

4 Inter-governmentality

A framework for analysis

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Introduction

Even though it was primarily developed to make sense of developments within the central European states over the last four centuries, the analytical concept of governmentality has proved to be fruitful for explorations beyond this spatiotemporal framework.¹ As demonstrated in this volume and a growing literature over the last two decades, governmentality yields important insights when applied to that which goes on between, above and beyond the states; to the international and the global (e.g. Larner and Walter 2004; Neumann and Sending 2010; Kiersey and Stokes 2011). The concept has also been put to good use in regions beyond Europe (e.g. Corbridge et al. 2005; Death 2013; Busse 2018) and to periods well before the emergence of the self-reflective state discussed by Foucault (Chatterjee 2013; Jobe 2015). It has been argued that governmentality might also yield important insights when applied to the history of inter-state relations from the early modern period and onwards (Leira 2009). An important question still remains unexplored: whether governmentality provides any added analytical purchase when applied to interactions between polities before the early modern period.

This chapter is dedicated to an exploration of this question. The topic might seem counterintuitive, since Foucault himself did not have much to say about relations between polities. However, as stressed in the introduction to this volume and as one can observe in some of Foucault's own comments, there is no inherent reason to assume the state as the basis for the study of government. The modern state is a central expression of government, but not the only possible one. The introduction points out how "governmentality, globality, and the state are all simultaneously co-produced and entangled." (p.XX) This understanding of intertwinement is logically connected to an understanding of governmentality as a "history of the art of government," in particular, in the European context. It nevertheless seems worthwhile exploring how if and how earlier, nonstate centered forms of government were also entangled in forms of "globality" (understood as a way of conceptualizing the totality of the known world). To be a bit more specific, assuming that: (1) governmentality (historically understood) was always entangled

with globality and (2) that governmentality (heuristically understood) can be studied in polities other than the modern state, it makes sense to establish a form of heuristic analytical apparatus for the study of the relation between nonstate governmental apparatuses.

My conclusion is that the analytical tools of governmentality are indeed applicable beyond Europe and the last four centuries. By being explicitly *analytical*, the conceptual vocabulary of governmentality allows us to make sense of logics and practices of government across time and space, without assuming sameness. More specifically, I argue that these analytical tools can enhance our understanding of what I will here term *inter-governmentality*, even before the emergence of the modern state and state-system. I conceive of inter-governmentality as a heuristic tool for investigating the history of government which takes place in between governmental apparatuses, how relations between governmental apparatuses can be understood as a form of conduct of conduct, an orchestration without an orchestrator. To maintain analytical distance, I specifically want to avoid the term “international governmentality” for phenomena predating states and nations. The term “inter-governmentality” has been used sporadically in the academic literature, typically to denote current governmental logics in situations of multiple and overlapping levels and fields of authority (Sheptycki 1999; Lee 2012). My usage is somewhat similar. I want to focus on the logics and techniques we can find in relations between different governmental apparatuses. Whether they are located on different levels or not, is, however, an empirical question. I also want to be clear that I do not think that governmentality above and beyond governmental apparatuses is a prerequisite for analytics of government to be fruitful; inter-governmentality applies as much (if not more) to relations between governmental apparatuses.²

To be specific – the point is not to explore global governmentality before the state, but forms of relations between apparatuses of government which need not be states. The conceptual apparatus of governmentality (or the analytics of government) provides three clear and interrelated benefits. First, and most importantly, it provides an explicitly analytical framework to the academic subfield of Historical International Relations, where the distinction between analytical and practical concepts is central, but often hard to get around. Second, it can direct attention at overlooked issues, such as gift-giving and marriage practices, and help bring meaning to practices which do not make sense to the modern eye. Third, it offers potential coherence to already ongoing research, by suggesting an overarching and integrative analytical framework.

