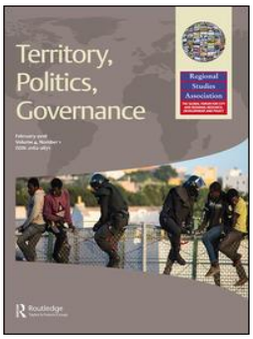

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How Should We Do the History of Territory?

STUART ELDEN

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Abstract This article approaches the question of territory, and its relation to politics and governance, from a historical perspective. The approach here is to interrogate the claims made by Foucault concerning territory in his work on governmentality. Foucault sees territory as crucial to the Middle Ages through to Machiavelli, but as displaced as the object of government by the emerging concept of population. In distinction, this piece argues that territory is not crucial to medieval determinations of rule, but actually emerges around the same time as Foucault's notion of population, making use of similar techniques of rule. The historical examples relate to the broader book *The Birth of Territory*. While what he says about territory directly is misleading, Foucault is, however, extremely helpful in thinking about these questions more generally, especially in terms of his historical approach. Thinking more deeply about the history of the emergence of the concept and practice of territory is helpful in understanding contemporary concerns, transformations and disputes.

Extracto En este artículo se aborda la cuestión del territorio, y su relación con la política y la gobernanza, desde una perspectiva histórica. El planteamiento que aquí se propone es cuestionar las afirmaciones sobre el territorio realizadas por Foucault en su trabajo sobre la gubernamentalidad. Foucault considera que el territorio fue algo fundamental desde la Edad Media hasta Maquiavelo, no obstante, quedó desplazado como el fin último de gobierno por el nuevo concepto de población. En comparación, en este artículo argumento que el territorio no es fundamental para las determinaciones medievales de reinar, sino que en realidad surge más o menos al mismo tiempo que la noción de población de Foucault utilizando técnicas similares de reinar. Los ejemplos históricos se hallan en el libro más general *The Birth of Territory*. Aunque lo que explica directamente sobre el territorio es erróneo, Foucault es, no obstante, extremadamente útil al pensar en estas cuestiones de modo más general, especialmente en cuanto a su enfoque histórico. Analizar más a fondo la historia de la creación del concepto y la práctica de territorio nos permite entender mejor las preocupaciones, transformaciones y disputas actuales.

摘要　本文透过历史的视角，探讨领土及其与政治和治理的关系。本研究取径将探究傅柯在治理术的著作中有关领土的主张。傅柯将领土视为自中世纪延续至马基维利时期的关键元素，但逐渐浮现的人口概念逐渐将之取代成为治理的主要对象。有别于此，本文认为领土对于确立中世纪的统治而言并非关键，领土实则与傅柯所谓的人口概念同时期兴起，并运用相似的统治技术。历史案例部分关乎一本范围更为广泛的书籍《领土的诞生》。虽然傅柯对领土的直接论述是令人误解的，但对更广泛地思考这些问题而言仍相当有帮助，特别是他的历史取径。更深刻地思考有关领土概念和实践的兴起历史，将有助于理解当代的问题、转变与争议。

Résumé Cet article aborde d'un point de vue historique la question du territoire, et de sa relation avec la politique et la gouvernance. L'approche vise ici à s'interroger sur les affirmations énoncées par Foucault concernant le territoire dans ses travaux sur la gouvernementalité. Foucault

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considère que le territoire est essentiel du Moyen Age jusqu'à Machiavel, mais qu'il est remplacé en tant qu'objet de gouvernement par le concept émergent de population. A l'inverse, cet article soutient que le territoire n'est pas un élément décisif des déterminations médiévales du règlement, mais qu'il apparaît en réalité à peu près au même moment que la notion de population de Foucault, en utilisant des techniques similaires du règlement. Les exemples historiques se rapportent au livre *The Birth of Territory*, au propos plus large. Bien que ce qu'il dit directement sur le territoire soit fallacieux, Foucault est néanmoins extrêmement utile pour réfléchir de manière plus générale à ces questions, s'agissant en particulier de son approche historique. Le fait de réfléchir de manière plus approfondie à l'histoire de l'émergence du concept de territoire et de sa pratique est utile pour comprendre les préoccupations, les transformations et les conflits contemporains.

Keywords Territory genealogy governmentality population Michel Foucault Niccolò Machiavelli

INTRODUCTION

Territory continues to matter today in a whole range of registers. Take, for example, the post-1989 territorial changes within central and eastern Europe, where successor states to the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia emerged and in many instances fought over the delineation of their boundaries. Kosovo, Trans-Dnistra, Chechyna and the breakway areas of Georgia show the continuation of these issues. We could also look at the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea in east Africa; Somalia's fragmentation into *de facto* but unrecognised states; the independence of South Sudan and the ongoing border tensions; the ongoing occupations by Israel and conflict between them and their neigbours; the territorial dimensions of the 'war on terror', environmental disasters, resource ownership, migration, and climate change, especially in terms of melting sea ice in the Arctic and the need to delimit maritime boundaries. Self-determination movements, such as the campaign for an independent Kurdistan, the independence of East Timor, the long-running disputes in Western Sahara, Tibet, East Turkistan and many other areas show that many groups seek control of territory occupied by a state. Yet what are these groups claiming? What is being fought over, divided, mapped, distributed or transformed? While these are sometimes characterised as nationalist struggles, they are seeking control of space, a territory. Where did this idea of exclusive ownership of a portion of the earth's surface come from? What kinds of complexities are hidden behind that seemingly straight-forward definition? Is the standard story that it emerged with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 sufficient? What different elements made up the modern notion of 'territory' and what roots do they have in different historical lineages?

