Obviously, there will always be a need for exercising hard and decisive power over others in history in order to be able to sustain the territory, home and common will of ‘We, the People’ in society. Even if the circle of *parrhesia* and democracy should come into rule, there will be conflicts that call for coercive power to be resolved and, thus, for disciplinary agents to obey and show duty toward their constitution and its formal institutions (Hay 2007, Keane 2013, Stoker 2006). The aim is not to erase sovereignty and discipline but to develop new political mechanisms for putting their coercive and commanding functions in the shadow of new, softer, more attractive and persuasive forms of governance (Nye 2008). There are no *a priori* reasons why acceptance and recognition of the real and necessary difference that the exercise of political authority can make must always imply relations of coercion and subordination. In a world where uncertainty and risk are the general rule, the successful exercise of political authority becomes increasingly dependent on listening to and learning from what laypeople say and do inside their political communities with regard to identifying, easing and handling our common existential problems and challenges (Bang 2009a, b).

I cannot and will not try to elaborate on trustworthy and enabling authorization and normalization here. This will require a book of its own. What I will do, instead, is follow Foucault into the libraries where he collected examples of a political authority that does *not* primarily function in terms of coercion and commands. He could see that biopower is not logically tied to the king’s territory and the home of his subjects. It is a means for directing and coordinating the welfare and wellbeing of the population.¹ It is a regulatory mechanism for handling the uncertainty and risk that confront the population. Thus, he began paying much more attention to the discontinuity between governing
a territory and governing a population. Territory refers to a place – the king’s castle as the home of the nation – whereas the population identifies a functional space, which may well extend across territories such as those of sovereign nation-states and national publics.

When focusing on the population, worries over necessity immediately take priority over the issue of how to protect the state’s and its people’s interests. Whereas sovereignty is exercised in the name of the common interest, security is applied in the name of necessity – that is, for the sake of doing that which has to be done to meet the uncertainty and risks that face the population and which threaten to undermine its ontological security. Because the sovereign is only concerned with ruling the territory and his subjects, and because the disciplinary apparatus principally deals in individualizing subjects and making them wont to obey and follow commands from above, sovereignty and discipline become more and more unfit and inappropriate for governing society. Governing a population, and governing it well, calls for something very different from just extending the state’s direct hold and grip on deviators and ‘normal’ individuals.

As long as the institutions of sovereignty were the basic political institutions, and as long as the exercise of power was identified with the exercise of sovereignty, it was impossible for worries over necessity to obtain and develop specificity and autonomy in modernity. However, we find a long strand of political thinking in history dating back to classical Greece, which is not at all about sovereignty but relates to the issue of the existential risks that face a group of people. Foucault specifies this as being about the art of governing, and of governing well. This art, he argues, gains new and increasing significance and relevance with the occurrence of the population as a new category, which can be measured and weighed. The formation of the population implies that the art of governing is no longer directly derivable from sovereignty. The dawning of civil society, in combination with the economy’s release from the family as an autonomous sphere in its own right, created new societal governing problems. These called for government to keep a much more focused and analytical eye on how to calculate and manage the problems and challenges that impact on individuals and groups in their everyday life. What emerges is a new conception of the family as layered into the population as an important instrument of governing this population (the end of the family as a governing model). The population becomes the final goal of government, and the very object to which every government must address all its observations and rational considerations with a multiplicity of instruments, networks and mediating