This chapter is exploratory. I am trying to gauge the usefulness of a new conceptual framework. Thus, I provide illustrations for my arguments, rather than in-depth arguments. I will make suggestions and illustrate them with available secondary data, with the hope that they make enough sense for others to pursue them further in explorations of inter-governmentality.

The argument is made in three steps. First, I revisit Foucault and Foucauldians on governmentality and the international suggesting that there is intellectual room for an analytical framework of inter-governmentality. Second, I very briefly discuss the relationship between analytical and practical concepts in historical studies of the relations between politics and highlight the need for a strictly analytical concept. This is followed by the main part of the chapter, the elaboration of how the study of what went on between, above and beyond politics can be enriched by the application of an inter-governmentality perspective. Finally, a conclusion ties the chapter together, and suggests a way forward, pointing also to how inter-governmentality can help decenter the state in studies of contemporary government.

Governmentality between, above and beyond

As discussed in the introduction to this volume and other commentaries, Foucault (2007: 108–109 *et passim*) developed the concept of governmentality in both a general and a more specific sense. Generally (or heuristically, as described in the introduction), it is concerned with “how we think about governing, with the different mentalities of government,” with “the art of government” (Dean 1999: 16, 18). The specification concerns the historical emergence of one concrete form of governing; the one developing in Europe from the 16th century and onwards. As Foucault saw it, “the general problem of ‘government’ suddenly breaks out in the sixteenth century with respect to many different problems at the same time and in completely different aspects” (Foucault 2007: 88, cf. 231). This can again be further specified with governmentality being seen as a descriptive tool used to explore the trajectory of modern liberal forms of government. For the sake of exploring the usefulness of the concept before the 16th century and on a global scale, the general conception is clearly the one we need to focus on in the context of this chapter, although the exploration also implies expanding on the historical notion of governmentality. Nevertheless, for the sake of example and inspiration, it makes sense to revisit briefly how relations between politics figured into Foucault’s more specified framework.

Foucault clearly did not spend much time on interpolity relations, even though he considered the “diplomatic-military technique” (or apparatus) (Foucault 2007: 289, 295–297) to be one of the key features of governmentality, and even though he clearly saw an interconnectedness between government at the level of the state and at the interstate level. Foucault’s take on international relations shows a family resemblance to the one Hedley Bull (1977) presented at the same time, with an emphasis on a “society of nations,” where balance of power upheld by the great powers allowed for the development of international law and where great power management was crucial to maintenance of the system. Foucault’s take here lacks much of the critical distance found in his take on domestic developments. His take on state-formation nevertheless provides a distinct historical sociology of the emergence of European

states (Valverde 2007; Devetak 2008), displacing the key concepts of political science (Bigo 2017; Dean 2017), but his take on the international, at least of the 16th to 18th centuries, is decidedly more traditional. In their questioning of established terms, later historically oriented analysts following the paths suggested by Foucault, like Jens Bartelson (1995) and David Campbell (1998), have in a sense been truer to a logic of inter-governmentality than Foucault was.

The main thrust of governmentality scholarship has been directed at current affairs domestically as well as internationally (Neumann and Sending 2010), typically with a focus on the supranational; on global governmentality (Larner and Walter 2004). Critics who accept the validity of Foucauldian analysis for domestic contexts, but question the value of scaling-up (Selby 2007; Joseph 2010) have argued that Foucault's account primarily works for liberal domestic settings, and that scaling governmentality-concepts up and applying them beyond the specific European context is problematic, at least without coupling them with more structural accounts. Others disagree and have argued that this critique prioritizes the specific understanding of governmentality over the general one. Substantiating the usefulness of the more general approach, researchers have for instance demonstrated how governmentality can be applied fruitfully to nonliberal settings outside of Europe (Death 2013). I have elsewhere (Leira 2009) argued that an analytic of governmentality which goes beyond what Foucault originally offered can add important insights to our understanding of interpolity relations from the 16th century and onwards. Even though these different studies indicate an analytical value-added by applying governmentality before and beyond, we should pause to consider if such a push makes the analytical concept meaningless. Foucault (2007: 247) considered governmentality (or at least government, his usage was ambiguous) to be related to self-reflective government, and thus closely related to the emergence of something which could be described as "political science"; reflections on statecraft which went beyond the "mirror of princes"-tradition.³ He dated this to the years around 1600, and we would be hard-pressed to find something like this for relations between, above and beyond polities, before the 17th century emergence of the first guide-books for negotiations aimed at ambassadors (Berridge et al. 2001).

