Foucault Studies

ARTICLE

Ethnographies of Neoliberal Governmentalities: from the neoliberal apparatus to neoliberalism and governmental assemblages[1]

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ABSTRACT: This article is aimed at Foucauldian scholars and seeks to introduce them to ethnographic works that interrogate neoliberal governmentalities. As an analytic category 'neoliberalism' has over the last two decades helpfully illuminated connections between seemingly unrelated social changes occurring at multiple scales. Even earlier —in his College de France 1978-9 *Birth of Biopolitics* lectures, to be precise—Foucault began his engagement with neoliberalism as a dominant political force. Despite being more than three decades old, Foucault's analysis of neoliberal rationalities remains fresh and insightful, which perhaps explains why scholars inspired by his analytics of governmentality have been able to make major contributions to the current social science literature on neoliberalism. However, there are increasing concerns that governmentality scholars succumb to a more general tendency among social scientists to present neoliberal transformations in monolithic and linear terms. This article critically reviews contributions from a small but growing group of neo-Foucauldian researchers that avoid these tendencies. These researchers investigate the changes wrought by neoliberalism through methodologies that involve combining an analytics of governmentality with ethnographic and quasi-ethnographic methods, and in doing so they avoid deterministic, homogenous and static accounts of social transformation. By beginning with the "everyday," these works reject the idea that neoliberal governmentality forms a coherent apparatus. Instead these ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities focus on governmental ensembleges (or assemblages) that link neoliberal political rationalities with non-liberal rationalities, and they explore how neoliberal thought and practice is transformed across time and space.

Keywords: neoliberalism; governmentality; Foucault; ethnography; advanced liberalism

Introduction

Neoliberalism is currently one of the most popular concepts in the social sciences with a third of articles in cultural anthropology and sociology employing this term to label, explain and critique transformations in social and political life.[2] As an analytic category 'neoliberalism' is powerful because it illuminates interconnections between diverse social and political changes occurring at multiple scales, from "global financial" regulation to everyday interactions with bureaucracies. Foucault and the scholars that developed his analytics of governmentality were among the first to recognize the analytical purchase gained by understanding the present as shaped by neoliberal (or advanced liberal) rationalities. However, as the supply of articles, monographs and edited collections on neoliberalism grows,[3] there are recurrent concerns that labelling political and social change 'neoliberal' or 'post-neoliberal' obfuscates more than it enlightens and encourages monolithic assessments of change.[4] Some suggest that the literature on neoliberal governmentalities is particularly weak in this respect, and accuse it of lapsing into a set of polemic generalities, and dispensing with nuanced descriptive investigation.[5] At the same time a relatively small but growing body of scholars[6] seek to hold onto the original

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[2] See A. Kipnis, "Neoliberalism Reified: Suzhi Discourse and Tropes of Neoliberalism in the People's Republic of China," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* vol. 13, no. 2 (2007), 383– 400. A number of authors have also quantified the rise of the term neoliberalism. Result of this analysis show that almost half of citations occurred in the last decade J. Peck, N. Theodore and N. Brenner, "Postneoliberalism and its Malcontents," *Antipode,* vol. 41,Iss. sup. 1 (2010), 94– 116; that its use exploded from a handful of articles a year to around a thousand a year between 2002 and 2005 (T. C. Boas and J. Gans-Morse, "Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan," *Studies in Comparative International Development (SCID),* vol. 44, no. 2 (2009), 137– 161); and that a third of cultural anthropology articles in the same period used the term neoliberalism (A. B. Kipnis, "Audit Cultures: Neoliberal Governmentality, Socialist Legacy, Or Technologies of Governing?" *American Ethnologist,* vol. 35, no. 2 (2008), 275– 289; Kipnis, *Neoliberalism Reified: Suzhi Discourse and Tropes of Neoliberalism in the People's Republic of China*, 383– 400); and that there was a nine-fold increase in the use of the term in the Google book collection between 1990 and 2009, (T. Flew, "Six Theories of Neoliberalism" TASA, 26– 9 (November, 2102)).

[3] Mitchell Dean, "Rethinking Neoliberalism," *Journal of Sociology,* (2012); Loic Wacquant, "Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism," *Social Anthropology,* vol. 20, no. 1 (2012), 66– 79; P. Armstrong, "Neoliberalism in Action: Canadian Perspectives," in S. Braedley and M. Luxton (eds.) *Neoliberalism and Everyday Life*, (Montréal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 184– 202; S. Braedley and M. Luxton, "Competing Philosophies: Neoliberalism and the Challenges of Everyday Life," in *Neoliberalism and Everday Life* (2010), 3– 21; S. Braedley and M. Luxton, *Neoliberalism and Everyday Life* (2010); C. Greenhouse, *Ethnographies of Neoliberalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism,* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2007).

[4] Terry Flew, "Michel Foucault's the Birth of Biopolitics and Contemporary Neo-Liberalism Debates," *Thesis Eleven,* vol. 108, no. 1 (February 01, 2012), 44– 65.

[5] Terry Flew, *Six Theories of Neoliberalism*; Boas and Gans-Morse, *Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan*, 137–161; J. Donzelot and Colin Gordon, "Governing Liberal Societies: The Foucault Effect in the English-Speaking World," in M. A. Peters *et. al.* (eds) *Governmentality Studies in Education* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2009), 3–16.

[6] Stephen Collier, *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Lisa Hoffman, "Autonomous Choices and Patriotic Professionalism: On Governmentality in Late-Socialist China," *Economy and Society,* vol. 35, no. 4 (2006), 550–570; Randy Lippert, "Neoliberalism, Police and the Governance of Little Urban Things" (Victoria, BC, Canada, November, 2012); Randy K. Lip-

spirit and strengths of an analytics of governmentality by using ethnographic methodologies together with an analytics of governmentality.

These studies reject governmentality scholars' traditional exclusive reliance on archival sources or publically available documents. Instead, inspired by ethnographic methodologies they incorporate observation of everyday life, interviews, and the collection of documents on the ground, together with more traditional archival sources. [7] In embracing these new, analytics of governmentality inspired ethnographic methodologies these researchers reject the sharp analytic distinction between sociologies of studies of governmentalities and studies of practices of governance.[8] Instead their work reveals the blurry division between political rationalities and their associated technologies on the one hand, and actual practices of governance on the other.

The ethnographic turn within studies of neoliberal governmentalities is particularly worth taking note of because there is widespread agreement that neoliberalism is very commonly conceptualized as a *governmentality,* and because ethnographic studies actively address what is viewed as the governmentality literature's 'Achilles' heel,' namely its lack of attention to multiplicity and context.[9] Because these governmentality inspired ethnographies focus on actual people located within a specific place over a period of time, the researchers are thrust into the multiplicity and dynamics of everyday social life. In turn this gives these researchers greater insights into the multiplicity of power relations and practices within the present, as well as the actual processes through which subjectivities (such as an enterprising self) are formed. More particularly this positioning propels researchers to acknowledge the presence of non-liberal rationalities and to incorporate these rationalities into their theoretical frameworks. Governmentality scholars that rely on more traditional sources (archives or a selection

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pert, *Sanctuary, Sovereignty, Sacrifice: Canadian Sanctuary Incidents, Power, and Law* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 226; Tania Li, "Practices of Assemblage and Community Forest Management," *Economy and Society,* vol. 36, no. 2 (2007), 263–293; Tania Li, *Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics* (Durham, NC, USA: Duke University Press, 2007b); Katharyne Mitchell, "Neoliberal Governmentality in the European Union: Education, Training, and Technologies of Citizenship," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* vol. 24, no. 3 (2006), 389–407; C. McDonald and G. Marston, "Workfare as Welfare: Governing Unemployment in the Advanced Liberal State," *Critical Social Policy,* vol. 25, no. 3 (2005), 374.

