REVIEW ESSAY


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Security, Territory, Population is Palgrave Macmillan’s latest English translation of the courses Foucault delivered annually at the Collège de France from 1969 until his death in 1984. The lectures and course summaries from Foucault’s 1977-78 and 1978-79 courses were edited by political philosopher Michel Senellart, and published together in France by Seuil/Gallimard in 2004, as Sécurité, Territoire, Population and Naissance de la biopolitique, respectively. Senellart, who teaches at the Lyon École normale supérieure de lettres et sciences humaine, relied primarily on tape recordings in editing the lectures, but also had access to Foucault’s manuscripts and notes. Beyond his careful editing of these important lectures, Senellart also appended an essay that establishes the context in which the courses were developed, and provided a very valuable service to Foucault scholars by adding copious notes to each lecture. These notes not only provide citations for the vast array of historical sources Foucault used in preparing the lectures, but also list numerous additional sources, and cross-reference the course lectures with Foucault’s other publications, lectures, and interviews. Security, Territory, Population contains Graham Burchell’s superb (as usual) translation of the thirteen lectures and course summary from the 1977-78 course, as well as Senellart’s editorial contributions, making this an invaluable resource for understanding this absolutely crucial period in the development of Foucault’s corpus.

In the first lecture of his 1975-76 course, Society Must be Defended, Foucault lamented that his research from the previous five years was inconclusive and unsatisfactory, primarily because that work had implicitly relied on a traditional conception of power as repression and resistance.1 His first attempt to move past that

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“struggle-repression schema” was the introduction of the concept of bio-power, which appeared both in that 1975-76 course, and in La volonté du savoir, first volume of The History of Sexuality, which was also published in 1976. At the end of that first volume he famously described bio-power by contrasting it with the sovereign’s traditional power of death; rather than threatening the lives of subjects, bio-power was instead presented as a modern form of power that “exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations.” Foucault took a sabbatical in 1976-77, but upon returning to his academic duties the following year he picked up right where he had left off, and began his 1977-78 course by announcing: “This year I would like to begin studying something that I have called, somewhat vaguely, bio-power.” To further clarify this positive sort of power that was produced in modernity, he concentrated in this course on a new form of political rationality that appeared in the eighteenth century, which he identified as “governmentality.” In fact, about a third of the way through the course he claimed that a more accurate title would have been “the history of ‘governmentality,’” rather than Security, Territory, Population. In explaining the decision to publish the French editions of the 1977-78 and 1978-79 lectures simultaneously, Senellart claims that they “form a diptych unified by the problematic of bio-power.” The volume under review here, then, is not simply another course of Foucault’s lectures, but rather the course that his thought took from bio-power, through governmentality, toward biopolitics, and as we will see, that course revolved around liberalism.

The thirteen lectures are divided into five primary topics, each of which reveals an important dimension of the origins of those governmental techniques that have come to prevail in modernity. The first three lectures deal with the issue of security; the fourth and most of the fifth lectures focus on the art of government; the sixth through the ninth examine the history of pastoral techniques; the tenth and eleventh discuss raison D’État; and finally, the twelfth and thirteenth lectures deal with the important early-modern institution of the police. In carefully examining the historical development of each of these facets of governmentality, Foucault’s research covered sources from England, France, Italy and Germany, revealing that governmentality emerged as a result of transformations that occurred throughout Europe.

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2 Ibid., 243, 253-63.
4 Foucault, Security, Territory, Population, 1.
6 Ibid., 369.
In his discussion of security in the first three lectures, Foucault used the example of the scarcity of grain to distinguish security techniques from those employed under mercantilism. The mercantilist policies that “practically dominated Europe from the start of the seventeenth until the start of the eighteenth century,” he claimed, were focused on protecting the wealth of the state by preventing scarcity from occurring. Toward this end regulations were placed on the pricing, storing, cultivating, and exporting of grain, in order to keep grain prices as low as possible for peasant populations. In late seventeenth-century England, however, a new scarcity policy emerged that was based on the free circulation of grain within, and between, nations, and this policy was adopted in eighteenth-century France as one of the hallmarks of the physiocratic system. Rather than trying to prevent scarcity from occurring, this new approach allowed “natural” fluctuations in the price, supply, demand, and circulation of grain to occur, in the expectation that these processes would eventually reach a balance, and provide an adequate supply of grain. While he tended to ignore seventeenth-century liberalism and social contract theory in much of his earlier work – for instance, he explicitly dismissed the relevance of Hobbes’ social contract theory in his discussion of bio-power in both The History of Sexuality and his 1975-76 course - the eighteenth-century “game of liberalism” played a central role in Security, Territory, Population.

