

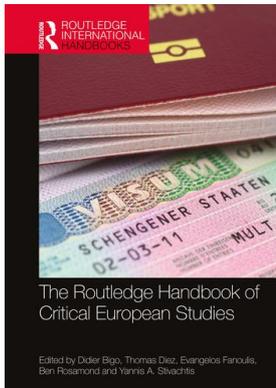
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Governmentality approaches

Jessica Lawrence

Introduction

Over the past 50 years, Michel Foucault's work has had an enormous impact on academic scholarship. Disciplines from sociology, to media, to criminology and culture studies have taken up his analyses of power, knowledge, discipline, subjectivity, and many other themes, and deployed resources from the Foucauldian 'toolkit' to think about their subjects in new ways. Because his major studies paid relatively little attention to questions of law or the international, however, Foucauldian approaches have historically had a more limited effect on scholarship in the fields of legal, international, and European Studies.

This has now begun to change. In recent years, researchers in the areas of political science, international relations, and law have also boarded the Foucault train (for more on the spread of discursive approaches in IR, see Chapter 3, in this volume). Foucault's work is vast, and 'governmentality', the topic of this chapter, is only one aspect of his scholarship – as noted, his early genealogical studies, with their focus on discipline, institutions, and individual behaviour, have long been popular in the social sciences. However, his work became newly relevant for studies of transnational legal and political order in the 2000s, when his lectures from the late 1970s and early 1980s at the Collège de France were translated into English for the first time (Foucault 2003, 2007, 2008). These lectures contain a wealth of material on a new theoretical approach that Foucault referred to as 'governmentality': the study of the political rationalities that motivate government; the mechanisms or technologies through which government occurs; and the complex relationship between the subject and power. Foucault never developed this work on governmentality into a major publication before his death in 1984, and as such his writing on the subject is somewhat unsystematic and scattered. However, the ideas he developed in these lecture series have been taken up and expanded upon by an increasing number of scholars working in the fields of world politics, international law, and European integration, and have burgeoned into a fully-fledged approach within the international studies literature generally, and within European Studies in particular.

Governmentality is a refreshing, interesting, and useful approach to the study of politics because it emphasizes the mutually constitutive relationship between practice and theory, and explores the way in which governmental behaviour not only *organizes* or *constrains*, but also *presupposes* and actively *constructs* its subjects. This prompts a reconsideration of concepts that

are often taken for granted, such as ‘the state’, ‘Europe’, and so on, and emphasizes the role that governmental techniques play in creating and reinforcing the very subjects and objects they seek to govern. In this way, it is particularly useful for rethinking reified discourses, and de-naturalizing and particularizing supposedly natural and universal concepts.

This chapter provides an overview of the current state of the art of governmentality approaches to European Studies. It begins by introducing the notion of governmentality, describing the historical origins of the approach and its most important conceptual terms and features. It then discusses the major intellectual developments in the field of governmentality studies that have taken place in the years since Foucault’s work, explaining the methodological ‘toolbox’ of post-Foucauldian governmentality studies as it is currently conceived. Following this, it turns specifically to the application of governmentality approaches within European Studies and introduces the most important areas of research in the field to date. It then goes on to set out the most important critiques of the governmentality approach, weighing its downsides and noting its potential blind spots. The chapter then concludes by commenting on the continued usefulness of governmentality approaches within European Studies and potential future developments in the literature.

The governmentality approach

Governmentality is a term that Foucault uses to describe our understanding of what government is, who its subjects are, and how, why, and to what ends it governs them. Governmentality is the ‘art of government’; the ‘conduct of conduct’: the way that the social order induces individuals and groups to think and behave in certain ways. As Foucault (2007, 193) explains, in his typical style:

[T]he word “conduct” refers to two things. Conduct is the activity of conducting (*conduire*), of conduction (*la conduction*) if you like, but it is equally the way in which one conducts oneself (*se conduit*), lets oneself be conducted (*se laisse conduire*), is conducted (*est conduit*), and finally, in which one behaves (*se comporter*) as an effect of a form of conduct (*une conduite*) as the action of conducting or of conduction (*conduction*).

