Inversion of the 'Duty of Care': Diplomacy and the Protection of Citizens Abroad, from Pastoral Care to Neoliberal Governmentality

Alexei Tsinovoi and Rebecca Adler-Nissen
Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, DK-1353
Copenhagen K, Denmark
ats@ifs.ku.dk; ran@ifs.ku.dk

Received: 24 April 2017; revised: 27 September 2017; accepted: 30 October 2017

Summary

The concept of ‘duty of care’ for citizens abroad is grounded in a political rationality where the population is seen as an object for protection by the state. In today’s globalised world, however, this rationality is challenged by increased citizen mobility, budget cuts, new information technologies and the proliferation of new security threats. In recent years the state’s duty of care has received fresh political and scholarly attention, but Diplomatic Studies have so far overlooked how the recent waves of neoliberal reforms have introduced a new political rationality into policy-making circles, where the population is not seen only as an object for protection, but also as a resource for mobilisation. Developing insights from studies of governmentality, this article argues that when this neoliberal political rationality becomes predominant in diplomatic circles, it leads to inversion of the duty of care through new citizen-based practices, steered at a distance by the state.

Keywords

Consular assistance – duty of care – political rationality – Foucault – governmentality – neoliberalism – citizen diplomacy
Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

President John F. Kennedy

Introduction

The protection of citizens within national territorial borders is interwoven with ideas of sovereignty, and with International Relations (IR) theories’ distinction between order and safety within the state and anarchy and danger outside.\(^1\) However, increased cross-border mobility of citizens, whether for work or leisure, has introduced new demands for the protection of citizens beyond the national territory, thereby presenting new challenges of care for the sovereign state. In the context of migration and globalisation, scholars — some of whom have contributed to this special issue of *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* — seek to understand how the duty of care emerged, what it consists of, and the distribution of responsibility between public and private actors involved in protecting civilians abroad. Analysing different cases, ranging from terror attacks over crisis management to parental child abduction, these studies reveal not only the complexities of international chains of care and the dilemmas of contemporary demands for protection, but also the discourses and practices of care through which the very demarcations of political communities are being redrawn.\(^2\)

While pointing to political, ethical, legal and managerial tensions, the underlying assumption of most scholarly accounts of the duty of care is that the

---


state sees society as an object for protection. Such notion of care, this article argues, has been said to stem from the pastoral power associated with the modern (welfare) state — an art of government in which care of the population by the state is the generic political rationality for how things should be done within a polity. However, this notion of care — like a shepherd protecting the flock — is increasingly marginalised by a new political rationality where the state no longer sees the population solely as an object for pastoral protection. Instead, in the neoliberal art of government, the population is perceived as a resource of productive forces to be mobilised for governmental purposes, rather than merely protected. Consequently, the fundamental relations between state and society and the responsibility for care that they entail become inversed, since the citizens are no longer passive recipients of state protection, but active providers of care for themselves. This approach was vividly expressed by mass privatisation in the 1980s and the Third Way post-political solutions of the 1990s. As such, the legitimate exercise of power in ‘advanced, liberal’ societies increasingly moved from pastoral interventions towards indirect incentivisation, steering the behaviour of the population at a distance towards certain ends — a form of political power often captured through the concept of ‘governmentality’. The implications of these tectonic shifts in relations between state and society have been thoroughly explored across the social sciences, including International Relations, in recent years, but have so far remained largely neglected by Diplomatic Studies. While some critical scholars have recognised manifestations of this new neoliberal rationality in

---


5 There are important exceptions to which we will return, including Ole Jacob Sending and Iver B. Neumann, ‘Governance to Governmentality: Analyzing NGOs, States, and Power’, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3 (2006), pp. 651-672.
nation-branding, its broader implications for diplomacy, and particularly for the duty of care, remain under-studied.

To begin addressing this gap both theoretically and empirically, this article is structured in three parts. First, it excavates the rationality behind the concept of care, and how it has been challenged by the emerging neoliberal rationality. Second, it illustrates how the rationality of care for citizens abroad historically evolved, and how the emerging practices of mobilising ordinary citizens in diplomatic practices are revelatory of a new neoliberal rationality — beyond the economic and technological considerations often invoked by scholars and practitioners. Third, through illustrative examples from across the globe, the article proceeds by analysing how this inversed logic of care affects the practices of diplomatic care for citizens abroad. The article concludes by suggesting that the governmentality approach to diplomacy can be generalised beyond our examples, enabling a deeper understanding not only of citizen protection abroad, but also of the broader relations between diplomacy and society in contemporary international relations.