This piece offers some reflections on how we might go about interrogating the history of territory, and how that helps us think about territory today. It is a piece that relates to the work I have been doing over the past decade on the history of territory, culminating in the book *The Birth of Territory* (Elden, 2013). The reflections here are made through a detailed engagement with the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault is taken to be an important thinker in a range of fields, and recently has been critically interrogated by a number of political scientists, geographers and international relations scholars (e.g. Crampton and Elden, 2007; Dillon and Neal, 2008; Kiersey and Stokes, 2010). His work on space, power and governmentality are widely discussed and referenced. Yet Foucault did not say very much about territory, and what he does say is, at best, misleading. Nonetheless, Foucault is extremely helpful in beginning to think about the history of territory. Justifying these two claims is the purpose of this contribution.

Interrogating the history of territory is important in its own terms, but also because of the way that understanding that history helps us to understand the contemporary limits of the term. Territory emerges in Western thought relatively late as a concept, not taking on a recognisably modern sense until the late middle ages, and not appearing as a central theme in political theory until the seventeenth century. It thus postdates the notion of the state, and unlike politics itself, comes from Roman, rather than Greek roots. Yet today territory, politics and governance interrelate in complicated ways, such that it is difficult to conceive of the latter two without some kind of territorial basis, extent or limit.

This article discusses these questions in four stages. First, it outlines what Foucault does say about territory, in indicates why it is misleading. Second, it answers the question of what Foucault might offer to a more adequate history of territory. Third, it briefly discusses some alternative accounts of the history of ideas and outlines the contours of the birth of territory, drawing on the wider study. Finally it returns to these opening questions and offers some brief, necessarily inadequate, thoughts on them in the light of this historical work.

FOUCAULT ON TERRITORY

Foucault discusses political space in a range of places in his work, crucially arguing that 'space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power' (1991, p. 252, 1994, IV, p. 282; also see ELDEN, 2001, Chapters 4 and 5). The question of territory becomes a specific focus in the mid-1970s, especially in the lecture course *Security, Territory, Population*, and in related materials.[1] One indication of Foucault's interest is provided in his response to the geographers of the *Hérodote* journal in 1976.

> *Territory* is no doubt a geographical notion, but it's first of all a juridico-political one: the area controlled by a certain kind of power. *Field* is an economico-juridical notion. *Displacement:* what displaces itself is an army, a squadron, a population. *Domain* [domaine] is a juridico-political notion. *Soil* is a historico-geological notion. *Region* is a fiscal, administrative, military notion. *Horizon* is a pictorial, but also a strategic notion. (1994, III, p. 32, 2007b, pp. 176–177)

Territory is not alone in being linked to juridico-political concerns, and the question of power, but it is important. As his interviewers respond, 'certain spatial metaphors are equally geographical and strategic, which is only natural since geography grew up in the shadow of the military' (1994, III, p. 33, 2007b, p. 177). Foucault then notes how 'the politico-strategic term is an indication of how the military and administration actually come to inscribe themselves both on a material soil and within forms of discourse' (1994, III, p. 33, 2007b, p. 177). This gives us a good indication of how territory should be approached. As I have argued elsewhere, much of the literature on territory seems to collapse it into political-economic concerns—the question of land—or broaden it only as far as political-strategic issues—what might be called the problem of terrain. Some appropriations of Foucault have seen the second as the addition his work provides. But Foucault offers much more than that. In particular, the stress on the juridico-political, the question of the law, is crucial. And his work on power is not simply strategic in a narrow sense, but opens up questions of political techniques more generally. These four registers—economic, strategic, legal and technical—taken together, are crucial in addressing the political and historical specificities of territory (see ELDEN, 2010 for a longer discussion).

Yet it is when Foucault actually addresses those latter two concerns in relation to territory that he becomes misleading. In terms of the legal question, Foucault essentially sees territory as equated with sovereignty, and that in the very specific sense he gives the term (2004a, p. 13, 2007a, p. 11).[2] He declares, for instance, that

> sovereignty is exercised within the boundaries [*limites*] of a territory … sovereignty is basically inscribed and functions within a territory … the idea of sovereignty over an unpopulated territory is not only a juridically and politically acceptable idea, but one that is absolutely accepted and primary. (2004a, p. 13, 2007a, p. 11)

Now, Foucault complicates this, and suggests that the actual exercise is often over bodies within that political space; and that making the strict linkage of sovereignty/territory; discipline/bodies; security/population is a bit crude, but this seems to be mainly in terms of the latter two pairs, not the first (2004a, p. 13, 2007a, p. 11). Foucault also equates the notion of territory with feudalism, suggesting that 'within an essentially territorial system of power founded and developed on the basis of a territorial domination defined by feudalism, the town was always an exception' (2004a, p. 66, 2007a, p. 64).

Foucault, therefore, suggests that the traditional problem of sovereignty was 'either that of conquering new territories or holding onto conquered territory' (2004a, p. 66, 2007a, p. 64); which he says is basically Machiavelli's problem. We get a sense, here, of just how vague Foucault's notion of sovereignty is, as the term and the concept are generally only taken to date from a later thinker, notably Jean Bodin. 'The Prince's safety [*sûreté*], that was the Prince's problem, in the reality of his territorial power; it was, I think, the political problem of sovereignty' (2004a, p. 67, 2007a, p. 65). He stresses that the Prince must seek to 'maintain, strengthen and protect the principality', but that the principality is not to be understood simply. He underlines that it is the Prince's *relation* [*rapport*]

> to what he possesses, to the territory he has inherited or acquired, and to his subjects, that must be protected rather than the principality as a whole, constituted by the subjects and the territory, the (if you like) objective principality. (2004a, p. 95, 2007a, p. 92)

The English translation reads 'objective territory' here, but this is clearly a slip. It is potentially misleading because it implies Foucault is saying territory is not the object of rule, when he is actually saying that it is not the objective principality that is the object, but rather the relation of the Prince to that principality. Foucault is clear that the key element of the principality, understood in itself, and as the object of the relation, is the territorial determination.

