

The soldier's tale: problematizing Foucault's military foundations

Corresponding author

Brieg Powel, Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3FE, Wales, UK.

Email: brp8@aber.ac.uk

Abstract

The popularity of Foucauldian understandings of government in International Relations (IR) has led to a vibrant debate over the utility of Foucault's work for the discipline, especially over its applicability outside Western liberal societies. By concentrating on governmentality's international applicability, however, IR scholarship has neglected Foucault's account of the foundations of modern social mentalities, apparatuses, and techniques. Foucault frequently based his ideas on historical research, with warfare and military affairs featuring prominently in his accounts of discipline and governmentality.

Based on a problematization of the military aspects of Foucault's thought, this article challenges Foucauldian IR scholarship to revisit governmentality's foundations and reconsider the contemporary relevance of Foucault's account of government. Foucault

neglected the heterogeneity of European militaries, such as their reliance on impermanent, auxiliary, and non-Western forces. He thereby missed the opportunity to develop a more sophisticated account of the relationship between force, the military, government, discipline, and biopolitics. Moreover, this article challenges Foucauldian IR scholarship to revisit the empirical foundations of Foucault's work and re-consider the geographical and temporal extent of the relevance of Foucault's account of government as a result.

Keywords

Foucault, governmentality, history, materialism, domestic/international.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (Wales) and the Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University, for the period of research leave during which the research for the article was conducted. Further thanks to: the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful and constructive comments; Shabnam Holliday for reading and commenting on various drafts; Jaakko Ailio for his comments as discussant during the European International Studies Association Conference in Sicily, 26 September 2015; and to the various questioners in the audience during that panel.

Introduction

Despite much recent International Relations (IR) scholarship drawing on Michel Foucault's insights on governmentality and biopolitics, there has been relatively little engagement with the empirical foundations of Foucault's work. In particular, Foucault spends some time exploring armies, war, and the 'military apparatus' (or *dispositif*) within his accounts of discipline and government.¹ Despite this, there is very little scrutiny of this aspect of his work in IR literature. When Foucault's military apparatus is discussed, it is often either taken for granted as part of the infrastructure of sovereignty and biopower which facilitates the 'War on Terror' and associated notions of the 'camp' or is viewed purely as an instrument of interventionism in neoliberal global politics.² Yet Foucault identifies the apparatus as one of the foundations upon which government is

¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991a); Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège De France 1977–78* (New York: Picador, 2007); Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at the Collège De France 1978–79* (New York: Picador, 2008).

² Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Michael Dillon and Julian Reid, 'Global liberal governance: Biopolitics, security and war', *Millennium*, 30:1 (2001), pp. 41-66; Michael Dillon and Julian Reid, *The Liberal Way of War: Killing to Make Life Live* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009); Jenny Edkins, Veronique Pin-Fat, and Michael Shapiro (eds), *Sovereign Lives: Power in Global Politics* (London: Routledge, 2004); Elizabeth Dauphinee and Cristina Masters (eds), *Living, Dying, Surviving: the Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007); Angharad Closs Stephens and Nick Vaughan-Williams (eds), *Terrorism and the Politics of Response* (London: Routledge, 2008); Nick Vaughan-Williams, 'The generalised bio-political border? Re-conceptualising the limits of sovereign power', *Review of International Studies*, 35:4 (2009), pp. 729-49. A notable exception (discussed below) is Christophe Wasinski, 'On making war possible: Soldiers, strategy, and military grand narrative', *Security Dialogue*, 42:1 (2011), pp. 57-76.

constructed and, despite the subsequent emergence of other knowledges, techniques, and methods, he explicitly states at the end of his *Security, Territory, Population* lectures that 'governmentality' remains dependent upon the foundation provided by a permanent military apparatus.³

The military apparatus is, moreover, not simply significant in and as of itself. The soldier, a key figure within the apparatus, is highlighted in Foucault's work due to its peculiar disciplined subjectivity. The soldier's subjectivation is explored in relation to the emergence of disciplinary power; his/her body being the object of particular methods and techniques aimed at transforming an individual from a member of the general population into a subject whose conduct is highly regulated and whose body is at the service of government.⁴ As one of the first subjects of discipline the soldier is key to the emergence of 'biopower', a power 'that has taken control of both the body and life or that has, if you like, taken control of life in general – with the body as one pole and the population as the other'.⁵ Discipline is one of the three 'powers' of Foucault's governmentality, alongside sovereignty and government. As sovereignty is heavily reliant on the military apparatus, the soldier thus occupies a peculiar subjective position

³ Foucault (2007), p. 354.

⁴ Foucault (1991a).

⁵ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended. Lectures at the Collège De France 1975–76* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 253.

at the two 'poles' of government through biopower; the individual subject and the population as a whole.

Given IR's historic concern with matters of war, the lack of scrutiny of Foucault's account in IR is surprising. Indeed, one critical voice has noted that Foucault's governmentality work tends instead to inspire scholarship that is significantly different to the 'traditional concerns of international relations theory'.⁶ This may stem from the fact that Foucault's own analysis of the military apparatus is relatively limited outside the lectures and the pages of *Discipline and Punish*, and even here it is fragmentary. His analysis concentrates on the establishment of the apparatus between the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, but not on its continued evolution since then. Nevertheless, a vibrant debate in IR over governmentality in international politics offers the potential to engage with governmentality's empirical foundations, including its military ones. Roughly speaking, one side of this debate contests governmentality's international applicability due to its European roots and its emphasis on power in domestic, rather than international, settings.⁷ Conversely, others argue that governmentality is applicable as a theoretical

⁶ Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault: discourse, liberal governance, and the limits of Foucauldian IR', *International Relations*, 21:3 (2007), pp. 324-45, p. 331.

⁷ Selby (2007); Jonathan Joseph, 'Governmentality of what? Populations, states and international organizations', *Global Society*, 23:4 (2009), pp. 413-27; Jonathan Joseph, 'The limits of governmentality: Social theory and the international', *European Journal of International Relations*, 16:2 (2010), pp. 223-246; David Chandler, 'Critiquing liberal cosmopolitanism? The limits of the biopolitical approach',

framework for understanding domestic *and* international affairs because of the interdependency of both spaces. Meanwhile, it is viewed as a viable *method* of governing due to the pervasive influence of neoliberal international organisations and norms in a global political economy.⁸ The crux of the IR debate therefore concerns governmentality's utility in an 'international' context, thereby echoing broader debates about the spatial nature of the discipline found in the works of, for instance, Kenneth Waltz and RBJ Walker.⁹ However valid and necessary this governmentality debate is, it nevertheless fails to engage with the empirical elements that Foucault identifies as the infrastructure of power around which governmentality has come to operate. The result is a body of IR scholarship which is willing to accept governmentality's premises as both a theoretical framework and as a method of government without questioning the empirical foundations upon which governmentality is based.

International Political Sociology 3 (2009), pp. 53–70; David Chandler, 'Globalising Foucault: Turning critique into apologia — a response to Kiersey and Rosenow', *Global Society*, 24:2 (2010), pp. 135-42.

⁸ Wanda Vradi, 'Universal but not truly 'global': governmentality, economic liberalism, and the international', *Review of International Studies*, 39:1 (2013), pp. 49–69; Carl Death, 'Governmentality at the limits of the international: African politics and Foucauldian theory', *Review of International Studies*, 39:3 (2013), pp. 763-87.

⁹ RBJ Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); RBJ Walker, *After the Globe, Before the World* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001 [1954]).

This article is motivated by two factors. The first is a suggestion by one of the IR debate's participants. Appreciating the need to examine the nature and underlying social relations of liberal societies more deeply to understand 'what it is about them that makes governmentality possible', Joseph has issued a 'call for action' to further explore governmentality's material foundations.¹⁰ The second is Foucault's own peculiar assertion in *Security, Territory, Population* that 'the great diplomatic-military apparatus ... has hardly changed since the eighteenth century'.¹¹ Accordingly, this article scrutinises the military aspects of Foucault's thoughts on discipline, government, and biopolitics. It calls into question ('problematizes' in Foucauldian terms) Foucault's portrayal of the soldier and the military in *Discipline and Punish* and the *Security, Territory, Population* and *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures (henceforward '*Discipline*', '*Security*' and '*Birth*', respectively), in which the concepts of governmentality and biopolitics were explored in detail. The article begins by considering the debate over governmentality's utility to IR. The article then illustrates the significance of historical analysis in Foucault's work, before outlining his accounts of, first, the soldier and, second, the broader military 'apparatus'. Finally, the article problematizes these

¹⁰ Joseph (2010), pp. 240-1.