The Transformations of the Notion of Care

The concept of duty of care, as established by the contributors to this special issue of The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, implies that ‘states and other principals’ have some sort of duty of protection ‘towards their subordinates’ abroad, thus extrapolating ‘territorially defined state practices, as they are exported beyond the border’. Indeed, the protection of citizens abroad is one of the core functions of foreign ministries, and some level of assistance and protection of their employees abroad is common for most international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and multinational corporations. As noted by Nina Græger and Halvard Leira, this notion of care relates to legal obligations and political legitimacy, which are closely linked to the emergence


of the modern state, and in particular the welfare state with its distinct state–society relations. However, these relations have profoundly changed in recent decades, and this article argues that to understand the protection of citizens abroad today, it is helpful to uncover the origins of Western notions of care, their trajectory of change, and how they influence contemporary policy-making and the diplomatic protection of citizens abroad.

To explore ‘where our notions of “care” come from?’ and why ‘the state should care for the welfare of its citizens’, it is useful to begin with Michel Foucault’s concept of pastoral power. This concept, which was developed as part of a genealogy of the Western state in his Collège de France lectures between 1977-1978, implies that our contemporary ideas of care, like many other political concepts, have religious origins. Specifically, Foucault analysed how the ancient Hebraic notion of pastoral care — that is, the relationship between the representative of God and the community captured through the shepherd–flock metaphor — was adopted by early Christianity as a general model of government. Later, through the historical process of secularisation, this model was adopted by the modern sovereign state, becoming the basic paradigm for state–society relations. At the risk of oversimplification, pastoral power relations are based on reciprocity between the pastor and the flock, where, in return for total submission, continuous care is guaranteed. However, the specific understanding of what it means to care for a population changed significantly throughout history. For example, Christian care was universalistic, creating inclusive solidarity between the rich and the poor across political boundaries. Yet as the sovereign state assumed this pastoral power from the church, thus becoming the ‘shepherd’ caring for the population, sovereign care became particularistic, through the exclusionary practices of citizenship. Furthermore, while Christian care was conditioned on utter submission, sovereign care, particularly in Europe, became intertwined with the liberal art of government emphasising individual freedom. This led to forms of power in exercising care within the pastorate, best captured by the concept of governmentality.

---


11 Dean, *Governmentality*, p. 90.

Unlike other forms of power emerging within the state-pastorate discussed by Foucault,\textsuperscript{13} such as the sovereign (juridical) or the disciplinary, governmentality emerged as a response to the problem of liberal government by steering the behaviour of the population ‘indirectly, through techniques that will make possible, without the full awareness of the people […] the directing of the flow of population into certain […] activities’.\textsuperscript{14} In other words, governmentality refers to the indirect conduct of behaviour at a distance in order to achieve certain political objectives.\textsuperscript{15} According to Foucault, such exercise of power emerged during the eighteenth century as part of a broader historical transition towards *biopolitics* — a central concept in his work referring to the ‘the attempt […] to rationalize the problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of […] a population: health, hygiene, birthrate, life expectancy, race’,\textsuperscript{16} and so on. The historical need to govern larger groups of people thus ‘brought life and its mechanism into the realm of explicit calculation’,\textsuperscript{17} and power and knowledge became increasingly intertwined in modern government. For example, the development of modern medicine and the economy created new forms of knowledge about a population, enabling the exercise of political power, through indirect steering, in hitherto ungovernable domains. Consequently, as the model for the modern sovereign state consolidated through the need to govern larger populations, biopolitics were increasingly introduced into the pastoral matrix of governance.\textsuperscript{18}

From the nineteenth century onwards, Western sovereignty increasingly relied on such power, as tension between pastoral and liberal commitments to caring for populations was resolved through what became the ideal of the welfare state and its unique state–society relations. As explained by Mitchell Dean, the state understood itself to be the protector of society, providing ‘care for the welfare of the population “from the cradle to the grave”’.\textsuperscript{19} Through Keynesian governmental interventions such as the management of unemployment, health and education, ‘the national welfare state [was thus] acting as a