Foucault emphasized that this new policy of “curbing scarcity by a sort of ‘laisser-faire,’ a certain ‘freedom of movement (laisser-passar),’ a sort of ‘[laisser]-aller,’ in the sense of ‘letting things take their course,’” is at the heart of security. In contrast to the disciplinary techniques he examined in his earlier work, which aimed at regulating and prohibiting movement, security techniques required the freedom of movement and circulation that Foucault had earlier dismissed as largely ideological. In Discipline and Punish (1976), for instance, Foucault claimed that “[t]he real, corporal disciplines [which he described as Panopticism] constituted the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties” of liberalism. But in Security, Territory, Population

7 Ibid., 32.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 34.
10 In the first volume of The History of Sexuality Foucault asked, “Must we follow Hobbes in seeing [the sovereign’s power to inflict death] as the transfer to the prince of the natural right possessed by every individual to defend his life even if this meant the death of others?” (135). He answered that question in the course resume from Society Must Be Defended: “We must begin by ruling out certain false paternities. Especially Hobbes” (270). Contra Foucault, I have argued that Hobbes actually complements his analysis of bio-power and governmentality in “Suicidal Thoughts: Hobbes, Foucault, and the Right to Die,” Philosophy and Social Criticism, 32, 5 (July 2006): 609-17.
12 Ibid., 41.
he reassessed that dismissive stance:

Well, I think I was wrong. I was not completely wrong, of course, but, in short, it was not exactly this. I think something completely different is at stake. ... An apparatus of security, in any case the one I have spoken about, cannot operate well except on condition that it is given freedom, in the modern sense [the word] acquires in the eighteenth century: no longer the exemptions and privileges attached to a person, but the possibility of movement, change of place, and processes of circulation of both people and things. I think it is this freedom of circulation, in the broad sense of the term, it is in terms of this option of circulation, that we should understand the word freedom, and understand it as one of the facets, aspects, or dimensions of the deployment of apparatuses of security.14

From this discussion of security he turned to the political discourse of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but rather than focusing on the classical English liberals, such as Hobbes and Locke, he instead concentrated on Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1516). While *The Prince* was well received at first, Foucault pointed out that from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries a significant number of political treatises appeared that took issue with Machiavelli’s most well-known work. Treatises such as Guillaume de La Perriere’s *Le Miroir politique* (1555) and Frederick the Great’s *Anti-Machiavel* (1740) formed a new category of political thought that he identified as “the art of government.” Acknowledging that this was a “shallow representation of Machiavelli’s thought,” Foucault nevertheless emphasized that these treatises rejected what they took to be his claim that “the Prince exists in a relationship of singularity and externality, of transcendence, to his principality.”15 Rather than advising the prince on how to maintain his territory, as Machiavelli did, they instead argued that the sovereign should be primarily concerned with governing the subjects that inhabited the territory, as a father governs his household: “To govern a state will thus mean the application of economy, the establishment of an economy, at the level of the state as a whole, that is to say, [exercising] supervision and control over its inhabitants, wealth, and the conduct of all and each, as attentive as that of a father’s over his household and goods.”16 The move past the art of government to “governmentality” proper would occur in the eighteenth century, when the model of the household was replaced by the mercantilist conception of the economy that “designate[s] a level of reality and a field of intervention for government.”17

At this point in the course Foucault mentioned that both the early-modern institution of the police18 and the science of statistics19 played crucial roles in the

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14 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 48-49; brackets are Burchell’s, which replace Foucault’s “that it.”
15 Ibid., 91.
16 Ibid., 95; brackets in original.
17 Ibid., 95.
18 Ibid., 94.
19 Ibid., 101, 104.
shift from the art of government to governmentality, but he postponed a detailed discussion of these two factors, and shifted his attention to traditional pastoral techniques for governing the conduct of individuals. In fact, he spent more time discussing the history of the “pastorate” than any of the other factors that contributed to the emergence of governmentality. He traced the origins of the pastorate to the shepherd-flock model of leadership that was “frequently found throughout the Mediterranean East, ... in Egypt, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and above all, of course, in the Hebrews,” and spent nearly an entire lecture making the case that the Greeks, particularly Plato, did not embrace the idea of a political leader as a shepherd. However, Foucault was quite emphatic about the role that the pastorate played in Christianity:

I think the real history of the pastorate as the source of a specific type of power over men, as a model and matrix of procedures for the government of men, really only begins with Christianity. ... The pastorate begins with a process that is absolutely unique in history and no other example of which is found in the history of any other civilization: the process by which a religion, a religious community, constitutes itself as a Church, that is to say, as an institution that claims to govern men in their daily life on the grounds of leading them to eternal life in the other world, and to do this not only on the scale of a definite group, of a city of a state, but of the whole of humanity.