In case that was not clear, he stresses it again: 'What is to be protected is the principality as the relation of the Prince to his subjects and his territory, and not directly, immediately, fundamentally, or primarily, the territory and its inhabitants' (2004a, p. 95, 2007a, p. 92). Yet while he underlines it is the *relation*, 'this fragile link' between the principality and the Prince, that is crucial, that is the object of rule, rather than the principality in itself (2004a, p. 95, 2007a, p. 92), the fundamental element of the principality is territory. 'The object, the target of power is two things: on the one hand territory and [on the other] the inhabitants of territory' (2004a, p. 99, 2007a, p. 96).

Machiavelli thus marks, for Foucault, something of the end of an age or the highest point of a period. Foucault proposes a firm determination of this situation:

> From the Middle Ages to the sixteenth century, sovereignty in public law is not exercised on things, but first of all on a territory, and consequently on the subjects who

> inhabit it … territory really is the fundamental element both of Machiavelli's principality and of the juridical sovereignty of the sovereign as defined by philosophers or legal theorists. (2004a, p. 99, 2007a, p. 96)

He clarifies what he might mean by this in *The Birth of Biopolitics*:

> On what did the sovereign, the monarch, the state have a hold in the previous system, and on what was its right to exercise this hold based, legitimized and founded? It was things, lands [*terres*]. The king was often, not always, considered to be the owner of the realm [*propriétaire du royaume*], and it was as such that he could intervene. Or at any rate he owned an domain [*domaine*]. (2004b, p. 46, 2008, p. 45)

Yet leaving aside the idea that lands were things—which Foucault will suggest is a specifically modern object of government—this is to suggest that lands, perhaps at a large scale, equate to territory. But to suggests lands are territory is certainly questionable or at best economically reductive. Indeed, what is striking about feudalism—a term that, it must be remembered, is a retrospective term of historians to describe a wide range of socio-economic phenomena—is that while property in land was of paramount importance, it lacked an articulated concept of territory.

It is well known that Foucault considers this relation between sovereignty and what he labels territory to be distinctively changed by developments in government, and in particular by the emergence of the category of population. As he says in a 1977 interview, the role of the state in relation to the people has moved from a territorial pact where it is the provider of territory or the guarantor of peace within borders to a pact of population, where people will be protected from uncertainty, accident, damage, risk, illness, lack of work, tidal wave and delinquency (1994, III, p. 385). Foucault suggests that after Machiavelli the key problem is 'no longer that of fixing and demarcating [*fixer et marquer*] the territory', but a range of other questions. 'No longer the safety [*sûreté*] of the Prince and his territory, but the security of the population and, consequently, of those who govern it' (2004a, p. 67, 2007a, p. 65). His notion of population is, in one sense, a broadening of the analysis he made in *The Order of Things* concerning the category of 'man'. Here the three domains of knowledge in *The Order of Things* are explicitly politicised (2004a, pp. 78–81, 2007a, pp. 76–79). In the earlier work, Foucault had traced the shifts from natural history to biology; from analysis of wealth to economics; and from general grammar to linguistics (1966, 1970). He now situates these in a broader, and more political, setting. For these transitions, 'if we look for the operator that upset all these systems of knowledge, and directed knowledge to the sciences of life, of labour and production, and of language, then we should look to population' (2004a, p. 80, 2007a, p. 78). He, therefore, suggests that the earlier theme of man and the 'human sciences' should be understood in terms of how 'on the basis of the constitution of the population as the correlate of techniques of power a whole series of objects for possible forms of knowledge were made visible', and reiterates that this was 'on the basis of the emergence of population as the correlate of power and the object of knowledge' (2004a, pp. 80–81, 2008, p. 79). He therefore concludes that 'man is to population what the subject of law [*droit*] was to the sovereign' (2004a, p. 81, 2007a, p. 79).

As a result of this development, Foucault claims that the object of government is transformed, as well as the technique of rule. 'One never governs a state, a territory, or a political structure. Those whom one governs are people, individuals, or groups' (2004a, p. 126, 2007a, p. 122). A state or a territory might be ruled, but not *governed*. One of Foucault's examples is Guillaume de La Perrière's *Miroir Politique* (1555), where he quotes the definition of government as 'the right disposition of things arranged

so as to lead to a suitable end'. He notes that 'the definition of government does not refer to territory in any way: one governs things' (2004a, p. 96, 2007a, p. 99). This is a complex of men and things, where 'government is not related to the territory', though Foucault does clarify to suggest that the qualities of territory might be important, even if territory in itself is not the object (2004a, p. 96, 2007a, p. 99). While the issue of the qualities of territory is important, the key issue is population and its various attributes. Another example is his discussion of Giovanni Botero's *Reason of State* from 1589. Foucault notes that Botero's work suggests 'state is a stable dominion [*dominio fermo*—strong, firm rule] over people', which he translates as 'strong domination [*ferme domination*]' (1596a/1956, Chapter I, 1). Foucault stresses that there is 'no territorial definition of the state, it is not a territory, it is not a province or a kingdom [*royaume*], it is only people and a strong domination [*domination*]' (2004a, p. 243, 2007a, pp. 237–238). In the *Hérodote* interview, remember, Foucault had said that '*domain* [domaine] is a juridico-political notion' (1994, III, p. 32, 2007b, pp. 176–177), explicitly pushing the spatial determination of the term behind the legal. In order to trace the roots of this idea, Foucault looks at the Christian notion of the pastoral and the biblical idea of the flock: transient, not fixed in place or population, but led by a strong individual (see 1990, pp. 61–62, 1994, III, pp. 561–562).