\textsuperscript{15} Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, ‘Governing Economic Life’, *Economy and Society*, vol. 19, no. 1 (1990), pp. 1-30.
\textsuperscript{16} Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 317.
\textsuperscript{18} Biebricher, ‘Faith-based Initiatives and Pastoral Power’; and Dean, *Governmentality*.
\textsuperscript{19} Dean, *Governmentality*, p. 176.
unified body upon and in defence of a unitary domain: society’.20 However, these state–society relations were also increasingly criticised for lack of economic efficiency, by maintaining the tension between the universalist notion of pastoral care and the particularism of citizenship. Nonetheless, this pastoral logic of care reached a peak under the welfare state, and care for the population became a source of moral, political and legal legitimacy. As discussed later in this article, it was precisely in this context that contemporary practices of duty of care in relations with citizens abroad also emerged.21

However, since the 1970s, the state–society relations upon which Western contemporary understanding of duty of care relies have been challenged, and increasingly inversed. Captured in British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s statement ‘there is no such thing as society’,22 a new political rationality emerged in policy-making circles, where society should no longer be seen as a consolidated object for state protection, but rather as a source of productive forces, waiting to be unleashed through state withdrawal. That is to say, it was best for the state not to care directly for the needs of society, but rather to enable society to care for itself.23 This inversion in state–society relations was animated by the idea of *homo œconomicus* — an ideal of a rational individual ‘who pursues his own interest, and whose interest is such that it converges spontaneously with the interests of others’ — wherein the policy implications are that ‘[w]ith regards to *homo œconomicus*, one must *laissez-faire*.’24 Paradoxically, this increase in freedom is only apparent since the newly constructed rational subject,25 by responding ‘systematically to modifications in the variables of the environment’, also becomes ‘eminently governable, [...] the correlate of governmentality’.26 However, while in liberal thought the ideal of

20 Dean, *Governmentality*, p. 176.
21 Græger and Leira, *The State’s Duty of Care in International Relations*.
22 Quoted in Dean, *Governmentality*, p. 177.
25 This is a truncated form of agency, acting unknowingly towards externally defined ends. Freedom here is instrumental rather than a value in and of itself. For more, see Dean, *Governmentality*.
the *homo œconomicus* was reserved to the domain of the market, in this new emerging rationality it is extrapolated to various other forms of human activity, such as education and health care.27 Foucault thus defines this form of neoliberalism as the ‘exercise of political power [...] modelled on the principles of a market economy [and] projecting them on to a general art of government’.28

With the proliferation of neoliberalism, the notion of care is thereby radically transformed, and the implications of this inversion in state–society relations have been a hotbed for academic debate in social science since the 1990s. Traditionally, in the liberal art of government, the market pre-exists the state as a separate domain, ensuring specific distribution between the state and private forces. Neoliberalism, however, prescribes the construction of market-like assemblages of discourses, practices, subject positions and so on, in other social domains that were previously governed through different logics.29 Illustrated vividly through the new public-management approach, citizens became increasingly reconceptualised as customers, various bureaucratic routines were replaced with competitive market-like structures, and a spirit of enterprise and innovation was constituted as a guiding principle for a ‘modernized government’.30 As such, it has had revolutionary implications for public policies, ranging from health care, unemployment, education, crime prevention and even national security. Many scholars have criticised these developments, pointing out both instrumental inefficiency and democratic deficit.31

27 Governmentality, however, does not *a priori* prescribe any specific goals towards which the population should be steered, and as such it is a neutral concept with regard to any specific policy objectives. See footnote 30 for more examples.


As mentioned earlier, the implications of this profound change in relations between state and society have so far been largely ignored in Diplomatic Studies. Nonetheless, the next section argues that the ways in which care is understood within the prevailing state–society relations have significant implications for how care is exercised in relation to the protection of compatriots abroad. Thus, the radical inversion of state–society relations that neoliberalism entails is central to understanding contemporary practices of duty of care in diplomacy.

The Rationalities of Care in Protecting Citizens Abroad

While various forms of protection for compatriots abroad have existed for centuries, the origins of contemporary practices of diplomatic protection are deeply linked to the consolidation of the modern sovereign state. Clearly capturing the fundamental logic of pastoral care and its reciprocal power relations, in 1758 the Swiss jurist Emmerich Vattel clarified the principle of diplomatic protection when he wrote ‘Whoever ill-treats a citizen indirectly injures the State, which must protect that citizen’, thus reflecting ‘a particular conception of relations between the state and its citizens, one based on a sense of reciprocity or mutual obligation’. Nonetheless, the exact nature of this protection changed significantly over the last few centuries. Until the seventeenth century, for example, the protection of compatriots travelling abroad, who...
were mainly merchants, was divorced from the state, and the consuls responsible for their protection were elected by the merchants themselves. However, with the consolidation of the sovereign state in the seventeenth century, this practice was discontinued and ‘consuls were increasingly appointed by the state [and] thereby [the states] confirmed their responsibility for, and control over, compatriots in foreign ports, and gave consuls clearer responsibilities for the general interest of the polity’.36 This consolidation of the consular service was driven mainly by mercantilist policies, designed to maximise state power through trade. For many years, the protection of compatriots abroad was thus essentially linked to the economic interests of the state. In such rationality of care, consular work mainly concentrated on assisting nationals involved in trading interests, with a focus on issues such as promoting shipping and protecting merchant navigation and colonies.37