¹¹ Foucault (2007), p. 354.

accounts whilst suggesting the need to rethink these underlying military aspects of Foucault's work and the implications of this rethinking.

The internationalisation of governmentality in IR

Governmentality literature in IR is largely silent on the military context of Foucault's work on governmentality and biopower. Much of this scholarship explores the extent of governmentality's applicability in the 'international', introducing the notion of 'global governmentality'. For instance, Dean's contention is that a 'global governmentality' has emerged, 'propounded' by international governmental agencies and operating 'through both the existing arts of domestic government within nation-states and as an attempted extension and generalisation of them across the planet'.¹² Even if states themselves have limited authority in the international, there is no escaping the importance of some form(s) of 'governmental' intervention by, for example, transnational supra-governmental organisations. Others, meanwhile, draw attention to the expanding involvement of non-state agencies in the process of government, either 'internationally' or through the domestic privatisation of some of the state's functions.¹³ Burchell, for

¹² Mitchell Dean, 'Nomos and the politics of world order', in Wendy Larner and William Walters (eds), *Global Governmentality: Governing International Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 40-58, p. 53.

¹³ For example: Graham Burchell, 'Liberal government and techniques of the self', in Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose (eds), *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neoliberalism and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Dillon and Reid (2001);

instance, draws on Foucault to make the point that modern government favours the delegation of some of its responsibilities to non-state agencies of power.¹⁴ Such works provide valuable contributions to our understanding of contemporary government drawn directly from Foucault's work. Indeed, as Joseph notes, this may be governmentality studies' most helpful contribution to IR:

Foucault's argument seems particularly well suited for describing current thinking on rolling back direct state involvement in various social and economic matters, bringing the state into cooperation with a complex network of other social institutions and giving the state more of a managerial role as an overseer of certain social processes.¹⁵

Foucauldian accounts of government, therefore, rest on the premise that the state and a network of governmental agencies cooperate to manage life, possibly on an international scale.

Other works emphasise the significance of Foucault's account of subjectivity under governmentality.¹⁶ Such studies perceive Foucault's account of the evolution of

Nicholas J. Kiersey, 'Neoliberal political economy and the subjectivity of crisis: Why governmentality is not hollow', *Global Society*, 23:4 (2009), pp. 363–86; Death (2013); Vrsti (2013).

¹⁴ Burchell (1996), p. 20.

¹⁵ Joseph (2010), p. 228.

¹⁶ Kiersey (2009); Jason Read, 'A genealogy of homo-economicus: neoliberalism and the production of subjectivity', *Foucault Studies*, 26 (2009), pp. 25-36; Doerthe Rosenow, 'Decentring global power: The merits of a Foucauldian approach to International Relations', *Global Society*, 23:4 (2009), pp. 497-517; Couze Venn, 'Neoliberal political economy, biopolitics and colonialism', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26:6

governmentality as an account of a complex process of subjectivation of individuals which culminates in the 'biopolitics' of neoliberalism. The emergence of neoliberalism from eighteenth and nineteenth century liberalism, is the subject of *Birth*, wherein Foucault introduces *homo œconomicus* as governmentality's principal subject.¹⁷ This subject is defined as 'someone who pursues his own interest, and whose interest is such that it converges with the interest of others';¹⁸ a consuming subject who is central to market society;¹⁹ and a subject who must be encouraged and trained to compete in this market by government.²⁰ In short, the neoliberal subject needs to remain free only to the extent that it is 'aware of what it wants and unaware of what is being done to it'.²¹ It is the spread of this neoliberalism and this form of subjectivity in the international that signifies the emergence of a global governmentality.²²

Yet Foucault also explores other forms of subjectivity, including, in relation to discipline and the body, the soldier. An emerging corpus of 'critical military studies' literature in sociology and IR including authors such as Basham, McSorley, and Higate, have each in

(2009), pp. 206-33; Jason R. Weidner, 'Governmentality, capitalism, and subjectivity', *Global Society*, 23:4 (2009), pp. 387-411; Vrasti (2013).

¹⁷ Foucault (2008), pp. 225-6.

¹⁸ Foucault (2008), p. 270.

¹⁹ Kiersey (2009), p. 380.

²⁰ Read (2009), pp. 27-8.

²¹ Foucault (2007), p. 105.

²² Vrasti (2013).

some way or other linked Foucauldian ideas of military discipline to wider recent geopolitical issues.²³ The ‘embodied legacy of military training’,²⁴ as Higate calls it, has significant implications for both the domestic and the international contexts in which military force (and therefore the subjectivised warriors under analysis) is deployed both from and within. For Higate, this is manifested in the different levels of aggression adopted by security and military contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, with different states’ military training practices continuing to influence the behaviour of ex-soldiers following their transition to contractors. Basham, meanwhile, finds that as Western military operations dragged on in Afghanistan and Iraq, a militarized form of discipline emerged in home populations as a means of providing and showing support to deployed military personnel and veterans.²⁵ This body of work is particularly sensitive to material and performative aspects of the political, appreciating that matter is ‘generative and agentive not just in the sense of bringing new things into the world, but also in the sense

²³ Victoria M. Basham, ‘Effecting discrimination: operational effectiveness and harassment in the British Armed Forces’, *Armed Forces & Society*, 35:4 (2009), pp. 728–44; 2013. Victoria M. Basham, *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday Experiences of the Geopolitical in the British Armed Forces* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Victoria M. Basham, ‘Raising an army: the geopolitics of militarizing the lives of working-class boys in an age of austerity’, *International Political Sociology*, 10:3 (2016), pp. 258-74; Paul Higate, ‘The private military and security contractor as geocorporeal actor’, *International Political Sociology*, 6:4 (2012), pp. 355-72; Kevin McSorley, ‘Towards and embodied sociology of war’, *The Sociological Review*, 62:S2 (2014), pp. 107–28.

²⁴ Higate (2012), p. 369.

²⁵ Basham (2016), pp. 268-9.

of bringing forth new worlds'.²⁶ Indeed, in their Foucault-inspired explorations of the body, disciplinary practices, performativity, and the everyday of war and militaries, Basham, Higate and McSorley are all crucial in underlining how the process of subjectivation of individual soldiers is directly associated with the forms of politics experienced in the international.

The claims of the global governmentality work, meanwhile, have been challenged. In addition to expressing concern over Foucauldians' reluctance to engage with 'traditional concerns of international relations theory',²⁷ Selby believes that the use of Foucault in IR often lacks recognition of 'the distinctive problems of "internationalising" a theorist whose focus was primarily on the "domestic" social arena'.²⁸ Furthermore, despite the fallacies of some 'orthodox' views of the division between domestic and international, there nevertheless exists 'an ontological specificity to the international'.²⁹ This is based on a number of 'elements', two of which are of particular note. First, a distinctive arena of international politics is brought into existence by the 'power effects' of discourses of nation-state, sovereignty, and anarchy, alongside the processes of 'capitalist

²⁶ Claudia Aradau, 'Security that matters: critical infrastructure and objects of protection', *Security Dialogue*, 41:5 (2010), pp. 451-514, p. 498. See also Basham (2013), p. 11.

²⁷ Selby (2007), p. 331.

²⁸ Selby (2007), p. 325.

²⁹ Selby (2007), pp. 337-8. See also Joseph (2009), p. 414.

modernity'. Second, the emergence and the territorial specificity of state-held capabilities of government, surveillance, consent-creation and coercion has consolidated differences between inside and outside spaces.

A further critique of Foucauldian governmentality approaches concerns an alleged failure by 'global governmentality' scholars to break from an essentialist methodological trap also occupied by more traditional liberal approaches. Both Chandler and Joseph warn against such an essentialisation of the international which they claim occurs in governmentality research.³⁰ As Joseph puts it: 'IR theories of governmentality tend to take for granted the spread of (neo)liberalism through international institutions', thereby attributing all parts of the international with a liberal character.³¹ Similarly, he argues that governmentality simply does not apply either as theory or practice in societies that do not possess the social basis or the institutions necessary to develop a liberal programme.³² Chandler complains that the 'shift to "global governmentality" [in IR scholarship] is only engaged with superficially', leading to a neglect of Foucault's methodological emphasis on the need to subjectively frame meanings.³³ Thus Chandler invites us to eschew superficiality by engaging more comprehensively with the

³⁰ Chandler (2010); Joseph (2010).