The field of analysis laid out in this brief passage is broad. Governmentality, here, is not simply the governmental activity of the state, but encompasses a disaggregated understanding of power that takes into account many diffuse drivers of institutional and individual behaviour. In the Foucauldian model, government operates at multiple levels, through multiple actors, and along multiple social pathways. The state remains an important part of this picture, as a (perhaps the) privileged locus from which the power relations making up a social space are consolidated, organized, and codified (Jessop 2011). However, it is not the only node or site of governmental authority within the complex networked field of governmentality. ‘Government’ extends far beyond the activities of the courts, police, legislators, bureaucracies, or any other agency normally associated with the idea of public power. Instead, it includes any effort to guide the behaviour of subjects or to induce them to guide themselves in accordance with the particular aims and ideologies that make up the background rationality of government. Mitchell Dean (1999, 18) puts it well:

Governmentality is any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through the desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs of various actors, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes.

Governmentality operates according to a specific organizing logic, ‘conducting conduct’ in keeping with a particular understanding of the role and objectives of government. This organizing logic is a political rationality, a framing discourse that brings with it a host of assumptions regarding how government does and should operate, with respect to which subjects and objects it should act, and to what ends or purposes it should direct social behaviour. The political discourse of governmentality ‘problematizes’ the world in accordance with the discourse’s own internal logic, highlighting certain relationships, subjects, and themes as important or relevant, and judging the value and validity of individual and collective conduct according to its own conceptual matrix. In doing so, it marks some practices and behaviours as reasonable and comprehensible, others as unreasonable and irrational, and still others as simply irrelevant or invisible. When political actors adopt a governmental rationality and problematize the social order in line with its conceptual framework, they ‘build in’ all of the assumptions that this rationality implies. And when this problematization is accepted by others, they too adopt not only the discourse itself but also the organizing logic of the political rationality that undergirds it.

In this sense, political rationalities are highly correlated with the regimes of truth that generate ‘knowledge’ about the nature of government, human behaviour, and the relationships between the two. What we ‘know’ to be ‘true’ about the world and the drivers of individual and institutional conduct has a major influence on the type of social order we deem possible and preferable. For example, if one ‘knows’ that ‘human nature’ is dominated by ‘competition’, then it follows that a society that attempts to organize itself according to a cooperative or non-competitive logic will inevitably require either totalitarian control or break apart under the centrifugal force of the ‘natural’ competitive drive. In this way, ‘knowledge’ both structures the perceived realm of political possibility and emphasizes certain logical relationships and points of data as relevant and controlling, while ignoring or minimizing others. Because of this close relationship between ‘truth’ and ‘political rationality’, the production of scientific, social, bureaucratic, and other forms of knowledge by experts such as economists, biologists, statisticians, and historians is another important node or locus in the network of governmentality.

Political rationalities are contingent, meaning that different governmental logics hold sway in different historical moments, geographical areas, and social contexts. Foucault himself sketched out a history (a ‘genealogy’) of the different forms of political rationality that have existed in Western Europe (in particular in France) over the past several centuries. His Collège de France lectures trace the evolution of ideas about why, how, and with respect to what and whom government should happen as they developed from the late middle ages with its *raison d’état* emphasis on consolidating the power of the state; to classical liberalism with its separation of *homo juridicus* and *homo economicus* into the spheres of political and economic life; and up through neo-liberalism and the colonization of governmental practices by the logic of the market with its focus on efficiency, cost-benefit analysis, flexibility, and the development of human capital (Foucault 2007, 2008). However, because the particularities of location and circumstance are so central to the analysis of governmentality, it should not be assumed that the same progression of rationalities, or the same forms of political reason, apply elsewhere or elsewhen.