He discussed the development of the Christian pastorate in great detail, distinguishing it not only from the Eastern and Hebraic traditions, but from Greek techniques of the self as well. I will have to pass over that discussion here, however, in order to focus on what I take to be the most important point Foucault made about the pastorate, which is that it was contested throughout its history. Although there is no gainsaying the success of Christianity in spreading pastoral techniques throughout the Western world, he emphasized that there were always “counter-conducts,” such as gnosticism, mysticism, and asceticism, which challenged the pastoral authority of the church. The Reformation was, of course, “the greatest revolt of conduct the Christian West has known,” and afterward “the pastorate opened up ... burst open, broke up.” This “crisis of the pastorate” coincided with the emergence of the art of government, and as government began to take responsibility for the conduct of individuals, revolts began to appear in political rather than religious contexts. As examples of this new secular form of counter-conduct, Foucault cited: the revolutions in seventeenth-century England and eighteenth-century France; the emergence of “secret societies,” such as the

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20 Ibid., 123.
21 Ibid., 136-46.
22 Ibid., 147-48.
23 Ibid., 163-85.
24 Ibid., 196, 201-16.
25 Ibid., 196.
26 Ibid., 193.
27 Ibid., 197-98.
Freemasons; movements protesting the status of women both in convents and society; oppositional movements in medicine; and treatises concerning the education of children.28 He even interpreted Descartes’ early Rules for the Direction of the Mind (1628) as a bid to govern the conduct of individuals in this newly opened field. At the end of his extensive discussion of the pastorate, Foucault “note[d] that this transition from the pastoral of souls to the political government of men should be situated in this general context of resistances, revolts, and insurrections of conduct.”29

The Scientific Revolution also played a role in the emergence of governmentality, by shattering that meaningful natural order that had served as the foundation for sovereign authority. Citing Aquinas, Foucault claimed that earthly sovereigns had traditionally governed on the basis of certain analogies drawn to “God’s government on Earth.”30 This transcendent foundation supported the dream of a universal Empire at the end of history, when all differences between nations would be overcome with the return of Christ.31 The scientific breakthroughs of Kepler, Copernicus, and Galileo, however, revealed “that ultimately God only rules the world through general, immutable, and universal laws,” and “does not ‘govern’ the world ... in the pastoral sense.”32 This “de-governmentalization of the cosmos”33 meant that there no longer was any ultimate endpoint toward which earthly states were aimed, and that “we now find ourselves in a perspective in which historical time is indefinite;”34 each state, in effect, became an end in itself. In response to this disruption, a new theoretical perspective emerged, raison d’État, which sought to re-establish the possibility of some sort of order among the now free-floating states.

Raison d’État first appeared in Italy, and as with the art of government, it developed in response to the dangers posed by Machiavelli’s The Prince.35 When sovereignty was de-coupled from a meaningful natural order, and from the pastoral concern for ensuring the otherworldly salvation of those subjects, there was a concern that the state would be directed by nothing more than the whims of a Machiavellian sovereign. Raison d’État responded to this threat by claiming that the sovereign should govern his subjects in a manner that would ensure the preservation of the state. But while the art of government urged the sovereign to govern on the model of the household, raison d’État viewed the state as a collection of subjects in a given territory. To emphasize this difference, Foucault quoted Botero, one of the first Italian theorists of raison d’État: “The state is a firm domination over peoples.”36