Since the nineteenth century, however, following a wave of liberal reforms and democratisation processes, state–society relations, particularly in Europe, increasingly converged around the ideals of the welfare state. In tandem with these developments, the ‘focus of assistance changed from representing traders’ interests to responding to the interests of leisure travellers and the general public’.38 With the development of the Western welfare state, travelling abroad was no longer limited to merchants, but was extended to ordinary workers, who were entitled to paid holiday. The wider public thus increasingly began to travel abroad,39 particularly with the arrival of passenger aircraft and the beginning of mass tourism in the 1960s and 1970s. This led to an increasing demand for consular assistance, involving more direct intervention by the state in helping its population abroad with all kinds of everyday issues, including lost passports, assistance in the case of rape, drugs or sickness, and emergency evacuation. In 1963, following the signing of the Vienna Convention on Consular Affairs, the central rights and responsibilities concerning the protection of citizens abroad became part of conventional international law, providing exclusive rights to

the consular staff. The diplomatic consular service thus essentially became the face of the welfare state abroad, dealing with an increasing public expectation for protection. Moving away from the instrumentalism of mercantilist care, the underlying rationality of care essentially conceptualises — in and of itself — citizens travelling abroad as an object for protection by the state.

Despite the predominance of this rationality during most of the twentieth century, citizens abroad were also occasionally treated through more managerial logics. For example, during the Cold War there was systemic use of citizens in public diplomacy, with various attempts by the United States and the Soviet Union to facilitate citizen-to-citizen engagements across the Iron Curtain. For early protagonists, such as US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, this was meant to be ‘people-to-people’ diplomacy: a diplomacy carried out by the country’s citizens, rather than their government, and aimed at genuine reconciliation and peace building. However, as Liam Kennedy and Scott Lucas observe, ‘The links between overt and covert, between the state and private groups [...] all contributed to the entanglements of public diplomacy in the early cold war period,’ as various citizen-based initiatives, such as university programmes, artists’ trips and religious exchanges were directly steered by the state. Such partnerships continued until the end of the Cold War, where-in ‘state–private networks’ such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) could promote state interests while ‘maintaining the illusion of detachment from the state’. Nonetheless, as observed by Paul Sharp, self-appointed citizen-diplomats were also a common phenomenon, emerging typically as representatives of commercial interests or advocates for a specific cause, and at times even undermining the official position of the state. While this type of international actor was ignored by IR theory for the most part, in recent

years citizen-diplomacy has been rediscovered\textsuperscript{46} and, as discussed below, often conflated with consular affairs and the duty of care.

Indeed, by the 1990s, what it meant to care for citizens abroad, and by whom, began to mutate, as the state was seemingly retreating from its duty-of-care tasks. Instead, responsibility was increasingly placed on the shoulders of the citizens travelling abroad, through new trends of privatisation and public–private partnerships. The literature often ascribes this change to managerial factors such as resource efficiency and technological innovation.\textsuperscript{47} On the face of it, with the exploding demand for protection abroad, budgetary constraints became a major concern for foreign ministries. In response, economic considerations became central to policy-makers in transferring responsibility from the state and involving citizens in their own protection. The emerging trend of travel warnings, for example, could be seen as a way to save costs, since a more informed traveller would be able to take care of him or herself by avoiding travelling to dangerous areas, and thus reducing the risk of potentially expensive evacuation operations.\textsuperscript{48} For similar reasons, some argue that governments increasingly encourage multinational corporations to use private security and insurance companies in the protection of ‘worker-citizens’, with the assumption that more calculated responsibility by the private firm will reduce the risk of future governmental intervention.\textsuperscript{49}

Beyond economic efficiency, the second common explanation for the increased shift to a citizen-driven practice of duty of care relates to the affordances created by new communication technologies. New digital technologies create new possibilities for citizen engagement where ‘the information revolution and the direct involvement of publics in transnational engagement’ become closely intertwined.\textsuperscript{50} Social media is thus seen as ‘a potential game

\textsuperscript{46} A clear example for this can be found in nation-branding literature; see, for example, Browning, ‘Nation Branding, National Self-Esteem, and the Constitution of Subjectivity in Late Modernity’.


