

LIMITS OF NEOLIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY:
SUCCESSFUL EXPORTATION AND LESS SUCCESSFUL
APPLICATION IN SERBIA

By
Katarina Kušić

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Supervisor: Professor Emel Akçali

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Abstract

This research will contribute to the ongoing debate about the appropriateness of using Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality in IR. It will do so by grounding the research in non-positivist empirics by using ethnographic fieldwork in Serbia, a space that has been trapped in a post-socialist transition for more than 20 years, and, despite being the target of exogenous neoliberal reforms, fails to function with a neoliberal rationality of government. Furthermore, this thesis will differentiate between exporting governmentality and actually applying it within specific territories. The first part will introduce the concept of governmentality and review the objections to its usage in IR. The second part will focus on the creation of Serbia as the 'backward' state, a prerequisite to external influence on the Serbian society, and address the problem of individual subjectivation usually associated with Foucauldian analyses of power. The last part will focus on Serbian civil society as a platform through which the new rationalities are introduced, but which simultaneously serves a site of resistance to those same rationalities. More than providing theoretical clarity, I hope to make this a starting point in investigating forms of government outside the developed West and their global relations without falling into the trap of linear development which unavoidably carries the normalizing gaze with it.

Keywords: governmentality, limits, statebuilding, democracy promotion, resistance

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Introduction.....	1
1. Methodology	5
1.1. Ethnographic governmentality studies	5
1.2. Fieldwork in Belgrade.....	6
2. (Neoliberal) Governmentality	8
2.1. Governmentality.....	8
2.2. Neoliberal governmentality.....	10
2.3. Universal or global governmentality?.....	12
3. States and individuals as subjects	20
3.1. Creating the ‘backward’ state as the subject.....	20
3.2 Creating the individual subject	25
3.3. The possibility of resistance.....	26
4. Civil Society.....	29
4.1. ‘Local ownership’ as the vehicle for neoliberal rationalities	31
4.1.1. Exporting neoliberal rationalities to Serbia	32
4.2. Civil society as a platform for resistance	36
4.2.1 Articulated Resistance.....	37
4.2.2. Non-articulated Resistance	40
4.2.3. Non-articulated resistance and the dichotomy of power.....	43
Conclusion	45
Bibliography.....	47

Introduction

The ability of governmentality to account for both micro and macro changes caused by the growing interconnectedness of societies has inspired International Relations (IR) scholars to use the concept in areas as diverse as that of securitization,¹ global governance,² and EU studies,³ and invoke the concept of global governmentality.⁴ Using governmentality in IR, however, is problematic. Six years after the publication of translated lectures in which Foucault described the concept of governmentality,⁵ the debate about the appropriateness and the potential of governmentality in IR is at its peak, as shown by Wanda Vradi in a recent article⁶ in which she defends the concept against the objections raised to its usage in IR by Jonathan Joseph,⁷ Jan Selby,⁸ and David Chandler.⁹

The objections against the use of governmentality in IR are well founded. Governmentality was developed to explain the conduct of individuals in conditions of formal freedom, which the international is lacking.¹⁰ However, despite the 'failure' of globalization to create a homogenous global population, the efforts of developed nations to speed up the 'development' of the less developed cannot be denied. This thesis will focus on these efforts to governmentalize, and their subsequent failures as limits of neoliberal governmentality. This will offer some reconciliation to the

¹ Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 27, no. 1 (2002).

² Ole Jacob Sending and Iver B. Neumann, "Governance to Governmentality: Analyzing NGOs, States, and Power," *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006).

³ William Walter and Jens Henrik Haar, *Governing Europe: Discourse, Governmentality and European Integration* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁴ Wendy Larner and William Walters, eds., *Global Governmentality: Governing International Spaces* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1978-1979* ed. Michel Senellart, trans., Graham Burchell (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-1978*, ed. Michel Senellart and Arnold Ira Davidson, trans., Graham Burchell (New York Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁶ Wanda Vradi, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global': Governmentality, Economic Liberalism, and the International," *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 1 (2013).

⁷ Jonathan Joseph, "Governmentality of What? Populations, States and International Organisations," *Global Society* 23, no. 4 (2009); Jonathan Joseph, "The Limits of Governmentality: Social Theory and the International," *European Journal of International Relations* 16, no. 2 (2010).

⁸ Jan Selby, "Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian Ir," *International Relations* 21, no. 3 (2007).

⁹ David Chandler, "Critiquing Liberal Cosmopolitanism? The Limits of the Biopolitical Approach," *International Political Sociology* 3, no. 1 (2009); David Chandler, "Globalising Foucault: Turning Critique into Apologia-a Response to Kiersey and Rosenow," *Global Society* 24, no. 2 (2010).