But the emphasis on the early-modern "self-consciousness of government" (Senellart 2007; 387, cf. Foucault 2008: 2) might be unnecessarily restricting, particularly when we consider how Foucault himself saw governmentality drawing on earlier forms and techniques of power, in particular the pastoral one. As discussed by Jobe (2015), and contra Foucault, it might be possible to distinguish a political pastorate in ancient Greece, centered on military-pastoral technologies. Discussing the intersection of law and other forms of regulation, Kendall and Wickham (1999) make a similar point for the government of urban life in antiquity. This would seem to imply that even within the original Foucauldian framework, it makes sense to explore governmentality before the early modern period. And looking more specifically at the changes

during the early modern period, on the one hand, there is no denying that major changes took place in how the emerging states started governing around 1600, particularly with regards to reflections on population and territory (Elden 2007; de Carvalho 2016). On the other hand, it is not as obvious that these changes were mirrored in inter-governmentality, where it might well be argued that self-reflectiveness did not develop until much later. One alternative for a later dating would be the treaty of Utrecht from 1713, when self-reflective discussions about the balance of power emerged for the first time. Another alternative would be the treaty of Vienna from 1815, when diplomatic conduct and ceremonial was first jointly codified.

The discussion so far suggests that it does not constitute conceptual violence to study inter-governmentality before the early modern period. It is also possible to find support for an open approach to governmentality in Foucault's own work, when he suggested that governmentality "is no more than a proposed analytical grid," and that he had wanted to explore if it was "not confined to a precise domain determined by a sector of the scale, but should be considered simply as a point of view, a method of decipherment which may be valid for the whole scale, whatever its size" (Foucault 2008: 186). More generally, as Nick Onuf (2017) has recently pointed out, the figure of "Foucault" has already become many different things to many different people, just as Foucault himself seems to have intended when describing his work as a toolbox for others to utilize (see Stetter's chapter in this volume). In an exploration like this, the goal should thus be less about match than about being somehow "loyally unfaithful" (Dean 2017: 97) to the concepts. The further exploration of the fruitfulness of inter-governmentality must therefore proceed first to the question of whether inter-governmentality adds anything of value, then to the specific analytics, and what we would look for when studying pre-modern inter-governmentality.

Concepts of the past

Having now established that it does make analytical sense to apply the analytics of government and inter-governmentality to the pre-modern world, it remains to be seen what the value-added of such application might be. In this section, I outline a key set of problems besetting many analyses of the past. Subsequently, I suggest that this is a problem which inter-governmentality can help us rectify.

A key challenge for any historical analysis of the pre-modern period, but perhaps particularly analyses of political history, concerns how the past can be conceptualized. Put very briefly, most of our political vocabulary was either invented or transformed during the 18th and 19th centuries (Koselleck 1985; Palonen 2006). When analyzing the past using our current terms, the risk of anachronism is ever-present. This general challenge of historical analysis is compounded in analyses of political history by the fact that so many of the concepts put to use are both analytical concepts and practice concepts. They

have a specific analytical meaning and are intended to establish some sort of critical analytical distance between researchers and their objects of research, but they are also steeped in the practices of everyday life (cf. Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 4–6). A central example of this is “the state,” which can easily be given a strict analytical form, but where it is very hard to avoid reading our experience of the state into the past. For that exact reason, researchers have come up with other alternatives. Some have suggested that empires have historically been much more prevalent than states, and that we should thus understand former political units as empires more generally. This nevertheless just sidesteps the problem, since empire itself has a distinct conceptual history (Jordheim and Neumann 2011). Another alternative, popularized in *International Relations* by Ferguson and Mansbach (1996), is to refer to political units more generally as polities.