Foucault's claims concerning Machiavelli deserve some scrutiny. Foucault contends that Machiavelli's key concern is that of knowing how 'a province or a territory acquired through inheritance or by conquest can be held against its internal or external rivals' (1990, p. 76); and of preserving 'the safety of the territory or the safety of the sovereign who reigns over the territory' (2004a, p. 65, 2007a, p. 67). But the Italian word *territorio* is not used in Machiavelli. The political spatial elements of his work, such as they are, are closer to an military strategic sense of terrain or an agricultural sense of land.[3] But what is striking about Machiavelli is that territory or even land is not the object of political rule. Whatever misleading translations of *lo stato* might tell us, this term needs to be understood as 'dominions [*domini*] that have held and have authority [*imperio*] over men'.[4] States are dominions holding *imperium* over men. The key here is that the object of political rule is men, people. As *dominium* and *imperium* both have some spatial connotations, there are a whole number of relations set up here. But Foucault usually denies this—if *dominium* implies territory then it would in Botero too, but Foucault, in Botero, translates it as 'domination'. Rather it is the primacy of men, the populace, which is crucial: they, not territory, are the object of political rule for Machiavelli. Foucault's reading of Machiavelli's concern as territory both relies on a narrow, statist sense of territory, and reads that sense into him, rather than actually providing sources for that sense in his work. Why does this happen? My most plausible answer is that translations of Machiavelli frequently translate *lo stato* as territory, or add territory as an object of a verb that seems to require one. The most common of these verbs is 'to acquire'.[5]

Similarly, Foucault's reading of de La Perrière and Botero can be questioned. De La Perrière is a strange example to have chosen, though Foucault seems interested in his expansion of government beyond a city to encompass family relations. While he rarely uses a spatial vocabulary, the overall purpose of the book would not have led to expections he would. Botero only rarely uses a vocabulary that would suggest a territorial definition, though it is worth stressing that his book on the reason of state is one of three major works, one looking at the city, and the other at the world as a whole. In these a geographical sensibility is much more evident (1595, 1596b, 1606).[6] The passage following the one Foucault takes from Botero is open to the same kind of reading he is making of Machiavelli: 'Reason of State [*Ragione di Stato*] is the knowledge of the means by which such a dominion [*Dominio*] may be founded, preserved and extended [*fondare,*

conservare, & ampliare]' (BOTERO, 1596a, I, p. 1; FOUCAULT, 1990, pp. 74–75). Foucault though is right to suggest that territory is not crucial to their determinations of rule. But given this is true of the thinkers that preceded them too, this should be seen as a continuation rather than a rupture.

After these indications, Foucault rarely discusses territory again. In the following year's course on *The Birth of Biopolitics* he says almost nothing. There are moments there and in *Security, Territory, Population* where territory is alluded to in passing, but claims are not developed in much detail. Nonetheless, they present some intriguing openings. To survey them in turn.

Foucault draws upon Giovanni Antonio Palazzo's definition of the state, where four determinations are given. The first, Palazzo suggests, is that 'a state is a domain [*domaine*], *dominium*', where the Italian is *dominio*. The second is that 'it is a jurisdiction, a set [*ensemble*] of laws, rules, and customs' (1604, pp. 10–11; quoted and translated in FOUCAULT, 2004a, p. 262, 2007a, p. 256). But when Foucault notes that a republic is a state in the same four senses, and restates them, the definitions become 'a republic is first of all a domain, a territory. It is then a milieu [*milieu*] of jurisdiction, a set of laws, rules, and customs' (2004a, p. 262, 2007a, p. 256). This is revealing because of Foucault's slippage between domain and territory, which was a relation he had claimed was not there in Botero. It is also interesting because Foucault's way of understanding the relation of jurisdiction to the state is to invoke another spatial term: it is 'a *milieu* of jurisdiction'. While he then repeats the definition of it as a 'set of laws', etc., the question of *where* the laws apply is obviously crucial. This question of the spatial determination of another category is important in a later lecture when he raises a series of questions about politics, including 'what is a territory? What are the inhabitants of this territory?' (2004a, p. 294, 2007a, p. 286). That is, even if we accept the claim that the inhabitants, i.e. a population, become the object of government, what sets them apart from other people, other populations, is a spatial determination or limit.

There are also two indications that open up questions that Foucault himself does not explore in detail, but which seem important in terms of the broader story. Foucault notes (though immediately clarifies he will need correct this general assessment) that 'every sovereign is emperor in his own kingdom [*royaume*], or at any rate the main sovereigns are emperors in their kingdom … Europe is fundamentally plural … it is a geographical division, a plurality' (2004a, pp. 305–306, 2007a, pp. 297–298). This is important, because it suggests the role of geographical division—the question of plural polities—but the question is how this idea of a sovereign being emperor in his domain or realm, that is a spatial extent and limit to their power, arose in the first place. It has a complicated history that can be traced back to writers such as Henri de Bracton in the mid thirteenth century who had declared that 'the king has no equal within his kingdom [*parem autem non habet rex in regno*]' (1968, II, p. 33), or the suggestion in the *Quaestio de Potestate Papae* (c. 1296–1303), that 'the king in his kingdom and the emperor in the empire [*rex in regno et imperator in imperio*]' are effectively equivalent temporal lords (DYSON, 1999, pp. 24, 76–77).[7] Foucault argues that the key foundation for the basis of royal power in the Middle Ages was the army, but notes that it was also based on judicial institutions. But this was not simply in terms of the reduction of 'the complex interplay of feudal powers' (2004b, p. 9, 2008, pp. 7–8), as he suggests, but also in terms of articulating a basis for power that was not dependent on the gift of the papacy.