[7] Michelle A. Brady, "Researching Governmentalities through Ethnography: The Case of Reforms and Programs for Single Parents," *Critical Policy Studies,* vol. 5, no. 3 (2011), 265–283; Michelle Brady, "Institutionalized Individualism and the Care of the Self: Single Mothers and the State," in Cosmo Howard (Ed.), *Contested individualization: Debates about contemporary personhood* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 187–208.

[8] Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1999), 229; Nikolas Rose and P. Miller, "Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government," *British Journal of Sociology,* vol. 61, no. s1 (2010), 275.

[9] S. J. Collier, "Neoliberalism as Big Leviathan, Or...? A Response to Wacquant and Hilgers," *Social Anthropology,* vol. 20, no. 2 (2012), 186–195; Loic Wacquant, "Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism," *Social Anthropology,* vol. 20, no. 1 (2012), 66–79; M. Hilgers, "The Three Anthropological Approaches to Neoliberalism*," *International Social Science Journal,* vol. 61, no. 202 (2010), 351–364; Flew, *Six Theories of Neoliberalism*; Wendy Larner, "Neo-Liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality," *Studies in Political Economy,* vol. 63, no. 63 (2000), 5–25.

of texts) can more effortlessly bracket out this multiplicity and complexity. In turn this allows them to more easily conclude (or imply) that neoliberal rationalities actually are the most important rationality within an everyday social field. Attentiveness to the dynamics of social life within a particular group or space (or both) also supports greater attention to the processes through which political alliances are formed, as well as resistances to such alliances and new programs of governance, and the failures of various plans. This focus also highlights the complex, often contested, social processes though which subjectivities (such as an enterprising self) are formed. In this way these studies of neoliberal governmentalities avoid polemic generalities that render neoliberal rationalities always and everywhere the same. By highlighting the multiplicity of power relations within the present they make clearer the existence of (actual and potential) spaces for contestation and positive social change.

This review article illuminates the important conceptual and empirical contributions that ethnographies of governmentalities make to the highly influential literature on neoliberal governmentalities. In particular, since the 1980s social scientists such as Ulrich Bröckling, Mitchell Dean, Peter Miller, Thomas Osbourne and Nikolas Rose have used Michel Foucault's studies on governmentality to develop highly influential accounts of neoliberalism (or advanced liberalism) as governmentality.[10] These accounts are widely cited in the contemporary social science literature on neoliberalism and thus the contributions that governmentality inspired ethnographies make to the governmentality literature have implications for the much broader literature on neoliberalism. This review highlights the contributions of ethnographies of governmentalities by firstly clarifying what aspects of the neoliberal governmentalities literature it seems worth holding onto, and those that must be discarded. Specifically, this review argues that Foucault's distinctive interpretation of neoliberalism (and advanced liberalism) initially enabled scholars to produce novel analyses of neoliberal social change, but over time this literature has fallen into the trap of tending to identify liberalism or neoliberalism as the only significant form of power, and producing "cookie cutter" descriptions of neoliberal rationalities. Ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities reinvigorate the field of governmentality studies by producing accounts of social change that are much closer to the spirit of Foucault's late lectures on governmentality and practices of the self. They do this by recognizing that neoliberal rationalities are incredibly influential and powerful, but simultaneously illustrating (through specific empirical studies) that they are not the only or main factors shaping social life and change.

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[10] U. Bröckling, S. Krasmann, and T. Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*, Vol. 71 (Taylor & Francis, 2011); Mitchell Dean, "Administering Asceticism: Re-Working the Ethical Life of the Unemployed Citizen," in Mitchell Dean and Barry Hindess (eds.) *Governing Australia: Studies in Contemporary Rationalities of Government* (Melbourne: Australia: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 87–107; Mitchell Dean, "Governing the Unemployed Self in an Active Society," *Economy and Society.* vol. 24, no. 4 (1995), 559–583; Nikolas Rose, "Governing "advanced" Liberal Democracies," in Andrew Barry, Thomas Osbourne and Nikolas Rose (eds.) *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neoliberalism and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1996, 1st ed.), 37–64; P. Miller and Nikolas Rose, "Governing Economic Life," *Economy and Society,* vol. 19, no. 1 (1990), 1–31; P. Miller and Nikolas Rose, "Political Thought and the Limits of Orthodoxy: A Response to Curtis," *The British Journal of Sociology,* vol. 46, no. 4 (1995), 590–597.

The structure of this article is as follows: The first section locates studies of neoliberal governmentalities within a broader set of debates on neoliberalism as governmentality, and neoliberalism in general. It reviews the major critiques of studies of neoliberal governmentalities, including a tendency to produce "cookie cutter" explanations for neoliberal reforms, the failure to be open to the unexpected, an omission of minor neoliberal thinkers, and a tendency to view relations of power in terms of a singular apparatus. This article provides a very brief review of an analytics of governmentality and the reader who is entirely unfamiliar with the approach is referred to comprehensive overviews elsewhere.[11] The second half of the article explicitly considers the contribution made by ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities.

Locating Ethnographies of Neoliberal Governmentalities

To appreciate the contribution made by ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities one must understand the contribution that studies of neoliberal governmentality have made to broader social science debates about neoliberalism and in turn the major critiques of these studies of neoliberal governmentalities, including the criticism that they diverge from Foucault's own final thinking on governmentality and practices of the self. However, first we must answer the question; what is neoliberalism? Academics' use of the term neoliberalism grew enormously during the 2000s, with it being linked to a disorientating range of changes—everything from global financial deregulation to the rise of Bollywood films and the transformation of education.[12] At the same time the term has developed a clear "negative normative valence" —those who embrace the kinds of economic and political change to which it refers rarely use the term 'neoliberalism'.[13] Adding to the term's complexity, while many of the social and economic changes associated with neoliberalism are not new, the term itself is. Work during the 1990s more commonly referred to the significant economic and political change of the 1980s as advanced liberalism,[14] the 'new right,'[15] or 'economic rationalism.'[16] The term neoliberalism only became common in academic and activist circles during the 2000s. Neoliberal processes of transformation are commonly identified as financial deregulation and flexible labour markets,[17] an "emphasis on individual responsibility,"[18] privatization and marketiza-

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[11] Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*; W. Larner and William Walters, *Global Governmentality: Governing International Spaces* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[12] Boas and Gans-Morse, *Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan*, 137–161; S. L. Mudge, "What is Neo-Liberalism?" *Socio-Economic Review*, vol. 6, no. 4 (2008), 703–731; Trent H. Hamann, "Neoliberalism, Governmentality, and Ethics," *Foucault Studies* (2009), 37–59.

[13] Boas and Gans-Morse, *Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan*, 137–161.

[14] A. Barry and T. Osborne, *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism, and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Rose, *Governing "advanced" Liberal Democracies*, 37–64; Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 321.

[15] R. Levitas, *The Ideology of the New Right*, edited by Ruth Levitas (Polity Press, 1986); D. S. King, *The New Right: Politics, Markets and Citizenship* (Dorsey Press, 1987).

[16] M. Pusey, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra: A Nation-Building State Changes its Mind* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[17] Hilgers, *The Three Anthropological Approaches to Neoliberalism*, 351–364; N. Brenner and N. Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of "actually Existing Neoliberalism"" *Antipode*, vol. 34, no. 3 (2002), 349–379.

tion of government services,[19] and promotion of individual choice. Yet, there are considerable areas of empirical disagreement. One is whether neoliberalism involves the restriction or the reconfiguration and even expansion of state intervention.[20] Another disagreement relates to whether neoliberalism is opposed to "collectivism"[21] or actually promotes certain kinds of collectivism, such as self-reliant communities?[22]

We can only answer these questions if we are clear about the ontological status of neoliberalism, namely the kind of social object that neoliberalism is. Many works have attempted to distinguish the different approaches to neoliberalism. Larner's[23] seminal typology of neoliberalism as policy framework, ideology, and governmentality has more recently been joined by alternative groupings proposed by Steger and Roy[24], Hilgers,[25] Flew,[26] Collier,[27] and Wacquant.[28] Taken together these scholars have argued that neoliberalism is used to mean: a dominant ideology, a system of social relations, a type of culture, a policy package, a mode of governance, a policy frame, a governmentality, a political rationality, an Anglo-American form of capitalism, a thing which determines all other things in the social field, or an all-purpose denunciatory category.[29]

Obviously there is significant overlap in these ways of categorizing neoliberalism and some approaches are less common than others. Neoliberalism as policy framework was one of the first ways of characterizing the radical political and policy upheavals of the late 1970s and 1980s but it has become increasingly overshadowed by research that understands neoliberalism as a dominant ideology **"**disseminated by hegemonic economic and political groups"[30] in order to "restore capitalist class power,"[31] or as governmentality.