Moving on to the relations between polities, conceptual usage becomes even more problematic. When discussing such relations, scholars have had few qualms describing diplomacy, foreign policy and international relations in ancient Egypt (Cohen and Westbrook 2000; Hoffmeier 2004), antiquity (Chittick and Freyberg-Inan 2001; Wolpert 2001) or any other period up until our own. But “international” was famously coined by Bentham in the late 18th century, and both “foreign policy” and “diplomacy” were 18th-century innovations as well (Leira 2016, 2019). Reading past practices analytically through these modern analytical *and* practical concepts invariably leads to an understanding of the past in terms of the present.⁴ Foreign policy as a current practical concept is associated, for instance, with ministries of foreign affairs, embassies and ambassadors, as well as ideas such as national interests, rational utility-maximization and bureaucratic politics. These are all modern phenomena and using the term “foreign policy” in periods during which they did not exist can lead the analyst to interpret past actions through terms which made little or no sense to past actors. Typically, as soon as one starts delving into the empirics in any detail, the (seemingly) tidy categories of our present dissolve. This is obvious for instance in Wolpert’s (2001) study of what he refers to as diplomacy in classical Greece, where he stresses the discontinuities between antiquity and our current age, but *still* insists on using our current terms to analyze the past. He refers repeatedly to terms like foreign policy and balance of power, and reads the empirics as an assertion of domestic factors over structural forces (and thus contra the realist reading). A more reasonable interpretation, divested of *International Relations* preconditions, would seem to be that the very concepts Wolpert applies, make very little sense, and that any distinction between what we would call domestic and foreign policy have to be understood in a completely different way in ancient Greece.

Before we move on, we should note that despite the obvious attention Foucault paid to conceptual (or epistemic) change in politics and science, he remained fairly conservative in his usage of terms relating to the international. He referred repeatedly to diplomacy in centuries where the term never existed, never problematized war (contra Bartelson 2018), read balance of power in

a standard 20th-century way (contra Little 2007; Andersen 2016) and saw a diplomatic-military technique as central to the emergence of governmentality, two centuries before the concept “diplomacy” was coined.

The possibilities of inter-governmentality

From the previous section follows that there is a distinct room for a strictly analytical concept which covers relations between what is now often (analytically) referred to as polities. And this is where I suggest that inter-governmentality has a lot to offer. Rather than referring to foreign policy and diplomacy of states and empires in times where no such concepts existed, we can analyze what can be called *regimes of inter-governmentality* in the relations between governmental apparatuses. A starting point for studying such regimes can be Foucault’s ([1979] 2000: 312) description of the pastoral dimension of governmentality as “government of individuals by their own verity.” In Dean’s (1999: 18–19) understanding (cf. also Foucault (2010), regimes of government concern “practices through which we are governed and through which we govern ourselves,” and “involve practices for the production of truth and knowledge, comprise multiple forms of practical, technical and calculative rationality, and are subject to programmes for their reform.”

It should be stressed though, that what constitutes “we” will necessarily vary across time and place; that the “individuals governed by their own verity” are variable.⁵ From the 18th century and onwards, “foreign policy” can for instance be understood as a regime of government concerned with the establishment and perpetuation of distinctions between both inside and outside and state and society, producing the “truth” of foreign policy as a distinct and separate field of policy, to be kept away from popular scrutiny and control (Leira 2011, 2019). Here, the “we” which is governed and governs itself is probably best understood as civil society, and the individuals as citizens. Conversely, in the work of Justus Lipsius in the late 16th century, “prudence” can be read as a regime of government concerned with “an understanding and discretion of those things which we ought either to desire or refuse, in publicke, and in privat” (Lipsius [1594] 1970: 11–12). Directed as it was towards those governing, the “we” which is governed and governs itself is the royal we – the sovereign individual (cf. Leira 2008). More generally, sometimes the governmental apparatus which engages in what we will call intergovernmental practices will work on and on behalf of a population, at other instances, particularly before the discovery (or invention) of “population,” it will work on its own behalf or on the behalf of the leader of the apparatus.⁶ Even before “population” in a Foucauldian sense was discovered, governmental apparatuses were seeking to govern themselves and others.