28 Ibid., 196-200, 228-31.  
29 Ibid., 228.  
30 Ibid., 232-34.  
31 Ibid., 260.  
32 Ibid., 234-35.  
33 Ibid., 236.  
34 Ibid., 260.  
36 Ibid., 237.
As raison d’État developed, it became apparent that the mere preservation of the state was inadequate to cover the actual political situation, because states had a natural tendency to expand, and ended up competing with one another economically.37 This realization that the primary source of international strife was economic competition, rather than the rivalry of princes, was “undoubtedly one of the most fundamental mutations in both the form of Western political life and the form of Western history.”38 To make sense of this new threat to security, raison d’État learned from Newtonian physics, and viewed states as existing in a field of forces. “The real problem of this new governmental rationality,” Foucault claimed, “is not therefore just the preservation of the state within a general order so much as the preservation of a relation of forces; it is the preservation, maintenance, or development of a dynamic of forces.”39 The event that crystallized these lessons was the Thirty Years War, and the treaty of Westphalia, in 1648, marked the point where the “system of security” developed by this more sophisticated raison d’État “was fully installed.”40 According to Foucault, Europe was created at this point on the basis of a new “military-diplomatic apparatus” that was comprised of three instruments: the use of war as a diplomatic technique (citing Clausewitz without inversion); permanent diplomatic relations based on the principle of a “physics of states”; and professional, scientifically trained armies.41

What Foucault outlined thus far in the course, therefore, was a very similar process that occurred both within, and among, states. The conception of society as a collection of economic forces, which he discussed in the first lectures on security and scarcity, was extended to international relations by raison d’État’s “idea that between themselves states form something like a society in the European space, the idea that states are like individuals who must have certain relations between them” maintained in a stable balance.42 However, there was an additional piece that had to be put in place before this system of governmentality could be fully operational, and that was provided by the police. Throughout the course Foucault had intimated that the police played an absolutely crucial role in the development of this new form of political rationality,43 and in the last two lectures he discussed this institution in great detail. While the term has come to be associated primarily with criminal justice, the police that concerned Foucault in these lectures was the much broader institution that developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, alongside the mercantilist program for strengthening the economic competitiveness of European

37 Ibid., 289.
38 Ibid., 294.
39 Ibid., 296.
40 Ibid., 297, also 291.
41 Ibid., 300-06.
42 Ibid., 303.
43 Ibid., 58, 59, 94, 110, 296.
“Police is not justice” and law enforcement. Foucault insisted, but rather an administrative system that was concerned with maximizing the size of the state’s population in relation to the natural resources of its territory, ensuring that this population was productive and healthy, and promoting the circulation of both people and goods through the creation and maintenance of adequate roads, canals, and other public amenities.

It is important to note that the police promoted the broad interests of the population not for their own sake, but only insofar as this served to augment the power of the state. And rather than using the clumsy tool of the law, the police instead governed the population through the much more subtle use of regulations. As Foucault put it, “We are in a world of indefinite regulation, of permanent, continually renewed, and increasingly detailed regulation, but always regulation.”

To even conceive of such a regulatory system, however, required a new form of knowledge beyond the law, which could provide a view of the population that was to be governed, and Foucault was emphatic about the complementary relationship that developed between the police and statistics:

Police makes statistics necessary, but police also makes statistics possible. For it is precisely the whole set of procedures set up to increase, combine, and develop forces, it is this whole administrative assemblage that makes it possible to identify what each state’s forces comprise and their possibilities of development. Police and statistics mutually condition each other.

Foucault began his discussion of the police in France, and examined in some detail Turquet de Mayerne’s utopian police tract, La Monarchie aristodémocratique (1611), as well as Nicolas Delamare’s influential three-volume Traité de la police (1705-19). However, the police reached its most sophisticated form not in France, where it developed largely as an accretion of administrative practices, but in Germany. Unlike France, whose strong monarchical history and centralized administrative system fostered the development of mercantilism, Germany had no such tradition. The various Germanic states created by the Treaty of Westphalia had to develop an administrative system, and this gave rise to the highly centralized German form of mercantilism known as cameralism. By the early eighteenth century Prussian universities were teaching cameralistics, the science of finance and

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44 Ibid., 337.
46 Ibid., 323-25.
47 Ibid., 328.
48 Ibid., 340.
49 Ibid., 315.
50 Ibid., 317-28.
51 Ibid., 327, 333-37.
52 Ibid., 333-34.
administration, to future government functionaries.\textsuperscript{53} It was in this particular German context that the police reached its most fully developed form:

[Y]ou see the development in German universities of something with practically no equivalent in Europe: the \textit{Polizeiwissenschaft}, the science of police, which from the middle or end of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century is an absolutely German specialty that spreads throughout Europe and exerts a crucial influence. Theories of police, books on police, and manuals for administrators will produce an enormous bibliography of \textit{Polizeiwissenschaft} in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{54}

