

**Compte rendu de la troisième séance du groupe de recherche du CERI
dirigé par Elsa Tulmets**

**Transferts normatifs, politiques et institutionnels
en relations internationales et politique étrangère**

**Lecture : Walters William & Haahr Jens Henrik
Présentation : Ondřej Ditrych (CERI, Sciences Po/IIR Prague)**

**Readings: Walters William & Haahr Jens Henrik
Introduction in *Governing Europe*
(London: Routledge, 2005) and
“Governmentality and political studies” in *European Political Science*
(4, 2005, pp. 288-300)**

According to Ondřej Ditrych, this article and book chapters are a useful introduction with different examples. William Walters analyzes the assumption that **Europe has needs** and that there are authorities that can identify them, find its problems and their solutions, and thus form policies, and describes how those policies denaturalize Europe through governmentalities of European integration. For their analysis of governments, Walters & Haahr focused on four areas.

The first area deals with historical forms of powers. The second area, with the different forms of powers and securities. The third area is about power and identities. The fourth area is about technologies of powers and the concept of security, which must be understood more in a normal than exceptional context.

The other great advantage of Walter's work is to propose and highlight **three different meanings** that Foucault and others gave to this term of *governmentality*. The first meaning proposed by Foucault is to be a “**conduct of conduct**”. According Walters, Foucault “sees government not in terms of the monopoly of the state but a plurality of practices that are conducted within and across countless social sites; practices that are often contradictory and only ever partially coordinated.”

The second meaning, which could also be the central idea of *governmentality*, is situated in a much larger range in the human sciences. This concept has been linked to the Western and post-1945 democracies where authoritarian forms of governing have been less undisguised. In this range of studies, the concept of governmentality is defined not as a power in opposition to freedoms but as **power governing through regulated freedoms**.

The third meaning is a governmental power whose main feature is its **focus on populations**. “It is expressed and exercised not in the dramatic acts of the prince but through the spread of a whole complex of knowledges (e.g., statistics, norms, social sciences), laws, policies and regulations that define, and seek to optimize the condition of the population, surveilling and regulating it in its life and death, work and leisure, movement and domicile.”

This theoretical overview was viewed with favor. The audience expressed its great interest in this approach because it offers a way to **think of powers with no boundaries**. It may be also very useful in European studies.

**Some comments following Ondřej Ditrych's presentation: « Theorizing EU Influence in the
Neighbourhood through the Governmentality Perspective »**

The theoretical framework

Ondřej Ditrych set his presentation in the following of Walters & Haahr's work and mostly used Michel Foucault for the theoretical part for the outline of his research. He divided his presentation into three parts: theoretical, methodological and empirical. In his opinion, only a well-informed theoretical basis could drive to an accurate and transparent methodology for his case-study, that is the critical analysis of the EU influence in Georgia.

He stressed that the purpose of his governmentality analysis is not to explain changes (like the “when”, the “where”, the “why”). His analysis of governmentality centers on the denaturalization the terms taken for granted (like liberal government, idea of progress and democracy) through new objects

or subjects to govern and new techniques of governing (like the internal market or the Schengen acquis). He tries finally to problematize them in an analysis of a unified-actor or of assembled strategies.

The concept of **governmentality** is central for his theoretical ground, Ondřej Ditrych admitted than he might be taken in the same critics than Foucault: to use abstruse biopolitic concepts (the abstract form of governmentality in opposition of precise definition of a liberal government), to tend to focus on global emergencies, to methodologize through reality, to see powers and government everywhere, to coordinate Foucault's (from the toolkit metaphor) work and to try harmonize and unify it.¹

On this theoretical point, two questions arose from the audience. The first was a theoretical question about the difference between the concepts of influence and power, since this one is understood as productive and not repressive. Is the concept of power less specific than the one of influence? Perhaps and the aim of the research group could be to look deeper on the different meanings of both terms. However, we can make a clear distinction between those through the concept of nomination: power is based on behavior while influence is based on power plus legitimation. That is to say there is no essential distinction but the behaviors linked to those two terms might be different. The reason why Ondřej Ditrych chose to use the influence term is to not essentialize what the European Union is, as in European studies (normative, transnormative), or give it fixed characteristics.

According to Ondřej Ditrych, this concept remains different from the power practices. To conclude, the concept of power from the Foucauldian approaches is more structuralist, plural and more adapted to the variety of states.

The second question was how to make distinction between governance and governmentality. If we take the terms of governance and governmentality, one would agree that there is not essential difference between those words. Furthermore one will find similarities between the concepts since they both go beyond states to search for powers relations. Both have been also linked to the tendencies of Western states.

The methodological outline

In the manners of governmentality studies, Ditrych's methodology consists in the exploration of discourses. The aim is to search the intrinsic logics of the regime, which must be contrasted with the rationality of government and governmentality enhanced by constructivist approaches. Finally he argued to confront the episteme of the governmentalities with its forms of visibility. For instance, the strong claims of neutrality and non-interference must be considered in regard of neighborhood policies. He concluded that his methodology consists in the analysis of political rationalities, like regulative ideals and problematization of some objects, political technologies and transnational practices and particularly those without integration.