To complicate the picture even further, political rationalities are not totalizing, but instead may coexist alongside one another, providing alternate narratives for thinking about government and behaviour within a particular social order. Different forms of political reason develop out of, in dialogue with; and in resistance to one another. As these frameworks evolve from their predecessors, they do not entirely replace one another, but rather create complex overlapping governmental assemblages in which one can find elements of different political rationalities operating in parallel (Walters 2012). As a result, individuals and institutions within a political

order may have access to multiple different frameworks from which they can understand, explain, and justify governmental choices.

These various forms of political reason, and their associated problematizations and knowledge complexes, also imply corresponding sets of practices or technologies through which the work of government can and ought to be carried out. These governmental technologies are ‘the complex of mundane programmes, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions’ (Rose and Miller 1992, 175). They are, essentially, the way that government is performed, that rationalities are made operable, and that subjects are understood and guided to act. Governmental technologies can include everything from the production of maps and administrative forms to the issuing of identification documents, from the collection of statistical data to the performance of Environmental Impact Assessments. Indeed, law itself can be seen as a political technology – one among the many tools through which governmental power acts and enacts.

These governmental technologies both reflect and reinscribe political rationalities, operationalizing the logic of government by making some objects visible, countable, or actionable while obscuring others from view. Different political rationalities, which frame the world in alternative ways, suggest the use of governmental techniques particular to their forms of reason and knowledge. In the neoliberal context, in which metrics used to gauge success in ‘the market’ are imported into other areas of social organization and used to assess the legitimacy of public and private behaviour (a process of truth-making known as ‘veridiction’ in the literature), these techniques include not only centralized authority but also de-centred, de-formalized governance tools, such as best practice reports, public-private partnerships, ‘nudging’, and stakeholder consultations. Such techniques make sense, however, only from within a frame that views aggregate human behaviour as strongly influenced by rational cost-benefit analysis and the drive for self-improvement, and that conceives of political legitimacy in terms of input and output criteria (for instance, favouring stakeholder consultation over democratic control).

A third aspect of the governmentality picture is the relationship between political rationalities and the construction of subjectivity. Just as different political rationalities imply the application of corresponding governmental technologies, so to do they conceive of the subjects they govern in distinct and correlated ways. Each political rationality presupposes different forms of self and identity among the governed, seeing individuals through different frameworks, anticipating different forms of conduct and response, and seeking different behavioural changes through the imposition of governmental authority. Government may ‘see’ its subjects as a flock to be shepherded, as stakeholders to be consulted during relevant processes, as potential threats to be deterred, or via any number of other framing narratives. And these frames, in turn, impact the type of interventions that will seem reasonable and necessary; the technologies that will be deemed appropriate to evaluate and execute these interventions; and the appropriate goals of governmental activity.

Subjectivities or identities are also important because, from the governmentality perspective, power operates not only through the exercise of coercive or disciplinary power ‘from above’, but also by shaping expectations and causing individuals to govern themselves. As particular rationalities and the forms of knowledge and types of problematizations they bring with them come to dominate political and social discourse, individual subjects are induced to understand themselves and their actions in accordance with the framing narratives they suggest. People and institutions thus come to evaluate their own behaviour along the lines suggested by the truths that power produces. In the neoliberal world, for example, governmentality operates ‘at a distance’ to influence individual behaviour, encouraging ideals of personal responsibility and self-regulation that instrumentalize individual freedom and autonomy for the purpose of self-government

(Rose and Miller 1992, 180). Further, these subjects then reproduce and understand government according to the framework of political reason that has colonized their self-understanding, creating a mutually constitutive relationship between governmental rationalities and subjectivities.

Since Foucault's work on the topic, scholars adopting governmentality approaches have created a wide body of supplemental scholarship that has expanded on and deepened Foucault's original ideas. Kim McKee (2009) usefully refers to this body of work as the 'Post-Foucauldian governmentality' literature. These studies set out to explain the governmentality approach in much greater detail and with much greater systematicity than it is described in Foucault's Collège de France lectures. Key contributions to expanding on Foucault's original themes and developing a usable method of undertaking governmentality studies are the work of Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose (1996); Ulrich Bröckling, Susanne Krammann, and Thomas Lemke (2011); Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (1991); Mitchel Dean (1999, 2007); Thomas Lemke (2012); and Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller (Rose and Miller 1992). These fundamental texts provide explorations of governmentality as a theoretical approach, including further explications of its key concepts and examples of its application in scholarly practice.