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[18] Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (Sage Publications Limited, 2009); Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*; Hilgers, *The Three Anthropological Approaches to Neoliberalism**, 351–364; Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 321.

[19] Brenner and Theodore, *Cities and the Geographies of "actually Existing Neoliberalism"*, 349–379; Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*.   .

[20] Hilgers, *The Three Anthropological Approaches to Neoliberalism**, 351–364; Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*; J. Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Duke University Press Books, 2006) .

[21] Hilgers, *The Three Anthropological Approaches to Neoliberalism**, 351–364.

[22] Nikolas Rose, "Community, Citizenship, and the Third Way," *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 43, no. 9 (2000), 1395.

[23] Larner, *Neo-Liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality*, 5–25.

[24] M. B. Steger and R. K. Roy, *Neoliberalism: A very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford UP, 2010).

[25] Hilgers, *The Three Anthropological Approaches to Neoliberalism**, 351–364

[26] Flew, *Michel Foucault's the Birth of Biopolitics and Contemporary Neo-Liberalism Debates*, 44–65

[27] Collier, *Neoliberalism as Big Leviathan, Or…? A Response to Wacquant and Hilgers*, 186–195

[28] Wacquant, *Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism*, 66–79

[29] While neoliberalism is usually viewed as a singular object, Steger and Roy argue that neoliberalism has three "intertwined manifestations: (1) an ideology; (2) a mode of governance (3) a policy package" Steger and Roy, *Neoliberalism: A very Short Introduction.*

[30] Larner, *Neo-Liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality*, 12.

[31] B. Van Apeldoorn *et al.*, "Beyond Neoliberal Imperialism? the Crisis of American Empire," *Neoliberalism in Crisis* (2012), 207–228.

As Collier perceptively notes, scholars who understand neoliberalism as a dominant ideology tend to treat "neoliberalism as bigger, stronger, more structural and structuring than other things in the field, as indeed determinative of those things, such that we can call the whole mess neoliberalism."[32] Cultural understandings of neoliberalism are the most recent additions to the literature in large part because anthropologists have been late in embracing the topic of neoliberalism.[33] However, cultural anthropologists are not alone in understanding neoliberalism as culture with political sociologists also concluding that similar empirical changes result from cultural transformation.[34] The fourth approach to understanding neoliberalism—and the focus of this review article—is governmentality.

Advanced Liberalism/Neoliberalism: Studies of Governmentality in the English Speaking World

Contemporary studies of neoliberalism as governmentality, including ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities, build upon Michel Foucault's work on governmentalities, political rationalities and neoliberalism.[35] While these writings have inspired a large literature on liberal and neoliberal political rationalities, Foucault himself never published a major work on these topics and English speaking academics in particular have overwhelmingly relied on a very wide range of secondary accounts including studies from Foucault's collaborators,[36] published summaries and interpretations of Foucault's College de France lectures,[37] and mono-

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[32] Collier, *Neoliberalism as Big Leviathan, Or…? A Response to Wacquant and Hilgers*, 191.

[33] Hilgers, *The Three Anthropological Approaches to Neoliberalism**, 351–364

[34] For example see L. Boltanski and E. Chiapello, "The New Spirit of Capitalism," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2005), 161–188; Pusey, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra: A Nation-Building State Changes its Mind*.

[35] Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984 Volume II* (Victoria, Australia: Penguin, 2000); Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (Hampshire, England & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Michel Foucault *et al.*, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel* Foucault (Massachusetts UP, 1988); Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," *Ideology & Consciousness,* vol. 6 (1979), 5–21; Michel Foucault, "The Ethic of Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom: An Interview," in James William Bernauer and David M. Rasmussen (eds), J. D. Gauthier (trans.) *The Final Foucault* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988, 1st ed.), 1–20; Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in Paul Rabinow (eds.) *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 340–72; Michel Foucault, "About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self," in Jeremy R. Carrette (eds), *Religion and Culture* (Manchester University Press, 1987), 158–181.

[36] These include François Ewald, Pasquale Pasquino, Daniel Defert, and Jacques Donzelot, all of whom published their own influential studies on the production of autonomous rationalities for government ('governmentalities') and governmental technologies. U. Bröckling, S. Krasmann and T. Lemke, eds., *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011, 1st ed.); J. Donzelot and Colin Gordon, "Governing Liberal Societies: The Foucault Effect in the English-Speaking World," in M. A. Peters, *et. al.* (eds.), *Governmentality Studies in Education* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2009), 3–16; M. Foucault, G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[37] Colin Gordon, "The Soul of the Citizen: Max Weber and Michel Foucault on Rationality and Government," in S. Lash and S. Whimster (eds.), *Max Weber: Rationality and Modernity* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 293–316; Colin Gordon, "Governmental Rationality: An Introduction," in P. Miller, Colin Gordon and G. Burchell

graphs on governmentality and neoliberalism/advanced liberalism by sociologists such as Nikolas Rose and Mitchel Dean,[38] together with a handful of Foucault's own writings.[39] Arguably Foucault's collaborators and secondary sources have shaped our understanding of an analytics of governmentality far more than Foucault's own reflections, and as I elaborate later this matters because many interpretations diverge in important ways from the methodology and style in his latest work.

Despite Foucault publishing very little of his work on governmentality during his lifetime, his short writings were quickly embraced by Anglo-American scholars keen to make sense of the immense political changes starting in the late 1970s – the rise of the "new right" in the United Kingdom and North America and 'economic rationalism' in Australia and New Zealand. Foucault's analytical emphasis on governance as the conduct of conduct and eschewal of the idea that state power emanates from a single source (the economy or the state) resonated with the emerging emphasis on 'politics "beyond the state," and new governance arrangements, including public-private partnerships. This new emphasis emanated not only from the new right, but also from new feminist politics of personal life, and new client rights based critiques of bureaucracy. All of these critiques gestured to new ways of thinking about politics and governance,[40] and they challenged traditional divisions of freedom versus constraint, state expansion versus state retraction and public versus private. Scholars embraced Foucault's conceptualization of governance as governmentality because it enabled them to go beyond these staid divisions and grasp the politics of the 'new right' in more nuanced ways. As Donzelot, one of Foucault's French collaborators, argued in his 1979 article, it was necessary to cease viewing the state as a singular source of power and instead consider it as an effect of governmental technologies:

(eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1–52; T. Lemke, "'The Birth of Bio-Politics': Michel Foucault's Lecture at the College De France on Neo-Liberal Governmentality," *Economy and Society*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2001), 190–207; T. Lemke, "Foucault, Governmentality and Critique" (andosciasociology.net, 2000, web)   :
http://www.andosciasociology.net/resources/Foucault$2C+Governmentality$2C+and+Critique+IV-2.pdf

[38] M. Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 321; Nikolas Rose, P. O'Malley and M. Valverde, "Governmentality," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, vol. 2 (2006), 83–104; Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society.*

[39] These include the 1978 lecture on governmentality and an interview "Questions of Method", both published in *Ideology and Consciousness*, a series of lectures delivered in the United States during the late 1970s and early 1980s (J. Donzelot and Colin Gordon, "Governing Liberal Societies", 3–16; Foucault, Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *The Foucault Effect*) and some of the essays, interviews and College de France course summaries published in the three volume series *Essential works of Foucault:* Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984 Volume 1* (Victoria, Australia: Penguin, 2000); Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984 Volume II* (Victoria, Australia: Penguin, 2000); Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Volume III* (Victoria, Australia: Penguin, 2002).

