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IDENTIFYING THE PERSON: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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Abstract

**Population, Governmentality and Individual Identity:
Some Questions from Nineteenth-Century Egypt**

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As is well known the political-statistical concept of population was a central concept for Foucault especially for his 'governmentality' work. Yet, despite its centrality, serious criticism has been directed recently to the manner in which Foucault described its sudden 'discovery' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the same time, and within the historiography of nineteenth-century Egypt, the concept of population is nearly absent, the work of Tim Mitchell being the only noteworthy exception. This paper attempts to use material from nineteenth-century Egyptian history to raise questions about how 'population' might have been 'discovered'. Specifically, it follows practices such as quarantines, conscription, travel permits, and census taking to elaborate on Foucault's concept of population and also to shed light on hitherto unknown aspects of the modern Egyptian state.

**The Documentation of Individual Identity:
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