Despite this further development, however, governmentality remains a 'thin' theory that is better characterized as an 'approach' or 'cluster of concepts' (Walters 2012, 2) rather than a fully formed theoretical model. Instead of attempting to make generalizable claims about causation or produce testable prediction models of order and authority, governmentality offers a set of tools for understanding the relations between power, procedure, and people in a given political context. As Foucault (1975) himself wrote in an oft-quoted passage:

All my books ... are little toolboxes, if you will. If people are willing to open them and make use of such and such a sentence or idea, of one analysis or another, as they would a screwdriver or a monkey wrench, in order to short circuit or disqualify systems of power, including even possibly the ones my books come out of, well, all the better.

The tools offered by the governmentality approach have been particularly popular among those aligned with social constructivist, reflectivist, and post-structuralist schools of international relations theory and heterodox political economy, and among legal studies scholars from critical legal studies, law and sociology, and similar schools of thought. Governmentality's emphasis on contingency and the social production of norms and knowledge is broadly aligned with anti-foundationalism and rejection of the idea of a pre-social self. It is also useful from the perspective of political praxis. As William Walters and Jens Henrik Haahr (2005, 6) write, 'Governmentality research is a critical, diagnostic practice because it seeks to make political reason more intelligible, and thereby more available to political practice'.

Methodologically, research in this vein tends to focus on micro-level analyses of practice and discourse in order to trace the means through which power acts upon and shapes individual and group behaviour. It interrogates the normative content of political rationalities, the forms of knowledge on which their claims to legitimate authority rest, and the discourses through which government articulates its political programmes. In order to do so, governmentality approaches frequently make use of techniques drawn from discourse analysis (e.g. Fairclough 2006) (though typically with a greater emphasis on the material and technical aspects of discourse than is sometimes the case with more semiotic approaches) and network analysis in the vein of actor-network theory (ANT) (e.g. Latour 2005) to determine where, how, and through which mechanisms political rationalities are transmitted and taken up. For more on the relationship of Foucault with practice theory, see Chapter 7 in this volume.

Key questions include such inquiries as: How are taken-for-granted concepts such as ‘Europe’, ‘the international’, and ‘the economy’ actively constructed in discourse and practice? How do various actors problematize or frame the social issues that they perceive? According to what logics do ‘experts’ and other privileged producers of knowledge construct their understanding of ‘truth’? Through what mechanisms or concrete practices does government operate? What do specific governmental technologies make visible or hide from view? How do the various individual and collective subjects of government understand and evaluate their behaviour?

Governmentality approaches in European studies

As demonstrated above, approaching European Studies through the lens of governmentality has provided scholars with a rich set of analytical techniques for exploring the ways in which different forms of political reason shape individual and institutional behaviour. Some of the earliest work that explicitly adopted a governmentality approach in the context of European Studies was done by scholars such as Andrew Barry (1993, 1994), William Walters (2004), and Walters and Jens Henrik Haahr (Walters and Haahr 2005). These pieces set the stage for the later application of governmentality approaches to a number of different areas of European law and policy, and have continued to serve as touchstones in the field. Since that time, scholars have developed a small but rich body of work examining Europe and the EU from the perspective of governmentality. In doing so, they have demonstrated that the governmentality approach is particularly useful in the European context.

To begin with, this approach is well-suited to European Studies because it de-centres the sovereign state and thus allows for a focus on a plurality of actors, both individuals and groups, at multiple levels. This emphasis on de-centralized networked governance allows scholars to bypass or downplay questions such as whether and to what degree the EU, with its pluralist power structures and unresolved hierarchies, should be thought of as meeting the formal characteristics of sovereignty or as being analogous to a nation-state (Walters and Haahr 2005). Governmentality allows for a more network-oriented focus on the power relationships within and among various formal and informal nodes of governmental activity within the EU; between the EU and the Member States; between and among the Member States and their various sub-organs; between (EU)rope, its ‘neighbourhood’, and the wider world; and so on.