¹⁰ Nicholas J Kiersey, "Neoliberal Political Economy and the Subjectivity of Crisis: Why Governmentality Is Not Hollow," *Global Society* 23, no. 4 (2009): 368.

aforementioned debate in the form of differentiating between two concepts: 1) the exportation¹¹ of neoliberal rationalities, and 2) their (unsuccessful) application within specific territories.¹²

I agree with Joseph that “there is a big difference between a society having its own conditions for governmentality and a society having governmentality thrust upon it by outside institutions and organizations,”¹³ but I believe that the usefulness of the concept does not end when entering those societies which fail to governmentalize to the neoliberal ideal. This failure of the neoliberal project is where we find the limits of governmentality, and by it, the limits of democracy promotion, statebuilding, and social movements looking to transform societies.

While the exploration of this neoliberal project is valuable, we should steer away from using neoliberalism as a purely ‘rhetorical device’ used to explain “almost any political, economic, social or cultural process associated with contemporary capitalism.”¹⁴ This trend allows the creation of ‘discursive coalitions’, which, regardless of how powerful their critique sounds, do not clarify what exactly they are criticizing.¹⁵ Alternatively, we should use Foucault’s insistence on decentering the “tactics, strategies, field of truths and rationalizations” in any regime of power/knowledge to analyze constellations of power on all levels of analysis;¹⁶ this is a valuable tool needed to analyze the workings of disciplinary power which renders some states open to foreign influence and intervention, and the grounding of that influence in indigenous populations.

Following Vrasti’s observation that we need a “much more empirically rigorous investigation of the conditions and structures under which the management of populations and states becomes effective”¹⁷ this thesis will examine the interaction of the neoliberal push and the local

¹¹ I borrow the term from Halit Mustafa Tagma, Elif Kalaycioglu, and Emel Akçali, “‘Taming’ Arab Social Movements: Exporting Neoliberal Governmentality,” *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 4-5 (2013). forthcoming.

¹² Tagma et al. similarly differentiate between “imposition and possible grounding” of neoliberal rationalities, and Kurki between the existence of neoliberal practices in democracy promotion and their impact in target states. Ibid.; Milja Kurki, “Governmentality and EU Democracy Promotion: The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the Construction of Democratic Civil Societies,” *International Political Sociology* 5, no. 4 (2011): 351.

¹³ Joseph, “The Limits of Governmentality” 233. I would also like to add neoliberal governmentality, since this is the form of government we are concerned with today.

¹⁴ Donald M. Nonini, “Is China Becoming Neoliberal?,” *Critique of Anthropology* 28, no. 2 (2008): 149., quoted in Terry Flew, “Michel Foucault’s the Birth of Biopolitics and Contemporary Neo-Liberalism Debates,” *Thesis Eleven* 108, no. 1 (2012): 45.

¹⁵ Nonini: 149., quoted in Flew: 45.

¹⁶ Doerthe Rosenow, “Decentering Global Power: The Merits of a Foucauldian Approach to International Relations,” *Global Society* 23, no. 4 (2009): 517.

¹⁷ Vrasti: 55.

conditions in post-regime change Serbia. Furthermore, it will investigate the exportation of neoliberal governmentality as the influence of external institutions and organizations on Serbia, a country trapped in post-socialist transition for more than two decades and open to both the normative power of the EU, and the social engineering¹⁸ of externally funded civil society organizations. However, the populations on the receiving end of these rationalities are not a tabula rasa but “have their own agency, which is grounded in particular culturally infused ways of knowing and doing things.”¹⁹ Thus the second area of investigation is the interaction of local populations with exogenously developed neoliberal rationalities - the application of neoliberal governmentality.

The failure of translating exported neoliberal governmentality to homogenous application of neoliberalism around the world begs the question of the limits of governmentality and calls for further investigation of these interactions. Is there resistance to be found on the ground? If there is, what is its nature? Or are existing social structures preventing the complete adoption of neoliberal rationalities? This is not an entirely new question since similar work in anthropology has been done on post-colonial²⁰ and post-Soviet²¹ spaces. I will take it a step further by investigating a post-Yugoslavian space which is typically left out of both post-colonial and post-socialist literature. Moreover, by employing ethnographical fieldwork to explore these new conditions on the ground, I will try to fill the gap in empirical research on governmentality in IR which is crucial in a mission of “deepening and widening Foucauldian interpretations of the global,”²² and ground the research in non-positivist empirics.

In the first chapter, I will define neoliberal governmentality and its universal tendency, and present the objections to its global applications and the defense provided by Vrásti. I will then offer reconciliation by differentiating between the exportation of governmentality as external influence, and its application as the reaction of local populations and newly developed conditions on the ground. In the second chapter, I will focus on the creation of Serbia as the ‘backward’ state, a prerequisite to

¹⁸ The term ‘social engineering’ which I employ throughout the paper has been used in an interview by a high ranking employee in an influential foreign funded NGO when discussing the mission of the NGO community in Serbia. Belgrade, April 23, 2013.

¹⁹ Merlingen, "Applying Foucault's Toolkit to CSDP," in *Explaining the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: Theory in Action*, ed. Xymena Kurowska and Fabian Breuer (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 204.