\textsuperscript{48} Löwenheim, ‘The Responsibility to Responsibilize’.

\textsuperscript{49} Okano-Heijmans and Caesar-Gordon, ‘Protecting the Worker-Citizen Abroad’.

changer for how international relations can be pursued\textsuperscript{51} and various new terms such as ‘eDiplomacy’\textsuperscript{52} and ‘digital diplomacy’\textsuperscript{53} are often invoked to capture how technology enables new forms of diplomacy. Indeed, consular services have often been the forerunners within ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs) in responding to the new technological environment, and some observe a ‘digital shift in consular assistance’ towards ‘[a] more networked “duty of care”, drawing on the use of social media’.\textsuperscript{54} Following this logic, new communication technologies enable new ways of providing care, because platforms such as Twitter can facilitate new forms of communication between foreign ministries and citizens abroad in times of crisis. However, in these digitally-mediated duty-of-care practices, citizens are not only passive recipients of consular assistance, but also an increasingly valuable resource for MFAs.\textsuperscript{55} The data produced by citizens in their everyday usage of digital devices have enabled MFAs to locate their citizens in real-time and thus have greatly assisted in relief operations. Moreover, by encouraging citizens to retweet information, MFAs could significantly increase their outreach in real-time.\textsuperscript{56} Thus, in various ways, and often indirectly, new technologies enable citizens to assume more responsibility for their own protection.

Of course, as already seen with the mercantilist care and the Cold War’s citizen-diplomacy, managerial considerations have always shaped diplomacy and its relations with citizens. However, what has radically changed in recent years, and this is precisely what Foucault’s concepts enable us to analyse,\textsuperscript{57}

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
  
  
  
  \bibitem{Bjola2015a} Bjola and Holmes, \textit{Digital Diplomacy}.
  
  
  \bibitem{Melissen2015} For example, Melissen and Caesar-Gordon mention the Nepal earthquake in 2015, as well as the 2015 Paris attacks.
  
  \bibitem{Melissen2016a} Melissen and Caesar-Gordon, “Digital Diplomacy” and the Securing of Nationals in a Citizen-Centric World’. A central concern in Foucault’s philosophy is the recovery of political considerations in domains we commonsensically assume to be non-political.

\end{thebibliography}
is the underlying political rationality that shapes general relations between the state and society and consequently the distribution of responsibility for the duty of care. In other words, what has changed is the generic mentality of government — that is, the ‘particular way of thinking about the kinds of problems that can and should be addressed by various authorities [...] a kind of political a priori that allows the tasks of such authorities to be seen in terms of [...] calculated supervision, administration and maximization’.58 Indeed, it is evident that economic concerns find an easy ally in the new technological affordances and their participatory and communicative culture, which enable citizens to engage in diplomatic practices on unprecedented scale. However, it is only through the specificity of the neoliberal political rationality that the ability to assert responsibility, to connect, to gather data and to co-create becomes a resource that the government can mobilise towards its ends. As the next section illustrates, such attempts to govern at a distance have become central in contemporary duty-of-care practices.

The Neoliberal Inversion of the Duty of Care in Diplomatic Practice

The proliferation of a neoliberal rationality in diplomatic circles can be traced back to the beginning of the 1990s and the wave of new public-management reforms that attempted to reshape the public sector in the image of the private sector. It was commonly believed that by adopting practices from private companies, governments would be able to reduce costs and become more efficient, and these reforms also became apparent in ministries of foreign affairs. For example, in 1993 the US State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs became a ‘reinvention lab’, intended ‘to reinvent government to make it work better, cost less, and get meaningful results by putting customers first, cutting red tape, empowering employees, and cutting back to basics’.59 Displaying the common characteristics of a neoliberal, new public-management approach, the focus of this reinvention of care was managerial efficiency through various ‘best practices’, plus partnerships with private-sector actors.60 In other words, market-like subjects, discourse and structures were imported into new domains, previously governed through different rationalities. Similar reforms took place in other MFAs in the following years and, as a result, both in the United States

60 For more background, see Hamilton, ‘The Transformation of Consular Affairs’.
and in other liberal democracies that followed this path, new challenges and opportunities concerning the protection of civilians abroad were met through the neoliberal rationality and the exercise of governmentality, rather than the direct pastoral interventions that had been typical of the welfare state.61