[40] Anna Yeatman, *Bureaucrats, Technocrats, Femocrats: Essays on the Contemporary Australian State* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990), 197.

> We would have then not a power and those who undergo it, but, as Foucault shows, technologies, that is to say always local and multiple, intertwining coherent or contradictory forms of activating and managing a population, and strategies, the formulae of government […] theories which explain reality only to the extent that they enable the implementation of a program, the generation of actions; they provide through their coherence a 'practical object' (practicable) for corrective intervention of government programmes of redirection.[41]

In a later issue of the same journal Foucault published his Governmentality essay, (based on his fourth lecture from his 1977–78 lectures (*Security, Territory, Population*)) where he argued that the common ground of all modern forms of political thought and action is a certain mentality for which he coined the term governmentality. Here he defined governmentality or mentalities of governance as 1) "the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific complex form of power, which has its target population as its principal form of knowledge political economy and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security"; 2) the tendency over time for this type of power to gain pre-eminence over other forms of power; 3) the process through which the administrative state became governmentalized in the 15th and 16th centuries.[42] Governmentality thus refers to a historically specific way of thinking about ruling that emerged in the 18th century, and more specifically an approach to governance that attempts to 'conduct the conduct' of others based on an understanding of their intrinsic nature (for instance governing disease through understanding its regularities and patterns). He argued that up until the 18th century government was guided by pre-existing principles, such as religious doctrine, but this reliance on an external principle was slowly displaced by new concerns to strengthen the state,[43] and as liberal rationalities for government emerged there was a new reliance on governing on the basis of the "intrinsic nature" of the objects that were governed.

Over a seven-year period (1977–84) Foucault put this distinct approach to work in order to identify multiple rationalities including pastoral power, the police, liberal and neoliberal rationalities. As he stressed in his lecture series, *Security, Territory, Population* (1977–78) it is only variants of liberal rationalities that are fully autonomous political rationalities because they are based on the "intrinsic nature" of the objects that are governed.[44] Liberalism is thus an autonomous rationality because it is concerned with ensuring the security of populations within territories through techniques of government that respect the regularities and processes intrinsic to the economy and population. The market is understood as a self-regulating realm that the state should not interfere with. A constant concern of liberal government is governing "too much." Thus liberal government contrasts with the rationality of

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[41] J. Donzelot, "The Poverty of Political Culture," *Ideology & Consciousness,* vol. 5 (1979), 73–86.

[42] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), *The Essential Foucault: Selections from the Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984* (New York: New Press, 2003), 229–245.

[43] B. Hindess, "Politics and Governmentality," *International Journal of Human Resource Management,* vol. 26, no. 2 (1997), 278; Michel Foucault, "Omnes Et Singulatim': Toward a Critique of Political Reason," in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Power: Essentials Works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984* (NY: Penguin, 2002), 278

[44] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977–78* (Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 417.

the *police* that had a constant concern that "not enough attention is being given to things." Liberal government constantly asks: "am I governing at the border between too much and too little?"[45]

Within his 1977–78 and 1978–79 College de France lectures and his 1979 Tanner Lecture "Omnes et Singulatim," Foucault focused on relatively autonomous technologies of the self, which resonated with an emerging public policy interest in governing individuals at a distance.[46] Whereas in *Discipline and Punish (D&P)* Foucault had emphasized technologies of power/domination,[47] in his work on governmentalities he examined the process through which subjects are encouraged to conduct their own conduct through processes of persuasion and enticement rather than more straightforward subjugation. Until recently English speaking readers could only access the course summary of the lecture series (*The Birth of Biopolitics*, 1978–79) in which Foucault systematically examined neoliberalism. This slight glimpse alone made clear that Foucault's assessment of neoliberalism was markedly different to the overwhelming majority of his contemporaries. At the time Foucault was writing (and throughout the 1980s and 1990s) neoliberalism was common characterized as the re-awakening of classical liberalism. Foucault breezily dismissed this idea and pointed out that a critical area of disagreement between liberals and neoliberals was over the conceptualization of the market. Liberal rationalities view the market as natural and robust, and it follows from this that they view the primary role of the state as being to enforce the rule of law and to refrain from interfering in the market's self-regulating mechanisms. Neoliberal rationalities, Foucault astutely pointed out, reworked this conceptualization in subtle but highly significant ways.[48] While the market is understood to be to be a rigorous formal structure, its actual historical existence is viewed as fragile.[49] The state's ideal role thus shifts in neoliberal rationalities from the liberal concern with staying out of the market to a new concern with vigilantly working to protect and govern it. Furthermore, the *homo oeconomicus* associated with neoliberal rationalities is one of "enterprise and production" not the liberal figure of exchange or consumption.[50] Although Foucault was writing in the late 1970s (and thus prior to the Thatcher and Reagan governments) he very perceptively observes that this form of *homo oeconomicus* is also applied to a whole range of individual behaviour previously viewed as non-economic, including the choice to commit crime, or marry, or use drugs.[51] Overall, what is crucial to realize is that his analysis of neoliberalism was highly original but scholars in the 1980s and 90s who worked to use these ideas in their own empirical studies were accessing only a very limited range of Foucault's actual writing on governmentality and neoliberalism. This is a point I return to later.

During the 1980s Thatcher and Reagan's new market-driven approaches to public policy were overwhelmingly read as a retraction of the state, or a reversion to classical liberalism.

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[45] Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 19.

[46] Cf. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population,* 417; Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*; Foucault, *Omnes Et Singulatim'*.

[47] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Auckland: Penguin Book, 1977).

[48] Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics.*

[49] Ibid. p. 131, 240, 323

[50] Ibid. p. 147

[51] Ibid.p. 255–6

New studies of governmentalities, inspired by Foucault's analysis, argued they were better understood as "a restructuring of governmental techniques,"[52] as the emergence of a new political rationality which developed out of the practical critiques and failures of social liberalism. Governmentality approaches were thus fruitfully employed to examine the transformation of governance in many fields and jurisdictions including employment in Australia[53] and the United Kingdom,[54] processes of privatization in New Zealand and the United Kingdom,[55] neoliberalism and financial planning in Argentina and the United States,[56] neoliberalism and development in Indonesia and Nepal,[57] the rise and development of school counselling in the United Kingdom and United States,[58] the reform of housing policy in the United Kingdom,[59] the governance of crime[60] and policing[61] in Canada, standardization as a technique for governing in a neoliberal way,[62] and global geographies of neoliberalism.[63]

As many have argued, central to this approach was the idea of being open to the unexpected, and a concern with the writing of minor, often forgotten thinkers, and bureaucrats and administrators, together with an interest in mundane and micro-governmental techniques and tools,

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[52] Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*, 1.

[53] P. Harris, "From Relief to Mutual Obligation: Welfare Rationalities and Unemployment in 20th–Century Australia," *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2001), 5.

[54] William Walters, "The 'Active Society': New Designs for Social Policy," *Policy & Politics*, vol. 25, no. 3 (1997), 221–234.

[55] Larner, *Neo-Liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality*, 5–25.

[56] D. Fridman, "A New Mentality for a New Economy: Performing the Homo Economicus in Argentina (1976–83)," *Economy and Society*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2010), 271–302; S. Binkley, "The Work of Neoliberal Governmentality: Temporality and Ethical Substance in the Tale of Two Dads," *Foucault Studies,* vol. 6 (2009), 60–78

[57] Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*, 1.

[58] Tina Besley, *Counseling Youth: Foucault, Power, and the Ethics of Subjectivity* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002); A. Fejes, "To be One's Own Confessor: Educational Guidance and Governmentality," *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* vol. 29, no. 6 (2008).

[59] K. Stenson and P. Watt, "Governmentality and'the Death of the Social'?: A Discourse Analysis of Local Government Texts in South-East England," *Urban Studies,* vol. 36, no. 1 (1999), 189–201; J. Flint, "Housing and Ethopolitics: Constructing Identities of Active Consumption and Responsible Community," *Economy and Society,* vol. 32, no. 4 (2003), 611–629.