³¹ Joseph (2010), p. 242.

³² Joseph (2009), p. 203; Joseph (2010), p. 237-8.

³³ Chandler (2010), p. 136.

substantive elements of Foucault's thesis. Joseph also calls for further engagement, albeit with the material foundations of governmentality. His concern is that:

Despite Foucault's own talk of the development of capitalism, the spread of political economy and a new concern for population and workforce, many of the followers of Foucault are not prepared to talk of such conditions of possibility, only of the practices of governance themselves.³⁴

To the above, this article adds a call for 'followers of Foucault' to problematize Foucault's account of the historical origins of governmentality, and especially to the social structures of those Western societies from which governmentality is understood to have emerged.

Foucault's military and historical foundations

There is a prominent military-historical element to Foucault's accounts of discipline, government, and biopolitics. *Discipline*, a precursor work to the lectures on governmentality, explores the soldier's subjectivation in relation to 'docile bodies' and the evolution of disciplinary techniques during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³⁵ Foucault views the military as what McSorley calls the 'foundational

³⁴ Joseph (2010), p. 241.

³⁵ Foucault (1991a), pp. 135-69.

laboratory of disciplinary power'.³⁶ Another lecture series, *Society Must Be Defended*, makes the case for politics being the continuation of war by other means, an inversion of Clausewitz's famous axiom.³⁷ Moving away from this argument in the later *Security and Birth* lectures, Foucault outlines the military's creation and significance as one of the foundations of modern government.³⁸ He explains that:

the pastoral, the new diplomatic-military technique, and finally, police, were the three major points of support on the basis of which that fundamental phenomenon in the history of the West, the governmentalization of the state, could be produced.³⁹

These three 'points of support' evolved to form part of what Foucault called the three 'powers' of sovereignty, discipline, and government which, despite emerging at different moments in history, have come to work alongside each other in the process of government.⁴⁰ These three 'powers' are the 'apparatuses of security' that allow governmentality to function, underpinning its processes of subjectivation, and thereby constitute its 'essential technical instruments'.⁴¹ *Birth* highlights the tensions between the world of the market and that of government, to the extent that governmentality's

³⁶ McSorley (2014), p. 116.

³⁷ Foucault (2003).

³⁸ Foucault (2007), pp. 301-6; Foucault (2008), p. 6.

³⁹ Foucault (2007), p. 110.

⁴⁰ Foucault (2007), pp. 107-8.

⁴¹ Foucault (2007), p. 108.

'global character' is at stake, and it is only resolved through the establishment of 'civil society' as a new 'field of reference' for sovereignty.⁴² Crucially, however, despite all the threats to and the potential 'disqualification' of the sovereign by the 'invisible hand' of the market discussed in *Birth*,⁴³ Foucault's conclusion is that sovereignty (and all it entails) persists, governing with and alongside economics, and with important proprietorial and productive roles to play within associated territories.⁴⁴ For its part, the soldier is central to both the sovereign and disciplinary apparatuses, being both subject and object of power.

Despite their somewhat fragmented nature, these various works and lectures are sufficient to produce in Dean's mind 'a number of ... lucid and coherent' contributions by Foucault on government.⁴⁵ Moreover, the military apparatus is always part of this understanding of government and, indeed, the *Security* lectures close by reasserting the significance of the military-diplomatic apparatus (and discipline) in a new world of 'économiste' government.⁴⁶ Here, Foucault summarises the 'new governmentality' by noting that government must 'manage populations', 'organise a legal system', and,

⁴² Foucault (2008), p. 295.

⁴³ Foucault (2008), p. 283.

⁴⁴ Foucault (2008), p. 284-5.

⁴⁵ Mitchell Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 176.

⁴⁶ Foucault (2007), p. 354.

crucially, 'has to provide itself with an instrument of direct, but negative, intervention'. Whilst this instrument was initially 'a police with a repressive function', it is now reinforced by the diplomatic-military apparatus. One of the key conclusions of the lectures, therefore, is that modern government operates thanks to a combination of forces, including the military apparatus. Consequently, the Foucauldian understanding of government as articulated in the *Security and Birth* lectures should not be understood without appreciating the military apparatus at its heart.

With this in mind, it is frustrating that Foucault's account of the military apparatus is less exhaustive than his 'lucid and coherent' musings on government. He admitted that this was an aspect of society that he wanted to explore in more detail, yet without ever fulfilling his ambitions:

One theme I would like to study in the next few years is that of the army as a matrix of organisations and knowledge; one would need to study the history of the fortress, the 'campaign', the 'movement', the colony, the territory.⁴⁷

This might explain Foucault's claim that the military apparatus 'has hardly changed since the eighteenth century'.⁴⁸ Thus a key social object such as the apparatus is portrayed as

⁴⁷ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 77.

⁴⁸ Foucault (2007), p. 354.

having achieved a permanence of form, ignoring the likelihood that social objects rarely maintain their form for long. True to his word, and despite its ongoing significance as one of the 'points of support' for 'the governmentalization of the state', Foucault never scrutinises the military's evolution beyond the eighteenth century. To paraphrase Hobson's critique of the use of history in IR,⁴⁹ whereas Foucault is more than willing to speak of governmentality as being embedded in and constituted by historical processes, including the emergence of the military apparatus and discipline, this apparatus has become an 'immutable illusion', eternalised and made resistant to wider sociological change. This may well have served the purpose of supporting his claim of the existence of governmentality. Yet the result is a theory of government contingent upon an ossified conceptualisation of a military apparatus that is, as time progresses, increasingly at odds with its material realities in the real-world.

This is all the more surprising given the engagement with history more generally in Foucault's work. History flows through his analyses, from *Discipline's* broad engagement with a number of texts and schemas to the lectures' historical sociology of

⁴⁹ John M. Hobson, 'What's at stake in 'bringing historical sociology back into international relations'? Transcending 'chronofetishism' and 'tempocentrism' in international relations', in Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson (eds), *Historical Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 3-41, p. 6.

government.⁵⁰ He has been variously labelled ‘the historian in a pure state’,⁵¹ ‘the greatest modern philosophical historian’,⁵² and a philosopher who ‘revives’ history.⁵³ In his own defence of (Nietzschean ‘effective’) history, Foucault contended that ‘history has a more important task than to be a handmaiden to philosophy ... its task is to become a curative science’.⁵⁴ To this end he proposes an ‘effective’ history to explore ‘events in terms of their most unique characteristics, their most acute manifestations’.⁵⁵ Without engaging in detail here with Foucault’s historical methods, it is nevertheless important to note the prominent historical approach taken in *Discipline* and the lectures on governmentality and biopolitics.

Conversely, the IR debate on Foucauldian notions of government is generally devoid of historical analysis. Foucault’s genealogical approach which owes much to history, on the other hand, has featured in calls for a ‘new materialism’ in IR. Building on such works’ appreciation of the agency of objects and the inert,⁵⁶ Coole’s call for a ‘capacious

⁵⁰ For an argument proposing Foucault to be a historical sociologist, see Dean (1994).

⁵¹ Paul Veyne, quoted in Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), p. 275.

⁵² Oswyn Murray, ‘Introduction’, in Paul Veyne (ed), *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. viii.

⁵³ Jacques Deluze, *Foucault* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 49.

⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, genealogy, history’, in Paul Rabinow (ed), *The Foucault Reader* (London: Penguin, 1991b), pp. 76-100, p. 90.

⁵⁵ Foucault (1991b), p. 88.

⁵⁶ For example: Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Bruce Braun and Sarah Whatmore (eds), *Political Matter: Technoscience, Democracy, and*

historical materialism' encourages us to re-evaluate apparently 'congealed' institutions and systemic logics.⁵⁷ Institutions and systemic logics, no matter how settled they might first appear, 'need always be reappraised within any particular context, along with their underlying ontological assumptions, lest they become reified or taken for granted'. Foucault's uncritical assumption of the eighteenth century ossification of the military apparatus, suggest a need for a reappraisal of the military apparatus. Moreover, the lack of a historical engagement in the 'global governmentality' and critical military studies work reinforces that need. To do so, however, first requires an exploration of the military's significance in Foucault's work.