In practice, neoliberal governmentality operates through a double movement: the population is encouraged to assume more responsibility for domains previously cared for by the state through privatisation or engagement in public–private partnerships; while, at the same time, new forms of knowledge are produced, through which the behaviour of the population can be steered towards specific governmental ends.62 A paradigmatic example of how this has been exercised in duty-of-care practices is the emergence of travel warnings. As illustrated by Oded Löwenheim, the proliferation of travel warnings peaked towards the end of the 1990s with increased globalisation and trans-border movement of civilians. However, beyond the aforementioned economic concerns, the new challenges to the state’s duty of care were evidently met through the emerging neoliberal rationality. On the one hand, the issuing of travel warnings by foreign services creates more responsible subjects, who are capable of making their own informed decisions and protecting themselves. On the other hand, this increase in the freedom of the travelling homo œconomicus is instrumental. By creating a certain kind of knowledge through travel warnings, consular services can steer the behaviour of populations at a distance towards specific ends, such as avoiding particular places. While there are many limitations to this technique,63 from the perspective of the consular services, travel warnings manage simultaneously to provide protection and reduce costs. Many thus believe today that ‘helping individuals help themselves is the best way to care for citizens’ abroad64 and, in this way, the means through which the ends of government are achieved become inversed.

Interestingly, in tandem with the rise of internet usage, many states that had never before issued analogue travel warnings began issuing travel warnings in digital forms,65 illustrating the significance of technological affordances for the

63 See, for example, Maley, ‘Risk, Populism, and the Evolution of Consular Responsibilities’.
65 For example, while the UK and the US had analogue travel warnings for several decades before the introduction of the digital form, most of the other countries in the European context, such as France, Denmark and the Netherlands, began issuing travel warnings
proliferation of neoliberal care. As Jan Melissen and Matthew Caesar-Gordon observe, ‘[n]ew communication technologies are changing the playing field [...] for the “duty of care” [and] digital tools can be of assistance in making individuals more responsible.’66 For example, after the 2015 Nepal earthquake, social media was particularly useful in this time of crisis, as MFAs could spread messages and locate their citizens more easily. Moreover, citizens could send back real-time updates and even retweet MFA messages, thus expanding their reach, while easily providing feedback and thus helping ‘to co-create solutions that were conventionally seen as a governmental responsibility’.67 In this way, technology creates new affordances through which ‘people caught in crisis situations [can see] themselves as empowered contributors rather than mere recipients of government assistance’.68 However, it requires a specific political rationality to see citizens as rational and governable subjects, and to mobilise these new technological affordances as resources — in order to collect data or spread messages, by retweeting — which can be steered at a distance towards governmental purposes.

Contrary to many conceptualisations of the neoliberal era, where it is assumed that the state is retreating from its previous functions,69 the concept of governmentality — through the technique of governing at a distance — illustrates how state power can in fact be extended to new societal domains, and even beyond state borders. The protection of citizens abroad is thus deeply intertwined with state control, and this is particularly evident in the context of migrant workers, where the protection of citizens abroad often becomes explicitly intertwined with other governmental goals. For example, as illustrated by Rahel Kunz in the context of Mexican consulates in the United States and Canada, Mexican citizens working abroad were reframed by the Mexican government as a resource of productive forces, in tandem with neoliberal

---

69 For example, see Susan Strange, The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
reforms. In order to govern these forces, more information was collected about the expatriate population, and consulates began seeking more direct engagement through ‘information days’. However, while the Mexican expatriates were ‘courted’ by the Mexican state, for example by acknowledging their achievements and providing them with information about new protective services, they were also incentivised to spread certain norms regarding desirable expatriate behaviour, to send remittances back to poor regions of Mexico, and to promote trade and tourism. As Kunz argues, governing at a distance thus fosters individual and collective responsibilities, as the expatriates became more responsible not only for their own well-being, but also for the welfare of their communities back in Mexico.