This links to the second of Foucault's indications, which is the question of the politics of time. Foucault suggests that 'there was no State or kingdom destined to indefinite repetition in time' (2004a, p. 266, 2007a, p. 260). Foucault links this to the idea of perpetual peace, but a more immediate resonance is the old division between eternal and temporal

power. Eternal or spiritual power was the power of the papacy over people's eternal souls, and concerned questions of doctrine, sin and ecclesiastical practice. Temporal or secular power was the power over their mortal bodies, for the span of their life on earth. Both types of power were articulated by papal theorists, and they traded on the idea of the two swords granted by Jesus to his disciples. While both were in the possession of the church, the first was its to wield directly. The second was not to use itself, but to delegate to others. This was to emperors, kings and princes who would use the sword of temporal power on the Pope's behalf. In time it was accepted that there could be a plurality of temporal powers alongside one eternal power, and thus a temporal division was recoded as a spatial one. The question that arose, however, was the relation between the articulation of temporal power—what it was, what it allowed and included, in distinction to simply what it was not—and the exercise of political power within defined limits, a space, or, later, a territory.[8]

That last comment indicates my key claim. Territory is not a term that is especially helpful in making sense of the Middle Ages, or even thinkers as late as Machiavelli. Crucially it is not the term that political thinkers used to describe the object of political rule. The word in either its Latin or vulgar variants is entirely absent from the likes of Marsilius of Padua, William of Ockham and Dante, and Aquinas only uses it to describe properties of the church. It is absent from Machiavelli. If it is also not part of Botero or de la Perrière's definitions this is hardly surprising: it was not there in their predecessors, and so its absence is a mark of continuity rather than break. Foucault's later suggestion that the police controls 'the space, the territory, and the population' (2004a, p. 354, 2007a, p. 346) seems much more useful. Each of these three terms has a history of emergence, and the historical record would suggest that each of these concepts emerged, at least in a recognisably modern sense, at a similar historical juncture. Foucault sees territory as a defining feature of a period that had no sense of it; he sees its absence when it is actually being conceptualised and actualised. Territory emerges later than Foucault thinks it disappears.

FOUCAULT'S HISTORICAL APPROACH

To trace this, Foucault's broader claims about political developments and in particular his discussions of political technologies are extremely helpful. This is what is meant by the suggestion that while what Foucault says on territory directly is misleading, he remains extremely useful in thinking about its history.

One way in which Foucault is helpful is that in the *Security, Territory, Population* lectures, even though he moves away from a focus on territory, he discusses in some detail the emergence of a range of political techniques. These techniques, which Foucault sees as transformative for making earlier, vaguer notions of the people into the modern concept of population, are also brought to bear on earlier notions of the land and its transformation into territory. Foucault's work on the politics of calculation, including the rise of statistics and political arithmetic, and the broader models of rationality that underpin them, help us to understand the way territory becomes an object of governance, alongside that of population. Foucault claims that there is a shift from territory as the focus of governance to the government of things, essentially people as a population. In distinction, the argument here is that Foucault's work is most valuable in seeing the parallel shift from people to population and from land/terrain to territory.

In the 'Governmentality' lecture, which was the fourth lecture of the *Security, Territory, Population* course, Foucault actually hints at something similar, almost in passing, and albeit cloaked by his misleading historical shift. Territory is, he says, the fundamental element in both political systems, but the emphasis is reversed. Under Machiavelli, for

instance, things like the fertility of the land, the population density, average wealth, and diligence of the inhabitants are important, but remain 'only variables in relation to the territory that is the very foundation of principality and sovereignty' (2004a, p. 99, 2007a, p. 96). In the more modern tradition, the emphasis is reversed, with government 'not related to territory, but to a sort of complex of men and things', where the focus is on the population and its relation to 'wealth, resources, means of subsistence, and, of course, the territory within its borders [*frontières*], with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility' (2004a, p. 100, 2007a, p. 96).

> And maybe, in a completely general, rough, and therefore inexact way, we could reconstruct the major forms, the major economies of power in the West in the following way: first, the State of justice, born in a feudal type of territoriality and broadly corresponding to a society of customary and written law, with a whole interplay of commitments and litigations; second, the administrative state, born of a territoriality that is no longer feudal but bounded [*de type frontalier*], that corresponds to a society of regulations and disciplines; and finally, a state of government that is no longer essentially defined by its territoriality, by the surface occupied, but by a mass; the mass of the population, with its volume, its density, and for sure, its territory over which it is extended, but which is, in a way, only one of its components. This State of government, which essentially bears on the population and calls upon and employs economic knowledge as an instrument, would correspond to a society controlled by apparatuses [*dispositifs*] of security. (2004a, p. 113, 2007a, p. 110)

The crucial elements here are that there are three stages to the shift he wants to suggest, roughly corresponding to sovereignty, discipline and security; that the first two, both of which function with a sense of territoriality, where there is a contrast established between feudal and frontier territoriality; and that the language of calculation permeates the third—mass, volume, density, extension. If Foucault, as he himself admits, is overdrawing this comparison, it does seem that he is onto something quite important in understanding what precisely was the development in the political technique around the seventeenth century. This is that the variables, the measures, become part of the means of political rule, a central theme within the mechanisms of government. Thus the focus is on the *qualities* of territory, that is, precisely that which can be measured.