This methodological outline drove the discussion on the role of strategies and context, which emerged again in the last empirical part. The audience agreed on the great interest of this methodology and outlines the **need of researches on convergence without integration** because this topic remains a black hole in international relations. Behind this, the question of **motivation** might be central, and to understand this question, we have to explore the relation between statehood and state capacity. Like in the previous presentation, the audience agreed that the analysis of the context is predominant.

The case of Georgia

Ondřej Ditrych showed in this last empirical part, his initial sketch for this work on "governing Georgia". He underlined that it was only an outline for further researches with no conclusion. He presented different hypotheses. He dissociated the EU strategies from the term of 'empire': those practices do not seem to enter in a diabolic plan of conquest; they are neither part of an efficient machine. He stressed the importance of the analysis of neighborhood since power collapses in the periphery: to understand EU governmentality, we need to look at the policies towards the Eastern neighborhood, their associated and dissociated images (a pacified buffer-zone, a zone of convergence without integration) or the coupled historical narrative of the East, like orientalism (the backwardness of

¹Ditrych advises on this point a reference to the second edition of Mitchell Dean's book, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, (London: Sage, 2010).

the East has to be solved). He helped with those hypotheses with the concept of **EU-topia** (the narratives projected by the EU opposed to the reality of the EU).

Ondřej Ditrych explained his choice for Georgia, as it was one of the most interesting cases even if his researches have not necessarily gone in the desired direction, and the case evolves. Georgia's relations are fairly correct to the West. If the question last years was not about to enter in the UE, the European DCFTA (Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area) towards Georgia has been negotiated over the last two years. The negotiations are now centered on the beginning of negotiations with set of conditions that the Government of Georgia has to accept. For instance, there is a block about deregulation, which was seen in different lights by Saakashvili's administration as a way to achieve competition and attract foreign investments. At the same time Georgia is cooperating with the UE, it benefits its Republic and administration. He pointed then two specific ways of acting for this cooperation. The first is through rationalities like the internationalization of standards or the problematization in failure to achieve sufficient progress. The second is based on technologies as institutional isomorphism or knowledge transfer.

He was then asked about the practical points of his empirical researches. Ondřej Ditrych explained he visited the country on a previous research. He made some interviews mostly to understand how EU exercises power through networks and to find the specific support of some Georgian circles to the relation with the EU, which is in competition with Russian relation. The audience brought again the discussion about the question of motivation, which is double (motivation of the EU and motivation of Georgia). For the EU, the question of energy and security seems central. Concerning Georgia's motivation, it would be a good idea to set up the question of how this country wiped in 2008 from a NATO motivation to the EU motivation. To explore those relations and shifts, we could examine internal political struggles (it is admitted that Saakashvili lost the battle on statehood, but some Georgian sources argue progresses on state capacity) or explore the comparison with Ukraine, whose case provides, as the Georgian one, recent setbacks.

According to Ondřej Ditrych, to understand this relation, we must bear in mind the position about "convergence without integration" and then the comparison, often used by Georgian political class, with Switzerland may be relevant. In their mind, Switzerland (or Singapore) is beautiful but not integrated and pray for convergence is equal as to bet on the weather. Behind this predicament, structural position appears very weak: EU is here to make it through those difficult times. The recent setbacks emerge as new perspectives. For instance, Armenia has been new shown for few years as a model of balanced relationship between the West and Russia. So, Ondřej Ditrych said, those recent setbacks are not surprising but are a confirmation this global shift.

The group concluded again on the importance of the context and the need to reflect on it, to understand it also in terms of social practices, on the specificity of each case and on their global similarities. The context in terms of assemblages can be completely different. At the question if he was looking only at the Georgian context and also at European one, he answered that he is more interested in the European governmentality but also very critical about the literature on neoliberalism as governmentality at the very general level. We need to concentrate on more specific elements to see the precise assemblages. Ondřej Ditrych thinks that the context of Georgia can be this specific key. Comparisons with Azerbaijan and Belarus could also be used as different keys.

Another question was about the governmentality perspective applied to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Since this concept does or does not fit to this policy, does he find other possible assumption? The problem on EU governmentality in Georgia is the role of Russia, which is per se limiting EU policies. Ondřej Ditrych agreed that some of the policies are determined by the power of Russia, not only because of the fear of Georgian political elites but also by European officers. It is again the contextual question of how the local actors are supported by the EU and how they actually work with the UE. Here we need to analyze, without generalization, the political programs, the evolution of some arguments at different levels, the consensus between different bureaucracies, the association of liberalism with coercion (of internal contestation). The different fields (security or development for instance) highlighted by governmentality approach can reveal a non-homogeneous actor.