An even more striking example of such entanglement of the duty of care with the extension of state power can be found in the case of labour brokerage by the Philippines. As argued by Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, following neoliberal reforms, the Philippine state increasingly ‘mobilizes, exports, and regulates migrant labor’. Similarly to Mexico, citizens working abroad thus become a resource for the state, represented as the ‘new national heroes’ who fulfil their duty by working overseas and supporting the homeland through their remittance earnings. At the same time, in order to legitimise migrant labour and enable the Philippines to ‘represent itself as a caring and virtuous’ state, extensive forms of protection are promised to the workers, such as ‘extraterritorial intervention in contractual disputes’, creating a form of ‘portable set of “rights”’. These rights, however, also come with duties, and the migrants are expected to be ‘law-abiding, diligent workers’ with ‘numerous mechanisms to discipline them transnationally’ in case they ‘fail in their nationalist duties’. As illustrated by Rodriguez in the context of the Philippine garment workers’ strike in Brunei, the Philippine consular service compelled the workers to end their protest, and to accept whatever terms their employer offered, in

---

70 For example, expatriates were reframed from being represented as ‘traitors’ to more positive terms such as ‘development agents’ and ‘entrepreneurs’; see Rahel Kunz, ‘The Discovery of the Diaspora’, *International Political Sociology*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2012), p. 104.
71 Kunz, ‘The Discovery of the Diaspora’.
73 As explained by Rodriguez, wages earned abroad are meant to finance services previously provided by the state, and thus the state in fact ‘responsibilizes’ the citizens for the costs of its own neoliberal restructuring.
order to secure the commercial interests of the state. In this form of ‘care’, the state not only protects the workers, but also ‘disciplines those who threaten the Philippines’ relations with foreign employers and host countries through forced repatriation and other sanctions’.77 Taken together, these examples illustrate how in contemporary duty-of-care practices, ‘governing “the state” and “the diaspora” do not necessarily stand in opposition’,78 but rather operate in concert, thus blurring the traditional inside/outside boundaries in international relations.

Indeed, governmentality can often become entangled both with sovereign and disciplinary power. This entanglement becomes particularly complex in the context of the duty of care of multinational corporations towards their employees. As illustrated by the In Amenas attacks in Algeria in 2013, some multinational corporations — particularly in the energy sector — operate in high-risk areas, and the protection of employees falls into a complex area of overlapping responsibilities between the public and the private sector.79 While theoretically, by using the broader term ‘population’, Foucault did not explicitly differentiate between private citizens and business firms, the state in practice does seem to govern private citizens and business firms through a different mixture of techniques. In Britain, for example, like many other European states, a firm’s duty of care towards its employees is written into law.80 Employers are thus formally ‘responsibilized’ by sovereign power for protecting their employees abroad. However, similar to the technique of travel warnings, in cases of emergency, such as terror attacks, the state still has to intervene directly. As such, the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) still produces ‘appropriate’ knowledge through which the practices of protection in high-risk areas can be steered at a distance. For example, according to the FCO, providing care entails ‘investing in tracking and remote monitoring technologies’, creating contingency plans, and hiring ‘assistance from a bona fide private security company’. Moreover, besides regular travel warnings, the National Counter-Terrorism Security Office can also provide protective security advice on how the company can reduce the risk of terrorism.81 However, the incentives for multinational corporations to follow this advice operate rather

79 Okano-Heijmans and Caesar-Gordon, ‘Protecting the Worker-Citizen Abroad’.
80 Okano-Heijmans and Caesar-Gordon, ‘Protecting the Worker-Citizen Abroad’.
differently than for individuals, guided by broader neoliberal risk-governance strategies, such as reputation management, where the value of a firm is linked to its ability to exhibit compliance with various voluntary standards and ‘best practices’.82

These accounts illustrate the changing relations between the ends and the means of government in the neoliberal era. From the perspective of Foucauldian analytics, the question is, of course, how well these new techniques in fact achieve their ends83 — that is to say, applied to the duty of care, whether it became inversed or merely entangled with other rationalities, it begs the questions of how effectively this technique or the other provides protection to citizens abroad. Although the answer is contextual, and beyond the scope of this enquiry, it is worth mentioning that while reliance on the private sector has been the trend in Europe, it is not the only logic through which the duty of care can be provided to ‘worker-citizens’ in high-risk areas. In fact, as argued by Maaike Okano-Heijmans and Matthew Caesar-Gordon, in countries such as China and Japan, the predominant trend is placing ‘the duty of care firmly under the umbrella of security, [...] denoting a high level of governmental involvement’.84 While both China and Japan face similar problems to European states, such as attacks on their installations with complex evacuation operations, problems of care here are channelled through a different political rationality, leading to the ‘securitization of worker-citizen safety’.85

By placing the duty of care for ‘worker-citizens’ within the public rather than the private sector, such a prism of sovereign intervention prescribes an almost oppositional solution to the problem of care, since securitisation and liberalism — and in particular neoliberalism — are founded on mutually exclusive logics, wherein the proliferation of one limits the scope for legitimate exercise of the other.86 Hence, while it is increasingly assumed that