Second, the governmentality approach is useful for European Studies because of the way in which it permits a ‘de-familiarization’, ‘de-stabilization’, or ‘de-naturalization’ of categories such as ‘democracy’, ‘the state’, ‘the citizen’, and even ‘Europe’ itself (Walters and Haahr 2005). By viewing Europe or the EU or its various institutions or policy domains not as predetermined identities or categories, but rather as a result of social construction that requires elaboration and continual reproduction, governmentality draws attention to the boundary-drawing exercises and problematization practices that are a part of European political life. Investigating the social construction of Europe is not unique to the governmentality approach – indeed, it shares this feature with a number of other critical and post-structural approaches to law, politics, and geography. However, it is an important feature of governmentality research and one that is highly relevant for scholars wishing to destabilize and unpack what have often become over-reified categories, allowing the reclamation of a critical distance from Europe as an object of study. In this vein, Luis Lobo-Guerrero and Anna Stobbe, for example, have described the way that Europe is contingently constituted through power practices (2016).

Relatedly, scholars have attempted to de-familiarize and unpack European power, exploring how the EU justifies its exercise of authority by examining the rationalities of government that guide its political action. Neo-liberalism is, of course, among the key themes within much work

on European governmentality. However, neo-liberalism is not completely hegemonic within the European political order. Other forms of governmental reason continue to exist alongside and in dialogue with the neoliberal frame. Owen Parker, for example, explores in detail the way competing ‘market’ and ‘legal cosmopolitan’ visions of Europe coexist and compete within the EU’s internal framework (2012). Similarly, I have argued elsewhere that both a ‘market rationality’ and a ‘rights rationality’, each with a number of internal variants, can be traced through the discourse and practice of the EU (Lawrence 2018). Because of this complexity, studies often speak of contemporary European political rationality not as univocally ‘neoliberal’, ‘liberal’, and so on, but rather under the more inclusive rubrics of ‘advanced liberal governmentality’ (Rose 1993) or ‘(neo)liberal governmentality’ (Kurki 2011; İşleyen 2014), which better encompass the polysemic nature of European power.

Third, the governmentality approach is appropriate for studying European politics because of the EU’s tendency to conduct its governmental activities through (neo)liberal ‘governance’ mechanisms such as coordination, best practices, public-private partnerships, and other decentralized and deformed tools. Governmentality studies aspire to go beyond state- and institution-centric analyses, and instead seek to understand the micro-physics of government from the ‘bottom up’. This entails an empirical investigation into the means and mechanisms by which discursive artefacts render populations knowable and governable. In doing so, this approach highlights the ways in which the operation of dispersed governmental technologies serves a productive function, constituting subjects as political actors in accordance with their underlying political rationalities. Scholarship in this vein includes Roger Dale’s work on the EU’s ‘open method of coordination’ (2004) and Cris Shore’s study of the Commission’s ‘governance’ initiatives (2011), both of which focus on the relationships between political reason and governmental technologies.

Other important bodies of work focus on distinct policy spaces within the European legal and political order.

European foreign policy has been a particularly productive area of governmentality scholarship. To provide a few examples, Milja Kurki (2011) examines the export of neoliberal governmentality through the EU’s democracy-promotion activities in third countries, exploring the links between governmental rationalities and techniques in EU external relations. Tagma, Kalaycioglu, and Akcali (2013) and Beste İşleyen (2014) have examined the effects of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its development promotion objectives in Tunisia and Egypt, arguing that they illustrate ‘a neoliberal governmentality agenda with which the EU aspires to circulate market principles and logics into the minds, choices, habits and actions of individuals and public institutions across a broad array of issues’ (İşleyen 2014, 673). And Jonathan Joseph has used a governmentality approach to analyse the EU’s ‘resilience building’ projects in the Horn of Africa, examining the public policy paradigm that sees such programmes as useful and legitimate governmental aims (2014).