A focus on governmental apparatuses has the further benefit of allowing us to overcome the unwarranted (and anachronistic, when applied to pre-modern history) dichotomies between domestic and foreign, and public and private. Death’s (2013: 764–765) argument along these lines in favor of applying the

analytics of government beyond Europe, are equally applicable to the world before modernity. Death (2013: 768) suggests that a benefit of the analysis of government is that it draws attention to “similarities between power relations that cut across perceived binaries,” and this is clearly the case for historical analyses of inter-governmentality as well. However, I would suggest that the opposite also holds, namely that the analytics of government sensitizes us to difference – how seemingly parallel practices at different times might best be understood in light of different regimes of practice. Two key practices of inter-governmentality can serve as general examples. Both “diplomacy” (Der Derian 1987) and “war” (Bartelson 2018) have been constituted through different understandings of the phenomena and different regimes of practice. More specifically, the regimes of practice governing diplomacy changed quite dramatically in the decades around 1815. Until the late 18th century, diplomacy was not an established term, but the multifarious practices feeding into what became diplomacy were associated with the salons, with kinship, with active roles for both men and women and with fleeting hierarchies. After the revolutionary and diplomatic wars, with the establishment of “diplomacy” as a term in its own right and its codification in the treaty of Vienna (1815), and with thoroughgoing changes in how gender and civilization was conceptualized, diplomacy became masculinized, hierarchical and formal. A further advantage of locating governmental apparatuses as the object of study and cutting across the dichotomies is that it allows us to study both horizontal and vertical relations, avoiding the anachronistic presupposition that the only “relevant” relations for International Relations were the ones between the state-like units.⁷

Analyzing regimes of inter-governmentality

Having established the object of analysis, the next step becomes to specify how to study it. Here, it makes sense to follow Dean’s (1999: 27–33) lead in how to analyze regimes of government. He suggests that one should start with “the identification and examination of specific situations in which the activity of governing comes to be called into question, the moments and the situations in which government becomes a problem” (Dean 1999: 27; cf. Foucault [1981] 2007: 141; [1983] 2001: 74). We could follow Foucault and refer to such instances or situations as instances of “problematization”; situations when something becomes articulated as a problem which requires governmental intervention. In modern Western lives, in what we refer to as “domestic” settings (as opposed to international settings), the “activity of government” is very seldom called into question or problematized; the “business of rule” typically persists uninterrupted. In most settings where we would explore inter-governmentality, we would also expect problematizations to be rare. Interaction between different governmental apparatuses is, and has typically been, nonexistent, episodic or continuous. In the case of nonexistent interaction, there are obviously no situations where government becomes a

problem. In situations of continuous interaction, government can become a problem at given points, such as declarations of war or peace-negotiations. When interaction is episodic, every encounter has the potential for problematization. Typical situations to look for problematizations would thus be first encounters, episodic interactions and situations where interaction changes.

These situations are not in any way novel to historical scholarship. First encounters, such as between Mongols and those who were in their way and Europeans and inhabitants of the rest of the world, are well known in the literature (Neumann and Wigen 2018; Todorov 1984). And, they typically involved government becoming a problem; more specifically, an acute problem of difference (cf. Inayatullah and Blaney 2004). For how should a governmental apparatus govern itself when facing the unknown? What sort of knowledge would enable what sort of practice?⁸ Should the strangers be considered as gods and treated with reverence, as the Aztec governmental apparatus did? Should an established governmental apparatus assume hostility and superiority, as many governmental apparatuses did to their detriment with Mongols on their doorstep?

