

ON FOUCAULT AND THE
GENEALOGY OF GOVERNMENTALITY

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I perform what I take to be a genealogy of governmentality by tracing the history of governmentality through various political philosophers and culminating in the work of Michel Foucault.

I begin with some examination of governmentality as it appears in the discursive space opened by Foucault's later work, in particular his *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*. I then turn to an examination of Plato and Aristotle, looking at how some contemporary interlocutors have been governmental in their approach. I conclude the first chapter with a look at ideology and historical explanation.

Next, I examine Machiavelli's *The Prince*, also in light of some current interlocutors, particularly Foucault and John Najemy. The purpose here is to see how Machiavelli may well have presaged some governmental space in his work and how others have utilized this space. I also address the dispute between Foucault and Derrida over Descartes as well as Foucault's insight into authorship and show how this all relates to Machiavelli and *The Prince*.

The final chapter looks at Hobbes and Locke's approaches to governance, particularly as they apply to the governance of nature. I continue the strategy of looking at current interlocutors, paying close attention to some contemporary commentary on Locke. I also look at the nature of historical explanation, in particular the approach that involves utilizing the "covering-law" models of explanation. I close with some thoughts on how this sort of explanation fails from a Foucauldian perspective.