Governmentality approaches have also had an impact within the European security studies literature. Early work by Didier Bigo (1994, 2006) and Ole Wæver (2000, 2005), for example, explored the EU’s role as an internal and external security actor from the governmentality perspective. More recently, scholars such as Michael Merlingen (2011) and Lucie Chamlian (2016) have applied the governmentality approach to analyse the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Migration and the construction and policing of European borders have been another area of interest for governmentality approaches. For example, Jef Huysmans (2004) and Matthias Leese (2016) have examined technological devices, such as European visas and the EU’s Registered Traveller Programme. Didier Bigo (2002) and Andrew Neal (2009) bring the topics of migration and security together with an examination of the securitization of the border and

the development of FRONTEX. Martina Tazzioli explores the impact of European migration controls in the Mediterranean region (2014). And Bal Sokhi-Bulley (2016) examines the problematization of migration within the EU, asking how migrants themselves are constructed and addressed by governmental activity.

European environmental policy (Neale 1997; Lawrence 2017); human rights (Sokhi-Bulley 2013); gender policy (Woehl 2008; Repo 2014); culture policy (Shore 2006); economic policy (Orbie et al 2017; Lawrence 2018); and many other areas have also been addressed using governmentality techniques.

In short, since the late 1990s, European Studies has seen the blossoming of a rich literature applying governmentality approaches to various aspects of (EU)ropean law and policy. This literature shares a focus on diffuse and de-centralized governance practices, on the de-familiarization of received categories, and on the impact of political reason on the construction of the subjects and objects of government.

Critiques

As this chapter has shown, governmentality approaches have particular merits and have been usefully applied in the area of European Studies. However, the governmentality ‘toolbox’, as with any other methodology or approach, also comes with its own set of biases, limitations, and blind spots.

To begin with, many have pointed to the terminological ambiguities (Lemke 2012) and lack of historical rigour (Gutting 1989) in Foucault’s own work as leading to conceptual difficulties, imprecision, and inconsistent usage in contemporary work on governmentality. Such charges are unassailably correct. Foucault’s informality and the lack of conceptual rigour in his lectures have caused ongoing confusion. To give just one example, even the word ‘governmentality’ itself is used in two distinct ways both by Foucault and within post-Foucauldian literature – to mean both the ‘art of government’ in general and the specific *neoliberal* ‘art of government’ in particular. This imprecision is something of which scholars should be aware, and which should lead them to carefully explain their use of terms and historical data.

Second, and of particular relevance to the field of EU studies, some have argued that one should be cautious in applying the governmentality approach to the international sphere, whether as a whole or in part. Jonathan Joseph, for example, has questioned whether there can really be a transnational or global governmentality at all, as different countries, regions, and so on operate according to different political logics (2010). Neumann and Sending, similarly, caution that ‘it would be analytically unwarranted simply to extend [Foucault’s] own analyses to the international’ (2007, 678). Others, however, see no difficulty in applying the governmentality approach outside the realm of the state. Lipschutz and Rowe, for example, argue that ‘the extension of this idea to the international arena is rather straightforward’ (2005, 15). Painting different political systems with the same brush would indeed be problematic from the perspective of contextual specificity. That said, however, exploring transnational or international governmentality is far from impossible, as the growing body of work within EU studies attests. It simply requires the same careful attention to the micro-physics of process as any state- or sub-state-level analysis.

Third, the governmentality approach has been criticised for reinscribing hegemonic discourses through its tendency toward the teleological. Derek Kerr, for example, argues that governmentality ‘enthrones the market’ as a new top-down conception of power (1999). Relatedly, Bevir points to governmentality’s continued adherence to what he calls ‘structuralist tropes’ (2016). This critique may be particularly salient when it comes to the tendency among some scholars to take an overly simplistic view of power and political rationality, concentrating perhaps

too heavily on the role of the state or supra-state as a neoliberal evangelist. In light of this, as Thomas Lemke notes, ‘studies of governmentality not only have to assume a plurality of rationalities and technologies, they also have to conceive of them as plural, messy, and contradictory’ (2012, 91).