The soldier subject

An important aspect of much of Foucault's work, including *Discipline* and the lectures, is the link between the subject, power, and government. In relation to governmentality, a plethora of subjective processes and resulting subjectivities are evident within the component elements of the apparatuses. For example, 'sovereignty' involves members of the armed forces, judiciary, and diplomatic services, whereas 'discipline' involves an

Public Life (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (eds), *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁵⁷ Diana Coole, 'Agentic capacities and capacious historical materialism: Thinking with new materialisms in the political sciences', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 41:3 (2013), pp. 451-69, p. 453.

array of subjectivising spaces such as schools, asylums, and military training establishments, each producing and dependent upon its own distinctive subjectivities. Subjects associated with these apparatuses are simultaneously foundational and exceptional: foundational as they are those subjects upon or around whom government or ways of thinking about government are established; exceptional as the distinctiveness of their 'sovereign' and 'disciplinary' subjectivities is necessary for the subjectivation of the general population. The school, for instance, involves the subjectivation of pupils by another, very specialised, subject in the form of the teacher. In turn, such 'teacher-subjects' are themselves products of distinctive subjectivation process which establish them as subjectivising agents for pupils, a process with its own specialised techniques, practices, and ways of knowing that are exceptional from but central to the subjectivation of the broader population.

Significantly, the soldier is the first subject noted in Foucault's account of the emergence of discipline in society,⁵⁸ establishing it as potentially the original biopolitical subject. Foucault describes the soldier as a member of a permanent armed force under the control of the government,⁵⁹ and it is as part of his exploration of disciplinary power in *Discipline* that Foucault first pays detailed attention to the soldier. Whilst *Discipline*

⁵⁸ Foucault (1991a), p. 135.

⁵⁹ Foucault (2007), pp. 300-6.

predates his turn to governmentality, there is a clear thread connecting it with the later governmentality work, stemming from the understanding of discipline as an art 'of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine'.⁶⁰ The conducting of conduct by government is, therefore, clearly emerging as one of Foucault's key conclusions on the role of government before the governmentality lectures themselves. The soldier is not the only subject under Foucault's analytical gaze as he explores the development of other disciplinary spaces and practices, such as the class, factory, and the hospital alongside the military training and the barracks. Crucially, these spaces involve the application of disciplinary techniques to change the behaviour of subjects, be these patients, recruits, prisoners, or pupils.⁶¹ Barracks are thus one of the first spaces dedicated to the exercise of disciplinary regimes over the bodies of subjects, and from which the broader notion of biopolitics grows.

The emergence of such institutions and practices mark a significant shift in government, away from a reliance on juridical power towards the 'action of the norm' and the distribution 'of the living in the domain of value and utility'.⁶² Foucault argues that we

⁶⁰ Foucault (1991a), p. 164.

⁶¹ Foucault (1991a), p. 164.

⁶² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1* (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 144.

should seek to explain power by considering the 'entry of forces' in the subject,⁶³ and the class, factory, hospital and barracks are the points of such entry. The government of groups of individuals, therefore, was made possible through a concentration on their micro ('tactical') behaviour. The alteration of specific movements, postures, and bodies expanded from being merely a means of turning the individuals into collective entities into a method of governing the masses. Foucault's primary contention therefore is that the practices developed in these disciplinary spaces permeated into wider society to facilitate a government by aggregation: the transformation of individuals into groups, classes, regiments, and units that were easily governable.

Foucault's analysis of government and the growing importance of the micro level of subjectivity is centred on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The period involved a range of major wars between European powers, such as the Thirty Years War (1618-48), the wars of Spanish (1701-14) and Austrian (1740-8) succession, the Seven Years War (1756-63), and the revolutionary wars in the US (1775-83), Haiti (1791-1804), and France (1789-98). Yet in keeping with his 'effective' historical approach, in *Discipline* Foucault concentrates on the micro-tactical rather than the strategic level, exploring the changes to the training of soldiers and on the realisation of what training might achieve

⁶³ Foucault (1991b), p. 86.

of the soldier. He identifies a transformative period bookended by the image of the soldier in two texts, Montgomery's *La Milice Française* (1636) and the French Crown's Ordinance of 1764.⁶⁴ Foucault contrasts Montgomery's belief that one needed to be born a soldier and in possession of particular physical attributes with the Ordinance's understanding that a soldier was 'something that can be made; out of formless clay'. By the Ordinance, the soldier was to be formed via training regimes designed to get 'rid of the peasant' and to give him the 'air of a soldier'. The soldier was thus turned into an 'exceptional subject': one that was to be extracted from the general population and subjectivised in a different, but very deliberate, manner.

This new form of soldier subjectivity developed alongside a new intellectual interest in the conduct of war, some involving detailed discussion of the bodies of soldiers. This was accompanied by a 'revolutionary growth in military literature',⁶⁵ with ideas from works on military training acquiring a broader societal impact.⁶⁶ Foucault himself cites works by a number of well-known enlightenment military figures, including Maréchal de Saxe, Maurice of Orange, Gustavus Adolphus, and, especially, Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, Comte de Guibert's *Discourse Préliminaire: Essai Général de Tactique I*. The

⁶⁴ Foucault (1991a), p. 135.

⁶⁵ Azar Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (Oxford: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 25.

⁶⁶ Gat (1989), p. 27; Foucault (1991a), p. 136.

soldier demonstrated how a body became something 'docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved'.⁶⁷ Military training formed part of a 'political anatomy' which allowed both control over the bodies of others along with improved speed and efficiency. This political anatomy was a result of a 'multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered locations, which overlap, repeat or imitate one another ... [to] produce the blueprint of a general method'.⁶⁸ Schemas emerged for uninterrupted and constant coercion, with a spread of disciplinary techniques from monasteries, armies, and workshops to being 'general' formulas of domination in society. These disciplinary methods were distinctive to those found under slavery as they did not rely on violence but rather on subtler forms of discipline. An 'art of the human body' was born which led to a growth in the subject's skills and the intensification its subjection, and the body becomes the object and target of power. This made the subject 'more obedient as it becomes more useful'.⁶⁹

The soldier was required to endure transformative techniques and practices designed to alter the very physics of his subjectivity. Foucault cites 'rifle drill' from the 1766 Ordinance to illustrate how training in firearm use had led the emergence of the 'body-

⁶⁷ Foucault (1991a), p. 136.

⁶⁸ Foucault (1991a), p. 138.

⁶⁹ Foucault (1991a), p. 138.

weapon, body-tool, body machine complex'.⁷⁰ Drill in particular comes to occupy his thought, along with its transformative effects on the human body. Foucault envisages the army as a

geometry of divisible segments whose basic unity was the mobile soldier with his rifle, and ... below the soldier himself, the minimal gestures, the elementary stages of actions, the fragments of spaces occupied or traversed.

Foucault frequently draws on Guibert's work whilst exploring drill according to a strict timetable underpinned by the 'negative' principle of non-idleness.⁷¹ Discipline, Foucault writes, 'arranges a positive economy ... [of] ever-growing use of time' and generating 'organic individuality'. A 'technique of subjection' was established to form a 'natural body' to supersede the 'mechanical body'.⁷² This 'natural body' became the target for new mechanisms of power, was offered up to new forms of knowledge, a body manipulated by authority, and 'a body of useful training and of rational mechanics'.⁷³

Such ideas were, Foucault argues, what underlay Prussian infantry training under Frederick II (the 'Great') with its breakdown of time and movements and embodied in the Prussian regulations of 1743. Figures such as Frederick were important as they bridged

⁷⁰ Foucault (1991a), p. 153.

⁷¹ Foucault (1991a), pp. 154-6.

⁷² Foucault (1991a), p. 156.

⁷³ Foucault (1991a), p. 156.

the gap between society, philosophy, government, and the military by fusing interest in the automata with approaches to military training, with notable successes on the battlefield. In turn, it is this aspect of Foucault's work on the body and on drill that has informed much of the critical military studies work in IR. However, it should also be noted that Foucault was not the first observer of European socio-political evolution to highlight the significance of the militaries of this period. For instance, the early professional military officer was, for Max Weber, the prototype of the modern civil servant.⁷⁴ Consistent across Foucault, Weber and the critical military studies literature, is the societal significance of the micro-processes of soldier training, with the soldier thus evolving from being merely an exceptional subject to the population to being one of the foundational subjects of contemporary politics, both domestically and internationally.