Episodic interactions were the norm before the rise of resident representation, and in cases of long-distance contact. While often studied for their content in terms of alliance-building and perpetuation of friendship, such episodes also provide ample grounds for studying the perpetuation or modification of regimes of inter-governmentality. Was each encounter treated as a distinct occasion, where knowledge had to be reestablished, or did governmental apparatuses see themselves as engaged in regularized contact with established rituals? Were rituals intended to demonstrate superiority or affirm equality? Scholarship on Medieval Europe suggests that interaction between “princes” was typically seen as regularized as long as both princes were alive. When one of them died, the relationship had to be renegotiated. As to hierarchy, many practices were (perhaps deliberately) ambiguous, allowing both parties to claim at least equality and perhaps also superiority.

Outbreaks of war and their settlements are likewise staple topics of historical analysis, often used as benchmark-dates in international relations. The major peace-conferences are typically treated as system-defining events, even though there is disagreement over which treaties were the most important ones (de Carvalho et al. 2011). In some sense, these disagreements arise from conflicting interpretations of whether and to what extent new knowledge and new ways of governing were laid out in the treaties. Less studied, but potentially equally telling when analyzing how political apparatuses governed themselves according to “their own verity,” or tried to challenge that very verity, are the situations where outbreak of war was preceded by war manifestos, detailing how governmental apparatuses understood the world around them, their place in it and the legal ways to act (Hathaway et al. 2018).

As illustrated above, many of the situations when intergovernment had the potential to be problematized are not “new” to historical analysis, quite the contrary. Inter-governmentality nevertheless offers new analytics for

well-known topics. To take but one example, there has been a long-standing tradition in IR and international law to see the treaties of Westphalia from 1648 as a watershed moment in the establishment of modern states and the modern state system. This view has been thoroughly debunked as empirically unsound. Analytics of inter-governmentality could add to this debunking a conceptual layer, focusing not only on empirical imprecision but also on what sort of regimes of practice existed before and after major peace conferences. Thus, inter-governmentality also opens up for new ways of exploring the government that went on before and after problematizations. For the more specific analysis of regimes of inter-governmentality, we return to Dean (1999: 29). In his framework for the analysis of government, he suggests analyzing four different but interlocking “regimes of practices,” concerning (a) the visibility and spatial dimension of government; (b) the technical dimension of government; (c) the knowledge and practice of government and (d) the identity or identification (subjectification) sought induced through government.

All of these regimes are applicable to pre-modern inter-governmentality. Visibility and spatiality can be of particular importance for approaching relations when there are few or none written sources but are equally important for how they enable later forms of inter-governmentality. Stone reliefs from ancient Egypt depict giraffes being provided as gifts from “Nubia” to Egypt (Laufer 1928), and later monuments and memorials are well-known to show interactions between warring parties (typically ones of triumph) (Neumann 2018). These visualizations have helped establish and perpetuate knowledge of selves and others, as well as the relations between them. Another obviously important way of visualizing and spatializing government is through maps (Branch 2013). They have served different functions across time and space. A typical form of map is the one which places one governmental apparatus at the center, and others along the periphery. Other maps have been more practically oriented towards government, by determining distance and directions. Some maps have defined the boundary between the governable and the ungovernable (typically at sea), while maps associated with treaties, like the one from Tordesillas in 1494, typically have demarcated the authority of different governmental apparatuses. Other forms of visualizing government can be found in the tables of territories, people and cities subordinated to specific governmental apparatuses, much used before modern map-making allowed for clearly defined territories, and in the elaborate family-trees of European noble and royal houses. Other forms of visibility have been less permanent. Ostentatious gifts, such as rare animals, have for instance been used to visualize the status of both gift-giver and gift-recipient, as well as the strength of the ties between them (Leira and Neumann 2017). Engravings, pictures, monuments, maps, tables, family-trees and gifts of splendor are all examples of ways of making inter-governmentality visible.