In the 1982 interview 'Space, Knowledge and Power' Foucault returns to this theme. At the beginning of seventeenth century, Foucault suggests that there is an argument being made 'that the government of a large state like France should ultimately think of its territory on the model of the city. The city was no longer perceived as a place of privilege, as an exception in a territory of fields, forests, and roads. The cities were no longer islands beyond the common law. Instead, the cities, with the problems that they raised, and the particular forces that they took, served as the models for the governmental rationality that was to apply to the whole of the territory' (1991, p. 241).[9] Some of these projects deal with territory as a whole on 'the premise that a state is like a large city; the capital is like its main square; the roads are like its streets' (1991, p. 241). He suggests, in sum, that 'the police become the very *type* of rationality for the government of the whole territory' (1991, p. 241). His analysis of the theorists of *Polizeiwissenschaft* such as von Justi makes similar points (1990, pp. 82–83).

Foucault suggests that *society* becomes the object of government at the end of the eighteenth century:

> government not only has to deal with a territory, with a domain, and with its subjects, but that it also has to deal with a complex and independent reality that has its own laws

> and mechanisms of reaction, its regulations as well as its possibilities of disturbance. This new reality is society. (1991, p. 242)

Here Foucault is suggesting that is a shift in the spatial issues, not their replacement. He discusses urban space and disease, the railroad, and electricity. 'So there were problems in the links between the exercise of political power and the space of a territory, or the space of cities—links that were completely new' (1991, p. 243). The focus of this interview, conducted by Paul Rabinow and initially published in the architectural journal *Skyline*, is architecture, and Foucault contends that there is a shift in its role, with its continuing importance working through in different ways.

> PR: So architects are not necessarily the masters of space that they once were, or believe themselves to be.
>
> MF: That's right. They are not the technicians or engineers of the three great variables —territory, communication, and speed. These escape the domain of architects. (1991, p. 244)

Foucault's claim is that other professionals, particularly those who work on infrastructure, begin to take over from architects in some registers. Foucault points to the work of the Écoles des Ponts et Chaussées [Schools of bridges and roads] and the 'engineers and builders of bridges, roads, viaducts, railways, as well as the polytechnicians (who practically controlled the French railroads)—those are the people who thought out space' (1991, p. 244). Political space is thus no longer merely the economic object of land; nor a static terrain; but is territory understood as a vibrant entity, 'within its borders, with its specific qualities' (2004a, p. 100, 2007a, p. 96). The strategies applied to territory—in terms of its mapping, ordering, measuring, and demarcation, and the way it is normalised, circulation allowed, and internally regulated—are calculative.

Foucault has argued that it is calculation [*calcul*] rather than an earlier notion of 'wisdom' [*sagesse*] which is the model for these rationalities: 'calculation of forces, relations, wealth, factors of strength [*puissance*]' (2004b, p. 315, 2008, p. 311). These calculative modes are tied explicitly to advances in rationality more generally, as modes of rationalising and regulating the art of governing (2004b, pp. 316–317, 2008, p. 313; also see 2004b, p. 5, 2008, pp. 3–4). Foucault's discussions of political economy, the police, and calculation are, therefore, useful in thinking the history of the concept of territory. Just as the people become understood as both discrete individuals and their aggregated whole, the land they inhabit is also something that is understood in terms of its geometric, rational properties, or 'qualities'. Territory is a political technology: it comprises techniques for measuring land and techniques for controlling terrain. Foucault's analysis of the politics of calculation is, therefore, crucial, but not as something which only manifests itself in population, but, rather, in territory too. The same kinds of mechanisms that Foucault looks at in relation to population are used to understand and control territory.

What is of particular interest is the quantification of space and the role of calculative mechanisms in the commanding of territory, and the establishment of borders. These mechanisms, these modes of governance, these 'new techniques' which go under the rubric of an art of government or the notion of governmentality, are forms of knowledge tied to particular practices, exercises of power. They are related to the development of the modern state and its practices, but also to the knowledge of the state—statistics. All of this helps an understanding of the territory historically and as a political, technical and legal term.[10]

TOWARDS THE BIRTH OF TERRITORY

Foucault did not provide the only inspiration for the broader historical project. A range of questions need to be considered in thinking about the emergence of territory. One is that territory is a word, concept and a practice; and the relation between these can only be grasped historically. Ian Hacking's valuable work on the history of probability and statistics provides another example, and attentive readers will recognise the tribute to his piece in *The Foucault Effect* in the title of this piece (HACKING, 1991). But two other traditions proved crucial for this work: the German tradition of *Begriffsgeschichte*, conceptual history, pioneered by Reinhart Koselleck and his colleagues (KOSELLECK, 2002, 2006); and the Cambridge School of contextualist approaches to the history of political thought, especially SKINNER (1978, 2002) and POCOCK (1972, 2009). Conceptual history is important because of its emphasis on terminology, and the relation between meaning and designation; contextualist approaches are crucial in stressing the importance of reading texts within the situations in which they were written.