[60] P. O'Malley, "Risk, Power and Crime Prevention," *International Journal of Human Resource Management,* vol. 21, no. 3 (1992).; M. Dubber and M. Valverde, *The New Police Science: The Police Power in Domestic and International Governance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); J. Simon, *Governing through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). ,

[61] R. Lippert and D. O'Connor, "Security Intelligence Networks and the Transformation of Contract Private Security," *Policing & Society,* vol. 16, no. 1 (2006), 50–66; K. D. Haggerty and R. V. Ericson, "The Surveillant Assemblage," *The British Journal of Sociology,* vol. 51, no. 4 (2003), 605–622; R. Lippert, "Signs of the Surveillant Assemblage: Privacy Regulation, Urban CCTV, and Governmentality," *Social & Legal Studies,* vol. 18, no. 4 (2009), 505–522.

[62] V. Higgins and W. Larner, *Calculating the Social: Standards and the Reconfiguration of Governing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[63] W. Larner, "C-Change?: Geographies of Crisis," *Dialogues in Human Geography* (2011); W. Larner, "Neoliberalism, Mike Moore, and the WTO," *Environment and Planning*, A vol. 41, no. 7 (2009); Larner and Walters, *Global Governmentality: Governing International Spaces*.

such as diaries, interviews with social workers, brochures, and manuals.[64] At the same time, as the governmentalities literature grew it developed tendencies that ran contrary to this openness and "experimental investigation."[65] Some governmentality scholars took the wide range of loosely connected concepts that Foucault had assembled in the context of specific empirical studies and developed them into a quite rigid set of concepts that slotted into a neat framework.[66] Others (as Bröckling and Krasmann have argued) produced quite repetitive studies of governmentalities. Studies of policy or political transformation occurring within short time periods reproduce similar narratives about neoliberalization, while studies focused on a longer timeframe commonly rehearse familiar sketches of governmental transformations from "Polizei, to liberalism, or from the welfare state to neoliberalism."[67] In these cases, as Donzelot and Gordon argue, analysis is "flattened into a set of polemical, ideological and globalising generalities, dispensing with the kind of descriptive investigation Foucault undertook in 1979 of the different avatars of neoliberalism with their national, historical and theoretical specificities."[68]

Many of these studies drew on, and reiterated, the sketches of classical liberalism, social liberalism, and advanced/neoliberal political rationalities initially developed by Mitchell Dean and Nikolas Rose so that neoliberal political rationalities became an almost "cookie cutter typification or explanation" of contemporary policy change.[69] For instance, Nikolas Rose's characterizations of advanced liberalism based upon his analysis of political and policy change in the United Kingdom are reproduced by researchers examining neoliberalism in other countries such as Australia and Canada, thereby implicitly suggesting that there is a singular neoliberal logic that can explain the nature and existence of diverse programs in these different sites.

Rose and Dean establish similar but distinct frameworks for investigating governmentalities that have perhaps contributed to this repetitive tendency. Rose's framework focuses on how we can investigate distinct political *rationalities* and *technologies*. He argues we can compare *rationalities* by their *moral* form (understanding of justice, freedom etc.), their *epistemological* character (understanding of the objects they govern), and their *idiom* (the kinds of terms and phrases that are used).[70] In turn, *political technologies* tackle the reality, which political rationalities have processed (rendered actionable).[71] In other words, Rose' analytical focus is on

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[64] Rose, O'Malley and Valverde, *Governmentality*, 83–104; Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, 3.

[65] Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*, 15.

[66] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 321; N. Rose and P. Miller, *Governing the Present: Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life* (Malden, Mass.: Polity, 2008); T. Lemke, "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique," *Rethinking Marxism,* vol. 14, no. 3 (2002), 49–64; G. Burchell, "Liberal Government and Techniques of the Self," *Economy and Society,* vol. 22, no. 3 (1993), 267–282.

[67] Osbourne cited in Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges,* 16.

[68] Donzelot and Gordon, "Governing Liberal Societies", 3–16.

[69] Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde, *Governmentality*, 83–104.

[70] Rose, *Powers of Freedom : Reframing Political Thought*, 321.

[71] Lemke, "The Birth of Bio-Politics", 190–207.

the ways that political rationalities set boundaries for the kinds of problems that rulers can tackle and render some technologies for governing as sensible, and others as not. In partial contrast, Dean foregrounds the process by which existing regimes of practices are called into question (problematization) and the logic or "strategy of a regime of practices"[72] rather than focusing on distinct political rationalities. For Dean the central analytic focus is how we are governed, rather than on distinct rationalities, such as neoliberalism, and he suggests that an analytics of government should focus on four dimensions:

1. characteristic forms of visibility, ways of seeing and perceiving
2. distinctive ways of thinking and questioning, relying on definite vocabularies and procedures for the production of truth (e.g. those derived from the social, human and behavioural sciences)
3. specific ways of acting, intervening and directing, made up of particular types of practical rationality ('expertise' and 'know-how') and relying upon definite mechanisms, techniques and technologies).
4. characteristic ways of forming subjects, selves, persons, actors or agents.[73]

Although neither Rose's nor Dean's frameworks explicitly preclude the possibility of multiple, overlapping forms of power and political rationalities, they nevertheless encourage a focus on a discrete governmental rationality or 'way of governing.' In this way these existing frames encourage a rendering of state power as forming a single apparatus, and "cookie cutter" analysis.

Studies of Governmentality: problems and critiques.

This tendency to identify discrete and identical (or already familiar) rationalities, technologies and periodizations[74] across multiple spaces is the most consistent charge laid by critics of the literature on neoliberal governmentalities. Neoliberalism within studies of governmentalities has thus very commonly come to be viewed as a "more or less constant master category that can be used both to understand and to explain all manner of political programs across a wide variety of settings,"[75] rather than an unfinished process, or a rationality that co-exists with other political rationalities. Recent debates in *Social Anthropology*[76] have reinvigorated discussions about this tendency within studies of neoliberal governmentalities. Within these debates Loic Wacquant somewhat surprisingly asserted that studies of neoliberal governmentality are "fond of highlighting contingency, specificity, multiplicity, complexity and interactive combinations and … ongoing hybridisation of neoliberal practices."[77] His assertion has had the effect of regenerating attention to the most persistent criticism of studies of governmentalities which

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[72] Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society.*

[73] Ibid., 23.

[74] Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*; Nikolas Rose, P. O'Malley and M. Valverde, "Governmentality," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, vol. 2 (2006), 83–104.

[75] Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde, "Governmentality", 83–104.

[76] Collier, *Neoliberalism as Big Leviathan, Or…?*, 186–195; Wacquant, *Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism*, 66–79.

[77] Ibid.

is that they actually assume too much coherence and order in the present [78] thereby leaving the "constitutive hybridity of discursive patterns and mechanisms of power…unaccounted for."[79] As Collier —a participant in this debate—argues, studies of governmentalities tend to conceptualize rationalities and technologies as operating within a coherent apparatus rather than forming part of shifting, supple, and sometimes incoherent configurations of power.[80] As a range of scholars have pointed out, studies of neoliberal governmentalities tend to identify liberalism or neoliberalism as the only significant forms of power in a given society or site[81] and to "identify any program with neoliberal elements as essentially neoliberal."[82] Furthermore, while studies of neoliberal governmentalities emphasize the process of generating problematizations and the apparatus of political technologies assembled to address them, they downplay the politics of governance, including the politics of managing factional interests, unforeseen crises, and of countering competing problematizations and resistances. The costs of conceiving of neoliberal governance as an apparatus and of failing to engage with difference, hybridity, contradictions, and politics are manifold. Scholars conducing ethnographies of neoliberalisms point out that an important cost is that when rationalities and technologies are characterized as singular, clear and settled in ways they are not[83] power relations appear "inexorable and inescapable"[84] rather than contestable and avoidable.