The soldier, raison d'État, and international 'balance'

The soldier occupies a second significant role in Foucault's work beyond its role as incubator of societal disciplinary techniques. In his *Security* and *Birth* lectures, Foucault explores the development of the state and *raison d'État*, the principle according to

⁷⁴ Max Weber, 'The origins of discipline in war', in Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (eds), *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (3 vols., New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), Vol. III, pp. 1150-1155.

which the state comes to be governed. The development of a permanent army (and diplomacy) is presented alongside 'mercantilism' and 'police' as one of 'a number of precise ways of governing' in which the 'plurality of the state is embodied'.⁷⁵ He contends that:

To govern according to the principle of *raison d'État* is to arrange things so that the state becomes sturdy and permanent, so that it becomes wealthy, and so that it becomes strong in the face of everything that may destroy it.⁷⁶

This has evident implications for the international and, indeed, Foucault's discussion of *raison d'État* is arguably his most explicit venture into IR scholarship.

As in *Discipline*, significance is awarded to the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Foucault argues that this era involved the relations between states undergoing 'one of the most fundamental mutations both in the form of Western political life and the form of Western history', from being rivalries between Princes to being relationships of competition between states.⁷⁷ This 'mutation' has significant consequences for international relations as it instigates a period where states seek to assert themselves

⁷⁵ Foucault (2008), p. 5.

⁷⁶ Foucault (2008), p. 4.

⁷⁷ Foucault (2007), p. 294; Foucault (2008), pp. 5-7.

in a space of increased, extended, and intensified economic exchange. They seek to assert themselves in a space of commercial competition and domination, in a space of monetary circulation, colonial conquest, and control of the seas, and all this gives each state's self-assertion not just the form of each being its own end ... but also this new form of competition. To use somewhat anachronistic words for this reality, a state can only assert itself in a space of political and economic competition, which is what gives meaning to the problem of the state's expansion as the principle, the main theme of *raison d'État*.⁷⁸

This reading of the international highlights the growing significance of 'force' and the emergence of a 'new theoretical strata' in which politics becomes the employment and calculation of forces. This new 'strata' involved a number of significant consequences such as: a change from thinking of possible conflicts in terms of the Prince's wealth to thinking of them in relation to state wealth, establishing the state's wealth as 'the very force of the kingdom'; moving from estimating a Prince's power by his possessions to investigating the state's intrinsic wealth, resources, commercial possibilities, balance of trade and so on; and a shift from a diplomacy based on princely alliances and obligations to kin and family to new alliances centred on state interests. For Foucault, this

⁷⁸ Foucault (2007), pp. 291-2.

represented the establishment of a new governmental rationality, and a key moment in the development of governmentality.⁷⁹

Three 'instruments' are seen to serve this rationality: war; diplomacy and the 'law of nations'; and a permanent military apparatus.⁸⁰ The soldier, evidently, is associated with the first and third instruments. Regarding war, this becomes an instrument of politics in its own right by losing its 'continuity with law, justice and right'. War is important as it provides the means through which territorial expansion is possible but, on the international level, it also threatens the European balance and thus the rationality of international politics. Moreover, in a nod of recognition of more total incarnations of warfare, Foucault argues that war now involves the employment of all the state's resources.⁸¹ A political-military complex has emerged that is 'absolutely necessary to the constitution of this European balance as a mechanism of security', yet war itself is but one of the functions of the political-military complex. The relations between war and peace, civil and military have, Foucault claims, been redeployed around this political-military complex.

⁷⁹ Foucault (2007), pp. 285-6.

⁸⁰ Foucault (2007), pp. 300-6.

⁸¹ Foucault (2007), p. 306.

The permanent military apparatus, the third and final instrument, is very clearly associated with the soldier. Whilst Foucault does not add much in the lectures to the earlier analysis of soldier subjectivity found in *Discipline*, he does outline four key components of the military apparatus. These are: (i) the professionalization of the soldier and the establishment of a 'military career'; (ii) a permanent armed structure that can 'serve as the framework for exceptional wartime recruitment'; (iii) an infrastructure of back-up facilities and strongholds; and (iv) a form of knowledge, 'a factual reflection on types of manoeuvre, schemas of defence and attack, in short an entire specific and autonomous reflection on military matters and possible wars'. This emphasis on permanence is striking, as is the reference to the logistical infrastructure to support such a degree of permanence. It is also clearly implied that the permanent military apparatus is a state military, with Foucault questioning whether maintaining international balance is possible if all states did not seek to maintain an apparatus of a similar 'level' to that of its main rival.⁸²

This has significant implications for the international, or at least the European international system. Foucault contends that:

⁸² Foucault (2007), p. 305.

The existence of a permanent, costly, large, and scientific military apparatus within the system of peace itself has ... been one of the indispensable instruments for the constitution of European balance.⁸³

Thus the existence of the military apparatus is important not just to government, the broader subject of his lectures, but also to the constitution of a distinctive European space of balance within the international. He notes that:

... the constitution of a permanent military apparatus ... is an essential component of politics governed by the calculation of balances and the maintenance of a force obtained through war, or through the possibility or threat of war. In short, it is an essential element in this competition between states in which ... each seeks to turn the relation of force in its favour, but which all seek to maintain as a whole.⁸⁴

The implications of *raison d'État* for the European states was that 'each state [had to] limit its objectives [and] ensure its independence'.⁸⁵ Indeed,

From the Treaty of Westphalia to the Seven Years War, or to the revolutionary wars ... military-diplomatic policy is organised by reference to the principle of the state's self-

⁸³ Foucault (2007), p. 305.

⁸⁴ Foucault (2007), p. 305.

⁸⁵ Foucault (2008), p. 6.

limitation, to the principle of the necessary and sufficient competition between different states.⁸⁶

Thus was created, through *raison d'État*, a 'zero sum' problem of competition wherein each state risked losing everything in its attempts to become more powerful.⁸⁷ However, a new eighteenth century liberal *raison d'État* emerged in response to the 'zero sum' problem. This allowed states to go to work on the subjects they governed, allowing government to expand indefinitely within their borders and leading to the establishment of 'police'. The police state aims 'to strengthen itself endlessly ... its aim is an unlimited increase in its power in relation to others'.⁸⁸ Making the subject more productive therefore became the means for states to strengthen themselves in relation to others. Thus, as outlined in the introduction to *Birth*, it is precisely because of the emergence of balance as the stabilising force within Europe, following the emergence of the military apparatus and sovereign *raison d'État*, that the liberalisms and their associated subjectivities discussed in *Birth* emerge.⁸⁹

To summarise this and the previous section, the significance of the soldier-subject in Foucault's work is twofold. First, *Discipline* identifies the soldier as an exceptional

⁸⁶ Foucault (2008), p. 6.

⁸⁷ Foucault (2008), p. 53-4.

⁸⁸ Foucault (2008), p. 52.

⁸⁹ For a fuller overview, see Foucault (2008), p. 5-7.

subject who is extracted from the general population and subjected to disciplinary regimes within dedicated spaces. Those regimes spread from their original contexts to enable the government of the wider population. Second, According to *Security*, the entire system is the 'triangle' of powers, including the sovereign and disciplinary powers to which the soldier is so important, underpins the whole system of governmentality.⁹⁰ In *Birth*, European liberalism is permitted to develop because of the international balance within Europe; the structural conditions of 'zero sum' international relations of the sovereignty *raison d'État* period encouraged a 'mechanism of mutual enrichment' through which 'either the whole of Europe will be rich, or the whole of Europe will be poor'.⁹¹

Problematizing Foucault's military apparatus

Foucault abandoned his exploration of the military when he shifted his focus to the eighteenth century transition from sovereignty-based *raison d'État* to a liberal 'governmental reason'.⁹² This, along with his claim that the military apparatus has not evolved in two centuries, is perplexing given both his stated desire to further explore the military and his recognition that discipline and the apparatus were so important to

⁹⁰ Foucault (2007), p. 108.

⁹¹ Foucault (2008), p. 54.