82 On the link between neoliberal governance and corporate risk management, see Michael Power, Organized Uncertainty: Designing a World of Risk Management (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
83 Dean, Governmentality.
85 Okano-Heijmans and Caesar-Gordon, ‘Protecting the Worker-Citizen Abroad’, p. 438. It should be noted that privatization in the context of this reference refers to a broad trend towards dealing with issues through the private rather than the public sector.
corporations and citizens should be made more responsible for their own protection, this is evidently only one particular solution for the protection of compatriots abroad, for which there is always an alternative. Foucauldian analytics of government cannot prescribe one solution over the other. Instead, these studies encourage us to ask political questions in domains that are often assumed to be natural and depoliticised, thereby opening up new terrains for alternative solutions to governing various state functions, such as the duty of care. Nina Græger and Halvard Leira have already suggested several potential problems that emerge from outsourcing state responsibilities, and in this context much could be gained from studies of governmentality in other domains of public administration, and more broadly the dynamics frequently involved in neoliberal inversions such as the tension between economic efficiency (or often lack thereof) and democratic accountability.

Conclusion

The underlying assumption in both the practice and theory of the duty of care is that the state sees society and its citizens as objects of protection. Such a notion of care stems from the pastoral power associated with the modern (welfare) state — an art of government where care of the population by the state is the main political rationality for how things should be done within the polity. However, this notion of care, like a shepherd protecting the flock, does not stand alone in contemporary diplomatic thinking and practice. A new political rationality has emerged, where the state no longer sees the population only as an object for pastoral protection. Instead, following the neoliberal art of government, the population is increasingly perceived as a resource of productive forces to be mobilised for governmental purposes, rather than merely protected. While social theorists, anthropologists, sociologists and political scientists have imported this insight into a range of studies, the concept of neoliberal governmentality has so far only had limited impact in Diplomatic Studies. By showing theoretically and empirically how the duty of care is inversed, this article has argued that diplomatic practices are shaped by broader social and political transformations of state–society relations, which Diplomatic Studies need to take into account.

87 Dean, Governmentality.
This argument was illustrated by examples from recent scholarly work on consular protection and the duty of care, where citizens, empowered through information and various digital tools, can become a resource to be mobilized by consular services and used in duty-of-care practices. Conflating consular affairs with the practices of citizen-diplomacy, through ‘responsibilization’ and production of ‘appropriate’ knowledge, these examples illustrate how diplomacy, and consular services more specifically, can exercise power at a distance and steer the behaviour of the population beyond state borders. While governmentality is still entangled with older forms of power, such as in the context of multinational corporations, it is evident that understanding the population as an object for pastoral protection by the state is no longer the predominant way in which states relate to their compatriots abroad. Taken together, these examples suggest that the concept of neoliberal governmentality can help us to understand not only how the duty of care is being inversed or entangled, but also, more broadly, how the relationship between citizens and diplomacy may be changing.

On the one hand, such exercise of power can in many ways address major concerns facing consular services today, including budgetary constraints and increased mobility (and expectations) of citizens. However, on the other hand, viewing the population instrumentally can also come at the expense of other societal values. Governmentality studies do not a priori reaffirm or negate any given technique. Instead, by contextually examining whether the means of government in fact meet their ends, future research could ask: how does the inversion of care affect the boundaries of political communities established through various practices of citizenship? Does the inversion of care apply not just to ordinary citizens, but also to the way in which the state governs its diplomats and consular officials?89 What are the implications of the inversion of care for democratic accountability? Some of these questions have already been indirectly touched upon by scholars interested in the topic, and we hope that the theoretical tools provided here will further advance a more critical approach to diplomacy.

Alexei Tsinovoi is a Ph.D. Fellow in the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen. His research interests are political philosophy, IR theory, science and technology studies (STS), and digital methods. His current research focuses on digital diplomacy. Recent publications

include ‘The Sacred, the Secular, and the Profane: Introducing Agamben’s “Profane Philosophy” to Security Studies and the Case of Israel’s Natural Gas Discoveries’; *Journal of International Relations and Development* (2017), doi:10.1057/s41268-017-0093-1.

**Rebecca Adler-Nissen** is a Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen. Her research focuses on IR theory, diplomacy and European integration, and she uses sociological insights to study diplomatic and international practices. She is the author of *Opting Out of the European Union: Diplomacy, Sovereignty and European Integration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), the editor of *Bourdieu in International Relations: Rethinking Key Concepts in IR* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), and has published in journals such as *International Organization*, *European Journal of International Relations* and *Review of International Studies*. 