The technical dimension of governmentality typically concerns the micro-foundations of power, where it is applied. For inter-governmentality this will, for instance, imply studying organization. For long periods of time, the

most developed organization of inter-governmentality were the armed forces. Technically, one can study how armed forces are organized, and the importance of drill and rituals to their cohesion. One can also study the ways in which envoys were dispatched – if this was patterned or ad hoc, and if there were variations between envoys sent vertically and horizontally.

Knowledge and practice of government are often the hardest to get a grip on in historical research, particularly where there is a dearth of written sources, as one would typically look to treatises and manuals for guidance of how knowledge is turned into practice. In lieu of such sources for inter-governmentality, tables, treaties and correspondence of different kinds might provide important clues. The first contacts discussed above are at a more general level, an example of how knowledge of the world was turned into practice, but also of how practice on the ground in its turn gave rise to new truths. More generally, specialized knowledge of the world beyond one's own governmental apparatus has typically empowered the knowers and enabled their practices of inter-governmentality.

Finally, identification and production of subjectivities can be expressed in a number of ways and brought about through the technologies and knowledges described above. Subjectivities of pre-modern inter-governmentality include, among others, soldiers, envoys, consuls, messengers and traders. For pre-modern inter-governmentality, we should be particularly attuned to identifications at different levels than the one of central authority.

Elaborating a little further on two examples should help make the analytical framework more explicit. They both illustrate how regimes of inter-governmentality can have similar traits across continents and millennia, but at the same time, how seemingly similar regimes contribute to wildly different inter-governmentalities.

The first example concerns kinship. Biological reproduction makes kinship something close to a universal, and ever relevant for international relations (Haugevik and Neumann 2018). In diplomatic interaction, kinship terms and kinship metaphors have been the rule rather than the exception. Even so, kinship has mattered in very different ways across time and space. In the Egyptian New Kingdom (around 1350 BCE), kinship seems to have constituted what we can analyze as an overarching regime of knowledge, making sense of relations between governmental apparatuses (Liverani 2000). In republican Rome, on the other hand, kinship was invoked to establish links to the Hellenized world and as a way of extending favors to allies. Both of these practices are understandable as forms of subjectification – claiming ancestry from Troy and bestowing kinship on others (Battistoni 2009). Yet another variety can be found in renaissance Italy, where kinship among the earliest permanent representatives was quite common. Here, kinship seems to be analyzable along a knowledge-dimension as well as a technical dimension – the established families knew how to perform interaction, and inculcated kin as well as others in these right procedures (Leira 2018: 65–67). Finally, during the 18th century, kinship can be understood as a highly visualized practice

of inter-governmentality, with the publication of elaborate genealogical trees and tables. The codification of this visualization took place at the same time as there was a fairly rapid shift in practice, with the inter-governmental regime shifting from vertical relations (cementing ties between liege and lord) to vertical relations (connecting with equals) (Leira 2018: 70–71).

Gift-giving has also been considered as a near-universal feature of human interaction, obviously often connected to kinship. But much as kinship, gift-giving can be analyzed as part of different regimes of government. Here, one single instance might serve. Around 1510, an Indian rhinoceros was gifted from the Sultan of Cambay to Alfonso de Albuquerque, the governor of Portuguese India (Bedini 1997: 125). This can be read as a form of technical practice – establishing patterns of interaction for future trade or cooperation. Albuquerque sent the rhinoceros to Portugal as a gift to King Manuel I, in what we can read as an act of subjection. From there, the rhinoceros was sent as a gift to Pope Leo X. The animal drowned on the way, and only arrived in a taxidermized state. The presentation of this gift can obviously be read as visual practice of inter-governmentality, with the rhino and an elephant, which was gifted the year before, as constant reminders of what the king of Portugal commanded. Indirectly, we can also read this gift-giving not only as an example of splendor, but also as an affirmation of a knowledge-practice; affirming the king of Portugal as the knower of distant lands.