⁹² Foucault (2008), p. 53.

his discussion of the centuries before the emergence of liberalism. As noted in the first section, the spatiality of governmentality has been a point of contention amongst IR scholars. There are clear 'inside' and 'outside' spaces in his work within which different conditions apply. This inside/outside dichotomy is not limited to the West/non-West divide but is also present where the state intersects the domestic and international. For example, *raison d'État* is understood to have 'unlimited objectives' within the state and only 'limited' objectives outside it.⁹³ Nevertheless, Foucault's work on the military also suggests a high degree of contingency between the international and the domestic. By considering Foucault's discussion of the soldier in *Discipline* alongside his analysis of the military apparatus in the lectures, the international significance of micro-politics and subjectivity is revealed. Discipline produces soldiers who inhabit the apparatus which, in turn, establishes the conditions of international competition and European balance. This links the international to the individual, strengthening the case for 'internationalising' a theorist whose primary focus, according to Selby, was on the 'domestic'. It is this micro-politics that is of interest to the critical military studies work of Basham, McSorley, and Higate, and it is reinforced by Wasinski. Also drawing on Foucault, Wasinski argues that the practices of military discipline, geometric planning,

⁹³ Foucault (2008), pp. 52-3.

and panopticism discussed in *Discipline* are part of a 'military grand narrative' that has, since the Middle Ages, made war possible in the international.⁹⁴ The micro of military discipline is always part of a broader, interconnected whole via the nature of the institutions (militaries) produced by the disciplinary regime. Analysis of the soldier thus echoes claims that power cannot be localised at the micro-, meso-, or macro-level because these spaces are not 'in and of [themselves] necessarily real'.⁹⁵

The timeframe of Foucault's work is also noteworthy, with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries crucial for the development of both discipline and the military apparatus. This era also saw momentous developments in warfare and is the subject of a debate in historical scholarship over a suggested 'military revolution' which transformed warfare and socio-political structures in Europe and beyond.⁹⁶ Foucault's identification of the 130 years between Montgomery's *La Milice Française* (1636) and the French Crown's Ordinance of 1764 as the key transformative period in military

⁹⁴ Wasinski (2011).

⁹⁵ Nicholas J. Kiersey, Jason R. Weidner, and Doerthe Rosenow, 'Response to Chandler', *Global Society*, 24:2 (2010), pp. 143-150, p. 146, original emphasis.

⁹⁶ See various contributions in Clifford J. Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995); Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West 1500-1800*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jeremy Black, *A Military Revolution? Military Change and European Society 1550-1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991). On the notion of multiple revolutions see Clifford J. Rogers, 'The military revolutions of the Hundred Years War', in Rogers (ed.) (1995), pp. 55-94; and Clifford J. Rogers, 'Tactics and the face of battle', in Frank Tallett and DJB Trim (eds), *European Warfare 1350-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 203-35.

training notably contrasts with the 'military revolution' debate's longer period of change, beginning with medieval advances in infantry warfare and ending in the various revolutionary wars with the advent of bayonets and dispersed formations of light infantry.⁹⁷ Whilst not necessarily undermining Foucault's overall conclusions, this earlier, medieval dating of the beginnings of drill in Europe calls into question the broader philosophical context in which he claims that such reforms occurred. Foucault associated the shifts in military discipline with works such as Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des Lois* (1748), La Mettrie's *L'homme Machine* (1747) and Holbach's *Système de la nature* (1770) to argue that new ways of knowing and thinking about the body had emerged which facilitated a new way of governing. La Mettrie's work, for instance, fostered an 'obsession' with the body and a shift from an understanding of the body as a totality to exploring individual movements and attitudes.⁹⁸

The military revolution scholarship, on the other hand, finds more material reasons for the introduction of drill, including the introduction of firearms and increased appreciation of the potency of polearms against armoured cavalry. The re-emergence of the pike-phalanx (Bean, 1973: 206) in the fourteenth century posed an existential challenge to a political system organised around the mounted knight's military

⁹⁷ On the medieval origins, see Rogers (1995, 2010). On the eighteenth century, see Black (1991).

⁹⁸ Foucault (1991a), pp. 136-7.

superiority over the population.⁹⁹ The phalanx was a close-order infantry formation of ranks armed with ‘the simplest weapon with which a man on foot can be armed against cavalry’,¹⁰⁰ the spear. Phalanxes proved invulnerable to attacks by knights on numerous occasions, such as at the battles of Courtrai (1302), Bannockburn (1314), Morgarten (1315), Dupplin Moor (1332), Halidon Hill (1333), Laupen (1339), and Crécy (1346). Yet the success of the phalanx was due to ideational factors rather than any new material enhancement to the ancient pointed stick. Early firearms similarly required the development of training and drill for effective use. As Bean observes, infantry armed with bow, pike, crossbow, or handgun were ‘practically helpless in small parties’ but ‘useful when *en masse* and trained to act *en masse*’.¹⁰¹ What changes in the fourteenth century, therefore, is the ability of rulers to train soldiers to operate *en masse*, turning a levy of individual peasants into formidable blocks of mutually reinforcing ranks of pikemen and, later, musketeers.

Foucault also ignores some important features of warfare during this period and since. Notably, his understanding of soldiering is state-centric, with no consideration of other forms of combatants beyond the state-trained soldier. The account of training in

⁹⁹ Richard Bean, ‘War and the birth of the nation state’, *Journal of Economic History*, 33:1 (1973), pp. 203-221, p. 206.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 14.

¹⁰¹ Bean (1973), p. 206.

Discipline, for instance, concentrates on the barracks, ignoring other possible spaces of military discipline. This is perhaps unsurprising given that Foucault was writing in the 1970s when conscription was widespread and the world wars were recent history. Conscription magnifies the subjectivising impact of military discipline as large proportions of populations pass through their doors to be given the 'air' of soldiers. Meanwhile, the world and 'cold' wars were possibly what Foucault had in mind when suggesting that conflicts now involved all 'the state's forces' in efforts to achieve victory.¹⁰² Both conscription and 'total' wars make very visible within society the permanent armed forces, the infrastructure of back-up facilities, and the military knowledge which Foucault cites in his lectures.¹⁰³

Yet nuclear weapons have rendered industrial warfare almost obsolescent, at least between nuclear armed states, as a nuclear war would likely be over before many of the 'forces of the state' could be brought to bear. As the early American nuclear strategist Bernard Brodie wrote: 'nuclear weapons do by their very existence in large numbers make obsolete the use of and hence need for conventional forces on anything like the

¹⁰² Foucault (2007), p. 305-6.

¹⁰³ For an overview of total war and its societal effects, see Jeremy Black, *The Age of Total War, 1860-1945* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).

scale of either world war.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the actual experience of conflict for most Western societies since 1945 has usually been in ‘wars amongst the people’ outside Europe, requiring only a small portion of the state’s forces in predominantly counter-insurgency and police-type actions.¹⁰⁵ Such wars present the observer with a myriad of possible soldier types distinctive to Foucault’s barrack-trained state soldier. Within IR scholarship a source of much curiosity has been the proliferation of private military actors, often alongside state forces.¹⁰⁶ The expansion in the use of private military companies (PMCs) has been rapid: whereas the US in the late 1990s employed one contractor to every fifty members of its armed forces it deployed in Yugoslavia, by Iraq in 2008 the ratio was one to one.¹⁰⁷ The US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan in the

¹⁰⁴ Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 412. See also Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 357-61.

¹⁰⁵ See Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Penguin, 2005).

¹⁰⁶ See Tony Lynch and A.J. Walsh, ‘The good mercenary?’, *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 8:2 (2000), pp. 133-53; Robert Mandel, *Armies Without States: The Privatization of Security* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Christopher Kinsey, *Corporate Soldiers and International Security: The Rise of Private Military Companies* (London: Routledge, 2006); Peter W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of Privatized Military Industry*, Second Edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007); Krahmman (2010); Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams, *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Dean-Peter Baker, *Just Warriors, Inc.: The Ethics of Private Force* (London: Continuum, 2011); Sean McFate, *The Modern Mercenary: Private Armies and What They Mean for World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁰⁷ Elke Krahmman, *States, Citizens, and the Privatization of Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 2.