With the relatively recent publication of the College de France lectures—particularly *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* 1981–1982 and *The Birth of Biopolitics,* 1978–9—English-speaking scholars, and especially those interested in ethnographies of neoliberalism, are increasingly arguing that these problematic tendencies are at odds with Foucault's own stance. Specifically there is increasing recognition that Foucault analysed multiple neoliberal rationalities rather than a single neoliberalism, and was concerned with complex processes of subjectification that do not involve simple self-domination.[85] Specifically, Foucault viewed neoliberalism as a set of systematic, reflective critiques of social government that involve attempts to re-organize society according to the enterprise form. This perspective is different from that adopted by influential thinkers such as Brenner, Theodore and Peck because Foucault assumes that distinct neoliberal rationalities emerged from critiques of social government. Neoliberal rationalities vary across national contexts because they emerge from critiques of very different economic-

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[78] G. Marston and C. McDonald, *Analysing Social Policy: A Governmental Approach* (UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2006, 1st ed); William Walters, "'The End of the Passing Past': Towards Polytemporal Policy Studies," in G. Marston and C. McDonald (eds.), *Analysing Social Policy: A Governmental Approach* (UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2006), 167–186.

[79] Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*

[80] S. J. Collier, "Topologies of Power Foucault's Analysis of Political Government Beyond 'Governmentality'," *Theory, Culture, & Society,* vol. 26, no. 6 (2009), 78–108.

[81] Lippert, *Sanctuary, Sovereignty, Sacrifice,* 226.

[82] Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde, *Governmentality,* 83–104.

[83] Li, "Practices of Assemblage and Community Forest Management", 263–293; Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*..

[84] Mitchell, *Neoliberal Governmentality in the European Union,* 389–407.

[85] Michel Foucault, *The Politics of Truth [Speeches.]* (New York, NY: Semiotexte, 1997), 240; Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges.*

institutional-discursive forms of social government. Thus rather than being an unique theory that may be imperfectly or differentially realized within particular geographic spaces due to "the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles,"[86] Foucault described how very different neoliberal rationalities—ordoliberalism and anarcho-neoliberalism—developed out of distinctly different critiques of social-liberal governance,[87] and only subsequently became linked and connected.

What is also crucial to note here is that Foucault's analytic approach changed in significant ways following the publication of *D&P*.[88] Although his shift away from emphasizing processes of subjugation, discipline and normalization to a concern with more complex processes of subjectification has been widely noted, it has not been fully incorporated into studies of neoliberal governmentalities. Following *D&P* Foucault was concerned with practices of the self that are relatively autonomous and do not involve self-domination,[89] however studies of liberal and neoliberal governmentalities have tended to draw on his earlier concerns with domination and emphasize the ways that technologies of the self or practices of the self are tied into technologies of domination.[90] At times they go as far as to conflate practices of the self with practices of normalization and discipline. Although Foucault draws strong links between his concern with governmentality and his concern with ancient practices of caring for the self[91] (in which individuals seek to achieve a certain state of happiness, perfection, or wisdom) scholars have infrequently considered the two sets of work together.[92] Instead scholars tend to view practices of the self as an extension of the kinds of disciplinary technologies that Foucault considered within *D&P*.

A second crucial shift is his move away from a conception of power relationships operating within coherent apparatuses.[93] As has been widely noted elsewhere within his later works Foucault reworked the critique of "juridico-political discourse" that he developed in *D&P*. Within that work he had critiqued liberal and Marxist theories that held that power can be possessed, and that it emanates from a single source (the economy or the state) arguing that in political analysis we need to "cut off the head of the king."[94] Following publication of *D&P* Foucault recognized that any robust conception of power must also answer "How is it possi-

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[86] See N. Brenner, J. Peck and N. Theodore, "Variegated Neoliberalization: Geographies, Modalities, Pathways," *Global Networks*, vol. 10, no. 2 (2009); Peck, Theodore, and Brenner, *Postneoliberalism and its Malcontents*.

[87] Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*

[88] Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*

[89] Michel Foucault, *The Politics of Truth* [Speeches.] (New York, N.Y.: Semiotexte, 1997), 240; Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke, *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*.

[90] For instance, Dean described how individuals are enticed to transform themselves into an enterprising subject though learning to promote their personal attributes to prospective employers: Dean, *Administering Asceticism: Re-Working the Ethical Life of the Unemployed Citizen*, 87–107.

[91] Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1981–82* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 566; Foucault, *The Ethic of Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom: An Interview*, 1–20.

[92] For exceptions see C. J. Heyes, "Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers," *Hypatia*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2006), 126–149.

[93] S. J. Collier, "Topologies of Power Foucault's Analysis of Political Government Beyond 'Governmentality'," Theory, Culture & Society 26, no. 6 (2009), 78-108.

[94] Michel Foucault, *The use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Book, 1990).

ble that this headless body often behaves as if it indeed had a head?"[95] Thus within *Security, Territory, Population* (1977-78) he identifies his new objective as moving beyond his previous focus on specific institutions (hospitals and prisons) to examine more "global project[s]…directed at society as a whole."[96] However, Foucault did not simply move to examining more global projects. As Collier very perceptively notes he also abandoned a conceptualization of power relationships as operating within a coherent apparatus[97] which over time is replaced with another relatively coherent apparatus.[98] Rather than examining how one form of power replaced another (e.g. disciplinary power versus sovereign power), Foucault renders a more complex relationship between forms of power arguing that existing forms of power may re-organize existing technologies, and that different forms of power may constantly shift and realign. Foucault elaborates with the example of punishment. In *D&P* he suggests that a disciplinary approach to punishment had largely superseded sovereign power, but in this later work he moves away from arguing that one form of power replaces another and instead asserts that a liberal concern with the security of the population may result in disciplinary elements being taken up again and redeployed, and even multiplied.[99] Thus, as Collier notes, in these lectures governmentality does not operate as a master concept but instead as part of an exploration of more generalized relations of power in which different forms of power, technologies and techniques are often redeployed into new configurations.[100] As I elaborate in the second section of this article, it is this later "fuzzy" conceptualization of power that more strongly influences those engaging in ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities. These studies embrace a wider range of concepts beyond governmentality, political rationality and technology, which dominate the existing field of governmentality studies. As I show they also recognize multiple forms of power, including the existence of non-liberal political rationalities.

Ethnographies of Neoliberal Governmentalities
Ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities thus emerge at the intersection of four important trends: 1) a discomfort with the polemics, generalities and recycling of familiar narratives that is common to much analysis of neoliberalism, and particularly studies of neoliberal governmentalities; 2) growing acceptance that neoliberalism is best theorised as a political rationality rather than an ideology; 3) a growing interest in neoliberalism within anthropology;[101] and 4) increased recognition that Foucault's later works address a wide range of practices of the self, and embrace a 'fuzzy' conceptualization of power .

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[95] Within the *Security, Territory, Population* (1977–78) lecture series Foucault states that his new objective is move beyond his previous focus on specific institutions (hospitals and prisons) to examine more "global project[s]…directed at society as a whole" (117).

[96] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 417.

[97] Collier, *Topologies of Power*, 78–108.

[98] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 417.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Collier, Topologies of Power, 78–108.

[101] Kipnis, "Neoliberalism Reified", 383–400; Collier, "Neoliberalism as Big Leviathan, Or…?", 186–195; M. Hilgers, "The Three Anthropological Approaches to Neoliberalism*", 351–364; L. Hoffman, M. DeHart and

Of course, framing this literature as "ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities" raises questions about what makes a work ethnographic, and on this point there is considerable diversity in views. Anthropologists have traditionally viewed ethnography as involving full immersion in the everyday life of a geographically distinct community or culture,[102] but for sociologists ethnography has rarely meant living with research subjects for an extended period and it usually involves only observing participants in one sphere of their life.[103] Here I embrace Forsey's argument[104] that studies that are primarily interview-based may be considered ethnographic if they are conducted with an ethnographic imaginary that involves providing "a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice" and seeking deep contact that allows one to understand the cultural context within which decisions and choices are made and actions unfold. Each of the studies we review here uses different data collection methods, but what they have in common is a desire to understand everyday practice in the specific social realm they are examining. However, importantly they also reject the idea that a clear analytic distinction can be made between governmentalities/political rationalities and everyday practice.