The individual who went farthest in developing this statistical approach to the regulation of populations was Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi,\textsuperscript{55} who taught \textit{cameralistics} in Vienna in the early 1750s. On the basis of these lectures he published \textit{Grundsätze der Policey-Wissenschat} in 1756, and in 1769 this important work was translated into French as \textit{Elément généraux de police}.\textsuperscript{56} The influence of this work was felt throughout Europe; however, the police never developed fully in France, or England for that matter, due to the role that liberalism played in those cultures. To illustrate this point Foucault returned to the issue with which he began the course, “because,” he claimed tongue-in-cheek, “basically I have done nothing else for several months but try to provide you with a commentary on these texts on grains and scarcity, which, through some detours, was always the issue.”\textsuperscript{57} As we saw earlier, in the late seventeenth century there emerged a certain suspicion of state interference in the grain economy among English economists and French \textit{physiocrats}, but at the end of the course Foucault presented this stance as a form of counter-conduct through which “that great over-regulatory police I have been talking about breaks up.”\textsuperscript{58} For these liberal economists, “[p]olice regulation is pointless precisely because … there is a spontaneous regulation of the course of things. Regulation is not only harmful, even worse it is pointless.”\textsuperscript{59}

So as the traditional Christian pastorate was broken up by the Reformation, and the medieval natural order was broken up by modern science, so too would that order of the state that was created by \textit{raison d’Etat} and \textit{Polizeiwissenschaft} be broken

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., n. 25 on 25-6.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 318. Foucault devoted the seminar of this 1977-78 course to Polizeiwissenschaft (366-67).
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., n. 7 on 329.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 341.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 354.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 344, also 341-54.
up by liberalism in the late eighteenth century. In place of “the artificiality of politics, of raison d’État and police,” there reappeared a sense of natural order, although “it is a naturalness that basically did not exist until then and which, if not named as such, at least begins to be thought of and analyzed as the naturalness of society.”60 And from this point on, there would be a division in techniques for governing the conduct of individuals in the population. On the one hand, the police were reduced to the “simple negative functions” with which we have come to associate the police – the prevention and suppression of disorder. But on the other hand there appeared those positive techniques for governing the conduct of individuals in the “natural” society, which Foucault described as “the great mechanisms of incentive regulation: the economy, management of the population, et cetera.”61 While Foucault vaguely identified these positive techniques as bio-power in The History of Sexuality, by the spring of 1978 he had clarified his view of them in terms of governmentality: “Civil society is what governmental thought, the new form of governmentality born in the eighteenth century, reveals as the necessary correlate of the state.”62

Lest anyone think that I have overstated the role of liberalism in Foucault’s account of the development of these governmental techniques, a quick glance ahead to his 1978-79 course indicates how seriously he took liberalism at this point in his career. In the resume of The Birth of Biopolitics, Foucault crystallized the distinction he tried to draw in his 1977-78 course between the police-friendly environment of Germany and the less hospitable culture of liberalism. The “Polizeiwissenschaft developed by the Germans … ,” he explained, “always subscribed to the principle: One is not paying enough attention, too many things escape one’s control, too many areas lack regulation and supervision, there’s not enough order and administration. In short, one is governing too little.” In contrast, liberalism “resonate[d] with the principle: ‘One always governs too much’ – or, at any rate, one always must suspect that one governs too much.”63 On Foucault’s account, this suspicion of state regulation emerged not out of a fundamental commitment to individual liberty, as neo-liberals still like to argue, but rather from the idea that there exists a society can be governed through techniques that he will call, in this 1978-79 course, “biopolitics.” In this course he lectured on Adam Smith and the liberal concepts of homo oeconomicus and civil society,64 but spent most of the course contrasting the very

60 Ibid., 349.
61 Ibid., 354.
62 Ibid., 350.
64 Michel Foucault, Naissance de la biopolitique: Cours au Collège de France (1978-1979), ed. Michel Senellart. (Seuil/Gallimard, 2004), 53-76, 271-320. Although the lectures from this course have yet to appear in English, Thomas Lemke offers an overview of them in ““The Birth of Bio-
different forms of post-war neo-liberalism that developed in Germany and the United States. These lectures are forthcoming in English from Palgrave Macmillan, and their publication will carry Foucault’s illuminating analysis of the relationship between liberalism and governmentality into the twentieth century.

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