2000s accelerated the PMC resurgence, to the extent that the market may have been far smaller in size without the interventions.¹⁰⁸

Whereas the private force literature addresses many of the challenges posed by PMCs to international politics, Foucault's neglect of this aspect of the security apparatus is lost on the global governmentality debate. This neglect is intriguing as many of the military thinkers Foucault cites were keen users of private forces. Foreign mercenaries were common in the armies of the Dutch Republic (Maurice), Sweden (Gustav Adolphus), France (Guibert; the Ordnances), and Prussia (Frederick). These were often soldiers who may not have been subject to the disciplinary regimes and spaces identified in his work.¹⁰⁹ For instance, Frederick needed between one- to two-thirds of the positions in his eighteenth century Prussian army to be filled by foreign mercenaries.¹¹⁰

This picture is further complicated by the practice of sourcing soldiers from groups that were outside the territory and disciplinary influences of the state, such as highlanders, hussars, uhlans, and jäegers.¹¹¹ The recruitment of such soldiers was driven by a need for warriors who were effective in the rougher terrain where European armies were

¹⁰⁸ McFate (2014), p. 19.

¹⁰⁹ See David Parrot, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹¹⁰ Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London: Routledge, 1983), p. 9.

¹¹¹ John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, Kindle Edition (London: Random House, 2011), loc. 1526-7.

increasingly fighting during the eighteenth century and, crucially, where 'standard' European military practice was found wanting. As Ferris argues, European armies 'were designed for high-intensity combat or sieges and operations in territories with open terrain, large populations, and well-developed logistical infrastructure'.¹¹² Using such militaries outside Europe was problematic 'because of differences in terrain, politics, enemies, and infrastructure. To work elsewhere, the systems had to be adapted to local conditions'. It was recognised that the standardised model of army training was unsuitable for many contexts in which European armies found themselves operating, and overseas campaigns would demand the participation of frequently large numbers of foreign auxiliaries.¹¹³ Such auxiliaries were recruited precisely because they were different to the European armies of the Enlightenment and had not been subjected to the forms of training outlined in Foucault's work.

Interestingly, Foucault may well have been aware of some of these points in his research on discipline and the formation of the military apparatus. Guibert's *Essai Général de Tactique*, which is a source for *Discipline*, includes three particular observations

¹¹² John Ferris, 'Small Wars and Great Games: The British Empire and hybrid warfare, 1700-1970', in Williamson Murray and Peter R. Mansoor (eds), *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 199-224, p. 200.

¹¹³ See for example Tarak Barkawi, 'State and armed force in international context', in Alejandro Colás and Bryan Mabee (eds), *Mercenaries, Pirates, Bandits and Empires: Private Violence in Historical Context* (London: Hurst, 2010), pp. 33-53.

overlooked by Foucault. First, Guibert was critical of Adolphus and Maurice's resurrection of Roman tactics and drill, claiming instead that it was the Roman spirit that needed to be emulated. Second, and linked to the above, this spirit should include duty and patriotism, thereby linking military service to notions of professionalism and the nation. Whilst this is not wholly at odds with Foucault's state-centric idea of the military, it does introduce the question of soldier motivation, with Guibert recognising that correct motivation was far more important than correct drill. Third, in place of the rigidity of massed drilled formations, Guibert argued for imaginative and innovative soldiers open to a variety of tactical approaches.¹¹⁴ However, it is not clear why Foucault, despite citing Guibert's descriptions of drill and body movements,¹¹⁵ did not delve further into the latter's ideas.

Indeed, European armies sometimes displayed considerable initiative on colonial campaigns to 'become the enemy to defeat it', thereby radically altering their doctrine and fighting methods.¹¹⁶ For example, before 1914 'most British forces were designed for use in only one arena',¹¹⁷ thus limiting their global utility whilst maximising it in

¹¹⁴ For an overview of Guibert's ideas, see Beatrice Heuser, 'Guibert: prophet of total war?', in Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (eds), *War in the Age of Revolution, 1775-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 49-68.

¹¹⁵ For example, Foucault (1991b), p. 148, 150, 155, and 164.

¹¹⁶ Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War through Western Eyes* (London: Hurst, 2009), p.42.

¹¹⁷ Ferris (2012), p. 201.

particular localities. After 1918, however, the British army recognised that it may be involved in four different kinds of conflict, with each sort demanding 'different kinds of organization, equipment, and training'.¹¹⁸ In 1965 recently retired US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and US Ambassador in Saigon General Maxwell Taylor reversed his initial advocacy for US troop deployment in Vietnam by stating that a 'white faced soldier armed, equipped and trained as he is [is] not [a] suitable guerrilla fighter for Asian forests and jungles'.¹¹⁹ Guibert himself noted that an army of citizens was ill-suited for operations beyond the homeland and, rather prophetically in relation to more recent conflicts, questioned the willingness of national soldiers to care as much for 'all the provinces of the empire' as they did for their homes and families.¹²⁰

Perhaps reflecting the limitations of the 'traditional' Western way of war outside the West, the US has often developed unique force structures according to circumstances, creating in Barkawi's words 'a mostly foreign and private force for one purpose (CIA covert operations), a foreign and public one for another (colonial armies, foreign legions), and a domestic and private one for another (US private contractors in Iraq)'.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ David French, *Raising Churchill's Army: The British Army and the War Against Germany 1919-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 168.

¹¹⁹ Maxwell quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 256.

¹²⁰ Guibert quoted in Heuser (2010), p. 63.

¹²¹ Barkawi (2010), p. 50.

Central to US foreign policy since the 1950s has been President Eisenhower's idea 'to develop within the various areas and regions of the free world indigenous forces for the maintenance of order, the safeguarding of frontiers, and the provision of ground capability'.¹²² Crucially, Eisenhower continued, 'the United States could not maintain old-fashioned forces all around the world' and that having other nationalities bearing the brunt of any fighting 'was the kernel of the whole thing'. Eisenhower thus identified the problem for any military seeking to operate in the international: material conditions such as lack of resources and unfamiliarity with local geography demand the employment of foreign forces to augment the military apparatus of even the most powerful of governments.

Eisenhower's words along with Barkawi's observations conjure the spectre of not a single permanent military apparatus in the Foucauldian mould but rather a heterogeneous apparatus, a multi-headed hydra driven by a frequently opaque combination of public and private motivational logics, especially outside Europe. Indeed, Western 'colonial conquests', a central element of international competition in Foucault's *Security* lectures,¹²³ usually relied upon native, irregular, and private

¹²² Eisenhower quoted in Gaddis, (2005), p. 151.

¹²³ Foucault (2007), pp. 291-2.

auxiliaries operating alongside Western regulars.¹²⁴ Examples such as the 1916-18 Allied pursuit of the forces of General von Lettow-Vorbeck in east Africa and contemporaneous Anglo-French operations against the Ottoman Empire in the Levant demonstrate that even intra-European wars involved significant numbers of native, impermanent, or auxiliary soldiers within nominally Western armies.¹²⁵

Whilst not necessarily negating Foucault's findings on the spread of discipline throughout society, this heterogeneity exposes the limits of military discipline. Discipline is, Foucault writes, 'the unitary technique by which the body is reduced as a "political" force at the least cost and maximized as a useful force'.¹²⁶ Yet the conflicts above suggest that the disciplined soldier of Foucault's account was less useful in unfamiliar contexts, and that meeting military objectives often depends on combining disciplined subjects with other, differently- or un-disciplined subjects. The key to military success in the international, therefore, rests not on discipline *per se*, but rather the ability to persuade the un- or differently-disciplined to cooperate with the disciplined within military

¹²⁴ Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, 'The postcolonial moment in security studies', *Review of International Studies*, 32:2 (2006), pp. 329-52; Jeremy Black, *War in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

¹²⁵ Hew Strachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); James Barr, *Setting the Desert on Fire: T.E. Lawrence and Britain's Secret War in Arabia, 1916-1918* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006).

¹²⁶ Foucault (1991b), p. 221.

campaigns. This opens the door to new lines of enquiry regarding the power relationship between the different elements involved in a campaign, including exploring the use of different soldier types.