In sum, inter-governmentality has a lot to offer for analyses of historical international relations (Leira and de Carvalho 2015). To the already-mentioned can be added two further benefits. First, as hopefully made clear above, and by being an explicitly analytical concept, inter-governmentality can help make sense of practices which otherwise seem meaningless, and direct attention at overlooked processes. Second, and following from the first point, inter-governmentality can help provide coherence to the relatively sprawling body of literature now referred to as “new diplomatic history.”

Conclusion

Over the preceding pages, I have made the argument that the analytics of inter-governmentality provide a potentially very fruitful approach to historical international relations. Making the argument implied tweaking the original Foucauldian framework, but it proved possible to remain “loyally unfaithful” while doing so. Providing a strictly analytical language for the study of how governmental apparatuses interact has the clear benefit of moving the observer one step away from that which is observed. Ideally, this can provide a sort of *Verfremdungseffekt*, where the past can be approached not simply as prelude. At the same time, through the focus on regimes of inter-governmentality, the analytics can bring out similarities between different times and places.

While the focus here has been on pre-modern history, the proposed framework should also work well for the modern world. The need for analytical distance is generally valid, before the 18th and 19th century conceptual

revolution but also for current affairs. The possibility of applying inter-governmentality to vertical relations, which I have hinted at above, should also prove particularly relevant in a day and age with cross-cutting and overlapping authorities. More specifically, inter-governmentality offers a way of overcoming the methodological nationalism of much IR as well as the statism of a lot of governmentality research. Inter-governmentality, as presented here, suggests a way of studying relations between states and nonstate actors, and between different kinds of nonstate actors operating in the space between and around the states. As such, inter-governmentality provides yet another way of studying what this volume refers to as the globality of governmentality, how government is never only about governing the self (of the state), but also about governing others, or taking part in the totality of government.

Notes

- 1 Work on this chapter has been financed by Research Council Norway, under the projects EMPRISE, project number 262657 and CHOIR, project number 288639. Thanks are due to Benjamin de Carvalho for comments on an earlier draft and to the editor for his patience and his incisive comments.
- 2 It is necessary at once to distinguish the notion of “inter-governmentality” from the Foucauldian take on sovereignty. Whereas the latter is concerned with the free play of sovereign wills the former is intended to capture whatever conduct of conduct we can find in the relations between governmental apparatuses.
- 3 The mirror of princes was a genre of medieval writing, which primarily consisted of advice to rulers on what to do and what to avoid.
- 4 Which is also why it has been possible for political realism to claim a writer like Thucydides as a forerunner of a realist tradition. A recent, and very pertinent, example, can be found in the claim, made by Graham Allison (2017), that the US and China are in a “Thucydides trap,” where conflict between a rising power and an established power is almost inevitable. For this analogy to work, all historical and contemporary nuance has to be eradicated. The past becomes merely a stage-prop for the present.
- 5 And, obviously, the very notions of individuals, individuality, and individualism have long genealogies of their own. Our modern conceptions are not likely to have made sense in pre-modern settings.
- 6 As Bruce Curtis (2002) has argued, “population” in Foucault’s accounts is an ambiguous concept covering more than one phenomenon, and possibly wrongly dating the emergence of liberal governmentality. Compare also Mitchell Dean’s (1999: 94–95) distinction between pre- and post-Malthusian conceptions of population.
- 7 The concept of “polity” in principle also allows for studying both anarchical and hierarchical relations, but in practice it is often used as a mere substitute for state-like entities.
- 8 There is an obvious parallel here to how governmental apparatuses tried (and sometimes failed) to govern themselves when facing domestic unknowns after the discovery of “population,” for example, in the case of nomadic people and indigenous people.

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