This work on territory, therefore, puts a great deal of emphasis on language, and the specific words and formulations used. Equally, attempts are made to render these arguments contextually specific. Foucault's insistence of the relation between knowledge and power is useful in building on these approaches, as it enables us to move beyond simply the word–concept relation and bring in practices. Foucault's political and historical sensibility is thus extremely useful. There is no space here to go into the details on this, but one example from Foucault's work of this period is used to open up the key issue. At the beginning of *The Birth of Biopolitics*, he raises a crucial question:

> Instead of deducing concrete phenomena from universals, or instead of starting with universals as an obligatory grid of intelligibility for certain concrete practices, I would like to start with these concrete practices and, as it were, pass these universals through the grid of these practices. This is not what could be called a historicist reduction, for that would consist precisely in starting from these universals as given and then seeing how history inflects them, or alters them, or finally invalidates them. Historicism starts from the universal and, as it were, puts it through the grinder of history. My problem is exactly the opposite. I start from the theoretical and methodological decision that consists in saying: Let's suppose that universals do not exist. And then I put the question to history and historians: How can you write history if you do not accept a priori the existence of things like the state, society, the sovereign, and subjects? (2004b, pp. 4–5, 2008, p. 3)

In terms of my work on territory, I have attempted to follow this injunction. I have not written a history of territory, in the sense that territory is an ahistorical category, which has been understood and practiced in different ways at different times. Territory, for me, is not a universal. Indeed, contrary to how my interest in territory might appear, I do not think territory is that central or even general a category of geography; I have no wish to see all problems through a territorial lens; and while it is certainly of fundamental importance in the modern period, I do not think territory historically is the key concept of political theory and its relation to place. Rather, I have tried to look at a more general question of the practices that relate politics or power to place (using those terms, for the moment, as relatively unproblematic notions), out of which, it seems to me, the concept of territory emerges. In other words, to write the history of territory is not a case of writing about the Greek understanding of territory, the Roman understanding, the medieval … up to a modern notion. Rather, it is of offering an account of the emergence of a concept out of a complicated and multi-layer set of chronologies, fragments and aporias. Territory is a concept, as all concepts, with a history. It is also one with a

geography. Both the concept and the project are political: this historical work is part of a wider project that aspires to be a 'history of the present' (see ELDEN, 2009).

This article has already hinted at some of the elements of the story of the birth of the territory. It is crucial to recognise that though the secular political theorists of temporal power articulated a loosely geographical sense of power—the king in his kingdom—they lacked the conceptual tools to work this through in detail. Indeed, it seems clear that the King was the King of the French, not of France in any clear sense. While the rediscovery of Greek political thought, in particular the availability of Aristotle's *Politics, Ethics* and *Rhetoric* in Latin translation made considerable inroads into the debates within, and especially the terminology of, political thought, it did not contribute to a clear geographical determination of rule. In political theory, this spatial vagueness continues for some time: at least as late as Machiavelli, Bodin and Botero. Yet running alongside this political tradition is a legal tradition where many of these ideas are worked through in detail. This is Roman law, not, like Greek political thought, directly linked to classical sources, but lost for centuries and mediated through rediscovery and reinterpretation. In particular, it is read in the codification of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. In writers like Bartolus of Sassoferrato and Baldus de Ubaldis of the early fourteenth century the relation between *territorium* and jurisdiction is made clear, especially for the Italian city states in their independence struggles with the Empire. But, surprisingly, their work seems to have no discernable impact in political theory for some time; most strikingly they are absent from Machiavelli, both in name and vocabulary. Machiavelli's debt to classical Rome is well known, but his most crucial relation is to the historian Livy, not the lawyers, and Livy—like Caesar, Tacitus and Sallust—never uses the word *territorium*.

The introduction of these ideas in political theory is somewhat later. It comes most strikingly, in the German writers of the seventeenth century who were trying to make sense of the fractured political geographies of the Holy Roman Empire. It includes writers like Andreas Knichen, Johannes Althusius, Theodor Reinking, Bogislaw Philipp von Chemnitz, Samuel Pufendorf and Gottfried Leibniz. Knichen (1613) is the most important political thinker of the territory of this period, but the ideas receive their most striking determinations in Althusius and Leibniz. Althusius (1610) suggests that 'the territory of the kingdom is the bounded and described place, within which the laws of the kingdom are exercised' (IX, 14).[11] While today that would be a wholly unremarkable definition, it is a crucial innovation in the early seventeenth century, especially in the specific terms used. Leibniz tries to clarify the question of sovereignty in the wake of the Treaties of Westphalia, and does so by distinguishing between sovereignty and majesty. In Bodin these terms were the same—he used the former in his French version of the *Six Books of the Republic* and the latter in his own Latin version. For Leibniz, following Knichen among others, they should be distinguished. Majesty was the power of the Emperor; sovereignty belonged to the lower level rulers of the Empire. For Leibniz sovereignty was internal competence, and external recognition, but did not imply that all polities were equal, and there could still be a hierarchical model of power. Explicitly linking sovereignty to territory is his major contribution: 'sovereign or potentate is that Lord or State who is master of a territory [*Souverain ou Potentat est ce Seigneur ou cet Estat qui est maistre d'un territoire*]' (1678, p. 360).

Foucault declares that Leibniz is 'the general theoretician of force as much from the historical-political point of view as from that of physical science' (2004a, p. 304, 2007a, p. 296). Foucault confesses that he is not sure why, but nonetheless hints at his importance. While Leibniz is seriously unrated as a political theorist, and in terms of the emergence of territory he is of the utmost importance, he is also important for his

contributions to mathematics, especially in terms of calculus and probability. Leibniz is an Aristotelian by training who knows the work of the theorists of temporal power; is indebted to the Roman law scholars of the fourteenth century; but like the German political theorists before him wants to put their work to use in political, rather than merely legal, instances. And he is an important moment in the development of the kinds of techniques that would make this concept of territory, now given a name and a determination, work in practice. Foucault suggests that 'the modern state is born, I think, when governmentality effectively became a calculated and reflected political practice' (2004a, p. 169, 2007a, p. 165). Much the same could be said of territory.