Such analysis might include the matter of subject motivation, along with its relationship to disciplinary techniques. Mercenaries, for instance, can bring with them problems of their own. Machiavelli's famous critique was that mercenaries were insufficiently bloodthirsty, could not be trusted due to the temptations of political power, and that their motivations were inappropriate for those wishing to engage in warfare.¹²⁷ Whilst he has been questioned by some,¹²⁸ the issues Machiavelli raised have not disappeared.¹²⁹ Pertinent in a Foucauldian context is the matter of Gustav Adolphus' armies, again not discussed by Foucault himself. In this instance, the use of mercenaries had a negative effect on army discipline, which was itself based as much on a sense of religious morality as on Foucauldian drill-based discipline.¹³⁰ Consequently the Swedish king sought to better integrate his mercenaries into his national army by dealing with them 'not as hired units but as individual soldiers'. Indeed, 'individualism was a

¹²⁷ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Kindle Edition, 2012), locations 1537-1540.

¹²⁸ For instance, Baker (2011), pp. 31-47.

¹²⁹ See McFate (2014), pp. 50-60.

¹³⁰ Russell F. Weigley, *The Age of Battles: The Quest for Decisive Warfare from Breitenfeld to Waterloo* (Blomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 27-8.

remarkably prominent ingredient in the Swedish Army ... in counterpoise with the discipline that made his army a reincarnation of the legions'.¹³¹ The need to accommodate the often individualistic motivations of private soldiers thus led to new forms of disciplinary practices beyond simply drill, geometry, and sub-units.

Similar problems emerge when the reverse occurs, that is when state-trained soldiers become commercial security and military contractors. Higate's ethnographic research reveals that when military contractors are faced with danger, the lessons of weapon drill from their public soldiering days instinctively kick into action; in echoes of the Foucauldian automaton, contractors become 'robotic' in their physical responses to danger.¹³² Unlike state soldiers, however, contractor responsibilities and objectives are often very different, focusing mainly on convoy security, close protection of dignitaries, hostage negotiation, guarding of civilian and military installations, training of local personnel as part of security sector reform, provision of logistical and support functions to military peacekeeping. Only to a much lesser extent are contractors expected to engage in combat operations, the task for which their state-directed drill prepares them.¹³³ Problems involving contractors instinctively becoming aggressive whilst on

¹³¹ Weigley (2004), p. 6.

¹³² Higate (2012), p. 364.

¹³³ Higate (2012), p. 356. See also: Christopher Kinsey, *Corporate Soldiers and International Security: The Rise of Private Military Companies* (London: Routledge, 2007).

deployment have, notes Higate, led some to call for more recruits from the civilian world for PMCs; individuals without the robotic muscle-memory typically instilled in military training barracks.

Another aspect of the 'motivational problem', so to speak, can be seen in a further soldier type to have been disciplined within the European/Western training system, the foreign auxiliary. These might include anyone from a Natal native drilled for a few weeks by European instructors before joining the Natal Native Contingent in the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War,¹³⁴ to Army of the Republic of Vietnam soldiers trained by the Americans. The motivations for individual auxiliaries might differ, ranging from notions of duty to local chiefs ingrained in the indigenous south African *amabutho* system, to earning a decent wage. Yet their motivation would influence the ability of the major Western power to incorporate them and their leaders within their military apparatuses.

In Vietnam, for instance, decades of US support, funding, and training, including President Nixon's 'Vietnamization' programme, could not account for the agency of the South Vietnamese government. Despite US pressure and an even more extensive aid package, South Vietnamese President Nguyễn Văn Thiệu refused to cooperate at the

¹³⁴ A peculiar and ultimately fruitless departure from the usual logics behind use of colonial auxiliaries. See Ian Knight, *Zulu Rising: The Epic Story of iSandlwana and Rorke's Drift* (London: Macmillan, 2010), p. 157-8.

1972 Paris Peace Talks, scuttling US plans for a prompt cessation of hostilities.¹³⁵ Similarly, recent US efforts to support specific tribes in Afghanistan, including subjecting large numbers of Afghans to Western training methods, have often resulted in strengthening local warlords who, in turn, have undermined other aspects of Western policy in the region.¹³⁶ The Afghan and Vietnamese cases demonstrate one of the fundamental problems with a heterogeneous apparatus, namely the inability of the wielder of the apparatus to fully rely on its constituent parts. This echoes Machiavelli's concerns about mercenaries, and, indeed, Machiavelli's points were aimed just as much at auxiliaries as they were at mercenaries,¹³⁷ branding them as both 'useless' and 'almost always harmful to those who use them'.¹³⁸

Problematizing Foucault's account of the soldier and the military apparatus therefore reveals a much more complex military apparatus than the one found in Foucault's works themselves. Changes to training associated with drill and body movement were made necessary by material changes far earlier than Foucault suggests, around the early fourteenth century. The armies and soldiers of seventeenth and eighteenth century

¹³⁵ Spencer C. Tucker, *Vietnam* (London: University College London Press, 1999), pp. 172-4.

¹³⁶ Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), pp. 319-21.

¹³⁷ Machiavelli (2012), loc. 1537.

¹³⁸ Machiavelli (2012), locs. 1680 and 1687.

Europe which featured so prominently in Foucault's works armies were more diverse than Foucault suggest, often involving large numbers of impermanent mercenaries. Military heterogeneity is also more pronounced outside than inside Europe, and the role of private military actors was negligible for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when major belligerents mostly conformed to international legal norms on the matter of private force.¹³⁹ Recent wars involving Western soldiers appear to continue these trends, although the lack of wars within Europe/the West itself adds a speculative aspect to such a conclusion.

Conclusion

Whilst not necessarily rendering Foucault's work redundant, the problematization of the military apparatus and the more complex picture this reveals raises questions over the broader empirical foundation of Foucault's theories of government. For instance, why did Foucault not discuss the role of private force in government or the mixed forces of colonial empires? Why choose the examples that he did, and not others? More fundamentally, perhaps, to what extent does the state- and Euro-centric nature of his understanding of the military apparatus have a bearing on his overall conclusions about

¹³⁹ McFate (2014), pp. 35-6. A notable and relevant exception was the American 'Flying Tigers' unit of combat aircraft. Manned by ex-US military personnel, this unit fought in China against Japanese forces, reinforcing the inside/outside Europe dichotomy.

the development of a new governmental rationality in the eighteenth century? For a 'philosophical historian' who drew extensively on a historical method, and who argued that role of history was to become "effective" to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being',¹⁴⁰ such a problematization of Foucault's own work might be entirely in keeping with his intentions. Indeed, his account of the military apparatus and military discipline can be viewed as being inconsistent with such an 'effective' historical approach: Foucault eschewed his usual desire to explore 'events in terms of their most unique characteristics, their most acute manifestations' to provide instead a more orthodox reading of European military history, based on a supposed consolidation of centralised, permanent, state militaries.

The key finding of this problematization is that the militaries of the societies discussed in Foucault's works were and are far more heterogeneous than suggested by Foucault himself. A permanent armed force of Foucault's description may have been the necessary platform for the development of governmentality and a suitable international context based on balance or competition. Yet Foucault, the 'philosopher historian', based his theories on a patchy exploration of history, including some of the sources (such as Guibert) and cases (Frederick II) he identified as being central to the

¹⁴⁰ Foucault (1991b), p. 88.

development of government, discipline, and the international system. He thereby does not account for the significant role of private, foreign, and auxiliary forces in the military apparatus, nor for the likely earlier medieval dating of the military disciplinary processes identified in *Discipline and Punish*. Indeed, the ‘military revolution’ debate might prove to be fruitful reading for those seeking a fuller (if still somewhat Eurocentric) analysis of many of the historical aspects of Foucault’s accounts of government, the state, and discipline.

Proponents of the notion of an emergent global governmentality, meanwhile, would do well to appreciate the very different nature of military apparatuses across the globe, both in the past and the present. The state-centricity of nineteenth and twentieth century warfare within Europe was rarely matched outside it, reinforcing critical voices within IR who question whether the necessary conditions are yet present outside Europe for Foucault’s ideas to be applicable. One means of making a case for a global governmentality would be to re-examine the conditions for a local governmentality, which is outlined so fluently in *Security*. If governmentality, as Foucault expressed during the lectures,¹⁴¹ does rest on the triangle of powers that includes discipline and (under sovereignty) the military apparatus, what are the implications for governmentality if

¹⁴¹ Foucault (2007), p. 108.

neither the discipline nor the military apparatus are what Foucault claimed they were?
As this article demonstrates, if governmentality exists at all outside the West, it appears that it must rely on the support of a very different military (and more broadly, security) apparatus to that found within the West itself, one that demands further investigation.