In response to critiques that *D&P* did not reflect how prisons really operated, Foucault himself distinguished his focus from attempts to understand "real life," arguing that "the actual functioning of the prisons…was a witches' brew compared to the beautiful Benthamite machine."[105] Some leading governmentality scholars have embraced this pronouncement insisting that studies of governmentality are completely distinct from sociologies of practices of governance.[106] Others have suggested that studies of governmentality can be combined with other approaches.[107] Those engaging in ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities tend to reject both approaches because an ethnographic methodology blurs a sharp distinction between political rationalities and associated technologies on the one hand, and actual practices of governance on the other. In turn this disturbs the idea of combining (or not) studies of governmentalities and sociological studies of practice. Whereas *D&P* depends on a distinction between programmes/"theoreticians' schemas" on the one hand, and "the elaboration of these schemas" and the effect induced in 'the real' by programmes on the other[108] ethnographies of governmentalities question the existence of a clear division between 'schemas' and their en-

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S. J. Collier, "Notes on the Anthropology of Neoliberalism," *Anthropology News*, vol. 47, no. 6 (2006), 9–10; Greenhouse, *Ethnographies of Neoliberalism*.

[102] B. Malinowski, "A Scientific Theory of Culture," (1944).

[103] See for instance P. G. Cressey, *The Taxi-Dance Hall: A Sociological Study in Commercial Recreation and City Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932).

[104] Martin G. Forsey, "Ethnography as Participant Listening," *Ethnography*, vol. 11, no. 4 (2010), 558–572.

[105] Michel Foucault, "Questions of Method," *Ideology & Consciousness*, vol. 8 (1981), 3–14.

[106] Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, 229; Rose and Miller, "Political Power Beyond the State", 275.

[107] Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde, *Governmentality*, 83–104.

[108] Michel Foucault, "Questions of Method," in Michel Foucault, Graham Burchell and Colin Gordon (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87–104.

actment. For example, in previous work[109] I have sought to understand how Australian single mothers are governed through welfare reforms. In this paradigmatic case of marketization and reduction of access to social welfare there is no clear distinction between "theoreticians' schemas" and 'the real.' Instead it was only possible to understand the "schemas" for welfare reforms including "characteristic forms of visibility… thinking and questioning …acting, intervening and directing…" by using an ethnographic methodology that involved observations at the agencies that help single mothers to find work, conducting interviews with single mothers themselves, and collecting documentary data (policy guides, manuals, brochures and letters) from these "on the ground" sources. Indeed, in this case publically available sources, such as policy documents, promotional material, legislation and political speeches provided a very thin sense of the "schemas" that governed single mothers subject to welfare reforms. It was only by embracing an ethnographic methodology that it was possible to develop a more finely grained picture of the problems that welfare reforms were seeking to respond to. Thus by using materials from the 'real' or the everyday to develop a picture of the ways of thinking, questioning, acting, intervening, directing and forming subjects, ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities trouble the distinction between studies of governmentalities and sociological studies of practice.

In characterising liberalism as "critical reflection on governmental practice"[110] rather than a set of fixed principles Foucault underscored the degree to which liberal thinkers were orientated toward responding to historically specific economic, social and political problems. When he turned to neoliberalism he similarly viewed it as a response to the rise of the social state. In particular, it problematized state planning and sought to re-organize society according to the enterprise form. Initially, studies of neoliberal governmentalities also viewed neoliberalism as 'critical reflection' on government. However, as others have pointed out, contemporary studies now assume too much about neoliberalism, and as a result they render it as a set of fixed principles rather than a political rationality that is orientated to grappling with ever changing problems.

Ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities engage deeply with a particular site or set of sites, in turn developing rich, deep pictures that push against assumptions about what neoliberalism is. For example, over the course of Collier's ethnographic work on neoliberalism and Russia in the 1990s, he was confronted with a set of problems that were almost invisible to outsiders. Collier's starting point was a small industrial city in Southern Russia called Belaya Kalitva, of the kind that the urban and social planners and architects who invented the norms and forms of Soviet Modernity saw as representing the ideal future.[111] Small towns like this therefore provided him with an entry into understanding plans for reformulating the Soviet social state after its breakup. His second site was a small out of the way "non-city" called Rodniki. Through his immersion in these sites Collier became aware of the reoccurring importance of late Soviet period city building, and how its objects—"pipes, wires, apartment

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[109] Brady, "Institutionalized Individualism and the Care of the Self", 265–283.

[110] Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 321.

[111] Collier, *Post-Soviet Social*.

blocks, bureaucratic routines—became the target of neoliberal reform."[112] By absorbing himself in a set of sites Collier was able to show how reforms in post-Soviet Russia (proposed and enacted) linked up with neoliberal critiques from elsewhere, and in the process he challenged our assumptions about neoliberal thinkers. Specifically, Collier's study traces 'minor traditions' of neoliberalism (such as new economics of regulation) that strongly influenced the reform of the regulatory regimes, technical infrastructure, and welfare in cities such as Belaya Kalitva but which are almost entirely omitted from the literature on neoliberalism.[113] Although Collier focuses deeply on two small sites his work has much broader implications because it challenges some fundamental things that we think we know about neoliberalism.[114] The ultimate aim of this kind of deep investigation is to develop a clearer picture of similarities and differences across a wide number of cases. As Collier argues, without a sophisticated picture of contemporary political rationalities in particular sites, any comparison across sites is hollow. While genealogical investigation alone had the ability to uncover minor thinkers, an ethnographic focus on particular sites reveals to researchers the development of a set of practical governmental problems that would otherwise not be visible. As he argues his fieldwork provided:

> Insight into critical nodes where fields of power come into contact and are made visible; into singular realities whose intelligibility has to be found in diverse experiences that lie beyond them. The detailed engagement of ethnography provided, thus, an orientation to a grouping of sites and a set of problems that I simply could not have stumbled upon otherwise.[115]

In addition to making visible different kinds of problems, ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities also help uncover the existence of marginalised political rationalities and forms of power. A tendency in studies of governmentality is to uncover the existence of a particular rationality or technology of government within a policy or program and to conclude with off-hand generalizations suggesting that this describes all power relations in that society or epoch.[116] Exclusive reliance on archival sources or publically available texts supports this tendency because it makes it easier for the researcher to focus on new or emerging rationalities while bracketing the existence of co-existing rationalities or forms of power. By orientating themselves to a site or set of sites, and the problems within that site, the researcher's attention is more easily drawn to the existence of multiple technologies, rationalities and relations of power. Ethnographic methodologies may draw attention to non-liberal forms of power that may be most apparent in everyday discourse or talk.[117] As Lippert's work on church sanctuaries for refugees[118] and more recently urban governance[119] illustrates, if we are to take seriously

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 29.
[116] Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde, *Governmentality*, 83–104; Collier, *Topologies of Power*, 78–108.
[117] Lippert, *Neoliberalism, Police and the Governance of Little Urban Things*
[118] Lippert, *Sanctuary, Sovereignty, Sacrifice*, 226.

governmentality scholars' claims to be concerned with forms of government beyond the state then we must also use methodologies that allow us to illuminate them. An excellent example of how ethnographies of governmentalities can reveal different forms of power is Lippert's ethnographic study of church sanctuary incidents in Canada.[120] The first sanctuary incident occurred in December 1983 when St Andrew's United Church provided sanctuary to a refugee who was about to be deported. By 2003, 36 similar incidents involving 261 refugees had occurred. Through accessing private archival material and interviewing key people who were involved in the incidents, Lippert shows how pastoral power, sovereign power, and law work together and sometimes conflict in sanctuary spaces and practices. In the process Lippert challenges the usefulness of key concepts, such as 'responsibilisation,' that are commonly linked to neoliberalism. The concept of "responsibilisation," implies a unidirectional movement from the state to other actors or groups, but what appears as, "responsibilization from the totalizing perspective of advanced liberalism is the proper exercise of community authority from the perspective of pastoral and nonstate sovereign powers."[121] 'Responsibilisation' as a concept for understanding neoliberalism obscures the operation of what Lippert refers to as "church and community sovereign power, a power understood in part as the monopoly to make the exception."[122] In focusing on a set of spaces that are only visible through ethnographic methodologies, Lippert challenges familiar narratives about neoliberal governmentalities, thereby shifting us from well-worn narrative paths that chart the steady ascendance of market logic and the imposition of new programmes of responsibilisation.