CONCLUSION

Territory then should not be understood as the static backdrop or container of political actions. Nor is it the passive object of political struggle. It is something shaped by, and a shaper of, continual processes of transformation, regulation and governance. Questions of division, bordering, contestation and conquest, ownership and extraction of resources, colonisation, measurement and quantification, threat and defense all have territorial elements; all impact on the understanding and practice of territory. The relation between territory and population is complicated and inherently intertwined. Populations are defined, in part, by their location, and territories, in part, by their inhabitants. Territory and population emerge at a similar historical moment as new ways of rendering, understanding and governing the people and land. Both are crucial political questions—biopolitics and geopolitics exist, not in tension or as alternatives, but as entirely implicated in each other, intertwined in complicated and multiple ways. To control territory requires the subjugation of the people; to govern the population requires command of the land. Geographers who have discussed the question of the population have long understood the spatial aspects of this question (for example, Hannah, 2000, 2010; Legg, 2007). They have, if you will, provided a geopolitical emphasis to questions of biopolitics. Drawing on Foucault, we can think the question of territory with due attention to the populations within and across its borders; to provide a biopolitical emphasis to questions of geopolitics.

In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault clarifies his relation to that of state theorists. He criticises those who thought his lack of a theory of the state meant he cancelled 'the presence and the effect of state mechanisms' (2004b, pp. 78–79, 2008, p. 77). Indeed, he claims that 'the problem of bringing under state control, of 'statification' [*étatisation*] is at the heart of the questions I have tried to address' (2004b, p. 79, 2008, p. 77). But this does not mean that he starts from the state in and for itself, as a political universal, or speaks of the essence of the state (2004b, p. 79, 2008, p. 77). He declared that he had avoided a theory of the state as 'one must forgo an indigestible meal' (2004b, p. 78, 2008, p. 77; also see Lemke, 2007; more generally Gordon, 1991; Lemke, 1997; Jessop, 2007). In the previous year's course, he had wondered 'what if the state were nothing more than a way of governing? What if the state were nothing more than a type of governmentality?' (2004a, p. 253, 2007a, p. 248). Now he fleshes this out in detail, suggesting that:

> The State is not a universal; the State is not in itself an autonomous source of power. The State is nothing else but the effect, the profile, the mobile shape of a perpetual statification [*étatisation*] or statifications, in the sense of incessant transactions which modify, or move, or drastically change, or insidiously shift sources of finance, modes of investment, decision-making centres, forms and types of control, relationships between local powers, the central authority, and so on … The state is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities. (2004b, p. 79, 2008, p. 77)

If you replace 'the state' with 'territory', and 'statification' with 'territorialisation', understanding territory as a process rather than a product, then you have something quite close to what is being claimed here.

> *Territory* is not a universal; *Territory* is not in itself an autonomous source of power. *Territory* is nothing else but the effect, the profile, the mobile shape of a perpetual territorialisation or territorialisations … *Territory* is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities. (after 2004b, p. 79, 2008, p. 77)

It is the history of that sense of territory that I have attempted to trace. To develop something along these lines in detail and to bring this analysis up to the present is what I tried to do in *Terror and Territory*, and it also characterises some of the work Neil Brenner and I have done with Lefebvre (Brenner and Elden, 2009; Lefebvre, 2009). Its uses and implications also shape my future work. Foucault argues that 'I think there are many signs of this appearance of a new form of planetary rationality [*rationalité planétaire*], of a new calculation on the scale of the world [*dimensions du monde*]' (2004b, p. 58, 2008, p. 56).[12] In my own future work on the space of the world (see Elden, 2011), which seeks to look at the relationship between the politics and geographies of globalisation, on the one hand, and philosophies of the world, on the other, Foucault remains a crucial inspiration. But making use of his historical sensibilities and ability to pose great questions does not mean we should always take his word for the answers.

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NOTES

1. An early attempt to use Foucault to think about territory can be found in Raffestin (1980). There are also some important discussions of the politics of land in Foucault (2011), especially pp. 115–117.
2. For both the lecture courses discussed here, I provide references to both English and French texts, but have occasionally modified the translation.
3. On the former see Machiavelli, *The Prince, 14; Discourses*, III, 39; and to a limited element *The Art of War*; on the latter see the *Discourses*, I, 37 and II, 7. The standard collection of his writings is Machiavelli (1960–1965). There is a comprehensive selection in English in Machiavelli (1965). I refer to individual works by title and section to allow reference to different editions.
4. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1.
5. See, for example, Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 3.
6. For a very valuable discussion of his spatial sensibility, albeit one that sometimes reads too much into his work, see Descendre (2009).
7. On this notion, see the longer discussion, with extensive references, in 2013, Chapter 7.
8. Again, see the longer discussion, with references, in 2013, Chapters 5 and 6.
9. There is a French version of this text in 1994, but this is a retranslation from the English.
10. Elements of these last few paragraphs are taken, with changes, from Elden (2007).
11. There is an abridged English translation of this text but it does not include this passage.
12. Foucault's reference to the planetary hints at the links between his position and philosophers of the world such as Eugen Fink and Kostas Axelos.

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