In addition, two critiques from the realm of Marxian and radical political theory deserve particular attention.

The first longstanding objection is that Foucault’s work is insufficiently political and that he fails to articulate a theory of political resistance or revolution to accompany his analytics of power. These critiques focus, variously, on Foucault’s rejection of the idea of a pre-social subject outside of society and discourse (Taylor 1984); his totalizing view that there is no ‘outside’ to power (Lentricchia 1988); and the lack of a normatively desirable alternative to contemporary power relations in his work (Fraser 1981). If power is always already present everywhere, and we lack any ‘outside’ Archimedean point from which to judge its effects, the argument runs, this seriously undermines the struggle for political change.

It is true that Foucauldian scholarship tends towards the genealogical, preferring to trace and analyse historical and contemporary power flows and their effects rather than drawing ontological conclusions about structure and agency, class relations, and so on. However, this does not mean that Foucauldian analysis cannot usefully be coupled with a politics of resistance. Because power, in the Foucauldian view, flows everywhere, it is also subject to tactical reversals, resistance, and change. As Foucault himself wrote: ‘[w]here there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power’ (Foucault 1978, 95). Mitchell Dean elaborates further that in this schema, power is ‘more like a duel than a total system of subordination’, the result of ‘the incessant cut and thrust of relationships of resistance and power’ (Dean 2007, 9). Making use of Foucauldian analytical techniques alongside other critical theories such as a Gramscian analysis of hegemony (Joseph 2017) or a Bourdieusian analysis of political fields (Zimmermann and Favell 2011) can be particularly useful in this sense.

The second critique is that Foucault seemed in his later work to move away from radical politics and instead to embrace neo-liberalism as providing new space for individual freedom due to its emphasis on self-government rather than disciplinary or sovereign power (Zamora and Behrent 2016). In particular, Foucault seems to underestimate both the extent to which repressive sovereign authority continues to exist under neo-liberalism and the extent to which the subjectivization of the individual under neo-liberalism is its own form of totalitarian control. In response, some have argued that the late Foucault’s seeming turn to political liberalism and universal humanism disqualifies him as a thinker useful to building a left political movement, and limits the critical or emancipatory potential of Foucauldian scholarship.

Scholars who find the Foucauldian toolbox useful have nevertheless continued to deploy governmentality and other concepts central to his work. Indeed, many have demonstrated that Marxian and Foucauldian scholarship can well go hand in hand. Scholars such as Wendy Brown (2015) and Jacques Bidet (2015), for example, have argued that one should read Foucault with, alongside, or through Marxian scholarship, rather than in opposition to it. Michael Merlingen, too, reclaims Foucault from neo-liberalism by ‘reading Foucault against Foucault’, arguing that his later work fails to take seriously his own previous focus on power and knowledge and their constitutive effects (2016, 18).

These critiques point to the need for reflexivity and self-evaluation among those employing the governmentality approach. Awareness of the dangers of imprecision, structuralist reification, oversimplification, and de-radicalization should inform scholarship in this area, suggesting the need to correct or compensate for these shortcomings by maintaining a critical distance and supplementing the Foucauldian approach with insights drawn from other methodological toolkits.

Conclusion

The governmentality approach continues to offer important benefits to European Studies and represents a growing field of analysis within the literature. Its ability to account for power outwith the state, its focus on empirical and discursive research into the mechanisms by which subjects are constituted in accordance with political rationalities, and its ability to de-familiarize conceptual categories that are too often taken for granted gives the Foucauldian toolkit great analytical potential for European legal and political research.

The further development of this literature is particularly important given the relative paucity of critical analysis in the world of European Studies. Mainstream scholarship's failure to interrogate received knowledge regarding government, the social order, and the relationship between power and truth means accepting *ex ante* the structures and limitations that they impose. Tracing the ways in which these forms of knowledge shape individual and collective behaviour is key to overcoming or rethinking the boundaries imposed by the operation of ideology, itself a crucial step in developing strategies for resisting the distribution of power under the status quo.

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