Ethnographies of political rationalities and technologies make evident the actual processes and forms of subjectivity formation over time. Textually based studies of neoliberal governmentalities provide evidence of new technologies of the self and new techniques for shaping an individual's relationship to themselves.[123] However, because ethnographic methodologies also involve focusing on particular people, actors and individuals, usually over an extended period of time, they enable researchers to uncover how new forms of subjectivity, such as subject of the European Union, or financial self,[124] work alongside or connect with other subjectivities, or perhaps clash with and challenge them. Ethnographies provide a window into the ways that neoliberal rationalities are reorganizing subjectivities tied to earlier social ways of governing —as in Hoffman's work on 'patriotic professionalism' in China[125] —rather than simply challenging or replacing them. This is not, as Wacquant has accused, about replacing a big N neoliberalism with an "indefinite number of small-n neoliberalisms." Instead it is about viewing neoliberal subjectivities as forming part of shifting, supple relations of power, rather than as being linked into a coherent apparatus of power. For example, through ten years of fieldwork in a major city in China (Dalian) Hoffman sought to understand how the

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[119] Lippert, *Neoliberalism, Police and the Governance of Little Urban Things*

[120] Lippert, *Sanctuary, Sovereignty, Sacrifice*, 226.

[121] Ibid. p. 170

[122] Ibid. p. 19

[123] Jason Read, "A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity," *Foucault Studies*, vol. 6 (2009), 25–36. http://ej.lib.cbs.dk/index.php/foucault–studies/article/viewArticle/2465.

[124] Fridman, *Foucault Studies*, Issue 18 (2014), 90-112.

[125] Hoffman, *Autonomous Choices and Patriotic Professionalism*, 550–570

actual subjectivities of urban professionals in China unfolded over a period of time. She argues that college graduates in China "adopted a self-enterprising ethos" that was linked to neoliberal political rationalities and techniques for governing, and a non-liberal (socialist) ethos of "national duty through labor."[126] Through participant observation she documents how neoliberal and socialist rationalities and technologies are combined in a 'patriotic professionalism' in turn challenging standard accounts of neoliberalism that suggest neoliberal subjectivities simply displace social subjectivities.

We have seen (in the first part of this article) that a longstanding criticism of studies of governmentality has been the failure to address the politics of governmentalities including managing failures and contradictions, marginalizing competing explanations, rendering a problem technical rather than political/partisan, devising compromises, and containing critiques.[127] Ethnographies of contemporary governmentalities usually combine fieldwork with historical and contemporary documentation related to the particular set of problems or programs they are researching. Frequently this fieldwork occurs over a period of years which allows researchers to "track the effects of planned interventions as they are layered one up upon the next and intersect […] with other processes"[128] and to make visible the politics involved in establishing an agreed problematic and defending it from successful challenge.[129] An excellent example of this kind of contribution is evident in Tania Li's work on the governmentality of development. Beginning in the early 1990s Li undertook long term field work in the hills of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia in order to understand the governmentality of "improvement programs." As she documents in *The Will to Improve: governmentality, development, and the practice of politics*, her field work, which extended over more than a decade, allowed her to track the processes through which programmers contained critiques, managed failures and contradictions, and linked together the objectives of "those who aspire to govern conduct and those whose conduct is to be conducted."[130] As Li has argued elsewhere her ethnographic methodology was explicitly focused on countering the governmentality literature's excessive focus on *problematizations* – the ways that diverse difficulties are assembled into a singular problem – and the resulting *dispositive*, apparatus or technologies of government that are assembled to govern this 'urgent need.'[131] Through her extended engagement with a particular site through ethnographic fieldwork Li illuminates the degree to which the governmental assemblage of improvement programs were unsettled and incomplete, and more specifically the limits of the World Bank's strategies to govern through community. [132] Finally, while Li's use of the term 'neoliberal regimes' suggests that the meaning of neoliberalism is fixed in advance, within her ethnographic study she is careful to illuminate how the new governmental assem-

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[126] L. M. Hoffman, *Patriotic Professionalism in Urban China: Fostering Talent* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 83–4.

[127] Hindess, *Politics and Governmentality*, 257–272; P. O'Malley, L. Weir, and C. Shearing, "Governmentality, Criticism, Politics," *Economy and Society*, vol. 26, no. 4 (1997), 501–517.

[128] Li, Will to Improve, 3.

[129] Li, "Practices of Assemblage and Community Forest Management"

[130] Ibid., 263–4.

[131] Loc. Cit.

[132] Ibid.; Li, *Will to Improve*.

blage contained non-neoliberal elements that were specific to the region and had developed in the colonial period. Li thus illuminates the degree to which neoliberal rationalities combine with other rationalities and forms of power, and the degree to which any attempt to govern remains incomplete, and in flux.[133]

Conclusion

In a recent journal debate Loïc Wacquant slammed the work of anthropologists who viewed neoliberalism as governmentality, arguing that they seek to reject a large N neoliberalism and replace it with a "messy" view in which there are an "indefinite number of small-n neoliberalisms born of the ongoing hybridisation of neoliberal practices and ideas with local conditions and forms".[134] In this article I have rejected this characterisation of ethnographies of neoliberal governmentalities, by arguing that researchers who embrace this methodology hold that it is possible to distinguish between neoliberal and non-neoliberal rationalities and practices. Thus, rather than seeking to identify multiple small-n neoliberalisms these studies seek to understand the relative importance of neoliberal rationalities within any particular context, and to uncover how neoliberal rationalities and practices link up and combine with other rationalities and practices.

Numerous scholars have criticised studies of neoliberal governmentalities for failing to generate any political traction due to their tendency to abstract from actually existing spaces and subjects, to produce "cookie cutter" analysis, and generate "hyperbolic discourses which exceed any critical purchase on the real."[135] In contrast, each of the studies examined within this review consciously attempt to critically engage with the 'real,' to push against fixed understandings of neoliberalism, and to reveal dynamic and sometimes incoherent configurations of power within particular national or regional contexts. Thus, we saw that Collier pushes against conventional scripts concerning the nature of neoliberal thought by revealing the influence of marginalised neoliberal thinkers, and Lippert challenges our understanding of responsibilization (a concept that is tightly tied to familiar narratives about the trajectory of neoliberalism) by highlighting non-state actors' views. Other studies reviewed here show how distinct forms of power recombine in different ways, the degree to which power relations are unsettled, and the role of politics and contestation in forming and disrupting these relations. Through revealing these dynamics these studies make visible spaces in which resistance against oppressive relations of power may emerge.

In embracing an ethnographic methodology, researchers such as Hoffman, Lippert, Li and Collier embrace a concern with the 'witches' brew' of actual practices, and thus they may be seen as rejecting Foucault's methodological approach to neoliberalism. However, what I have argued in this article is that in refusing to treat neoliberalism as an apparatus that determines all other relations of power and instead showing how distinct forms of power both recombine in different ways within different historical periods and co-exist (rather than simply replacing each other), these scholars draw on an understanding of power that is much closer

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Wacquant, *Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism*, 66–79.

[135] Donzelot, and Gordon, *Governing Liberal Societies*, 3–16.

to the position embraced by Foucault in his later years than many existing studies of neoliberal governmentalities.

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