²⁰ Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Duke University Press, 2006).

²¹ S.J. Collier, *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics* (Princeton University Press, 2011).

²² Michael Merlingen, "Monster Studies," *International Political Sociology* 2, no. 3 (2008): 273.

external influence on the Serbian society, and address the problem of individual subjectivation usually associated with Foucauldian analyses of power. In the last chapter, I will focus on Serbian civil society as “both the object and end of government”²³ - a platform through which the new rationalities are introduced, but which simultaneously serves as a site of resistance to those same rationalities. By doing so, I hope to contribute to the debate about the ability of governmentality to explain changes in non-Western societies. More than providing theoretical clarity, I hope to make this a starting point of the investigation of different forms of government and their global relations without falling into the trap of linear development which unavoidably carries the normalizing gaze with it.

²³ Graham Burchell, "Peculiar Interests: Civil Society and Governing 'the System of Natural Liberty'," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures and an Interview with Michel Foucault*, ed. Colin Gordon Graham Burchell, Peter Miller (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 140.

1. Methodology

1.1. *Ethnographic governmentality studies*

The ethnographic turn in IR sprouted from feminist studies²⁴ in the 1980s, and was quickly embraced by a variety of scholars ranging from social constructivist²⁵ to post-colonialist.²⁶ More recently, it has been argued that ethnographic research can advance governmentality studies²⁷ and studies of post-socialist change.²⁸ Hörschelmann and Stenning argue that using ethnography in the analysis of post-socialist transformations allows us to move away from the “universal and one dimensional theories” of neoliberal development, and to crack open a “complex interpretive terrain, where western concepts such as ‘the market’, ‘employment’, ‘class’ or ‘civil society’ take on distinctly different meanings from those applied by policy-makers and non-governmental agencies.”²⁹ In their words, ethnographic accounts are “potent means to question the supremacy of universalizing theories without retreating into the mosaic realm of discrete cultural differences.”³⁰

Interpreting different production of meanings requires embracing the conventional understanding of ethnography as both a method and methodology. The method is participant observation, and the methodology is making sense of how others make sense of the world.³¹ Such employment of ethnographic method implies an interpretive methodology, as opposed to the ethnographic method combined with statistical or relational methodologies.³² The abandonment of causal thinking in favor of descriptive usually marks interpretive research³³ which is needed to denaturalize the view of progress as a linear progression leading to procedural democracy, free market,

²⁴ Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," *Signs* 12, no. 4 (1987).; C. Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

²⁵ Iver B. Neumann, "Returning Practice to the Linguistic Turn: The Case of Diplomacy," *Millennium* 31, no. 3 (2002).; Vincent Pouliot, "'Subjectivism': Toward a Constructivist Methodology," *International Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2007).

²⁶ Lily H. M. Ling, *Postcolonial International Relations: Conquest and Desire between Asia and the West* (London: Palgrave, 2002).; Marianne I. Franklin, *Postcolonial Politics, the Internet, and Everyday Life: Pacific Traversals Online* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

²⁷ Wanda Vradi, "The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations," *Millennium* 37, no. 2 (2008).

²⁸ Kathrin Hörschelmann and Alison Stenning, "Ethnographies of Postsocialist Change," *Progress in Human Geography* 32, no. 3 (2008).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 345-6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 341.

³¹ Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, Third Edition ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 56-8., cited in Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Can Ethnographic Techniques Tell Us Distinctive Things About World Politics?," *International Political Sociology* 2, no. 1 (2008): 91.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 92.

and civil society. This will allow us to analyze the different production of meaning as both the cause and consequence of imposing such an ideal.

Governmentality fits well with ethnography because it considers both “the programs and rationalities of government” which flow from the universalizing ideal of neoliberalism, and the “mundane and humble details found in the everyday operations of power” as the effect and new meanings produced by the interaction of local populations with the newly introduced rationalities.³⁴ In other words, the combination of ethnography and governmentality studies allows us to consider both the exportation of overarching governmental rationalities and their everyday manifestations and interactions with the local.³⁵ Ethnography provides a “grounded perspective that explains how large-scale processes are interpreted, responded to and (re)produced by social actors in specific locations,”³⁶ and governmentality studies seek to explain exactly those rationalities developed by macro-processes and their effect on the quotidian lives of the local populations, making ethnographic research useful for “understanding the complex and contested nature of post-socialist transformations” and “contributing to poststructuralist critiques of universal concepts and theories.”³⁷ Governmentality helps with this mission through its ability to denaturalize the universal concepts and theories by tracing their contingent development in the West and exportation to the rest of the world. At the same time, it considers the micro transgressions which mark its limits by negotiating and distorting the meaning of those same structures. By focusing on exportation of neoliberal rationalities and their application on the ground, I sought to investigate the consequences of introducing neoliberal rationalities and the limits of their grounding in Serbia.

1.2. Fieldwork in Belgrade

My field work in Belgrade was based on participant observations: semi structured interviews, observation, and natural conversations. Because of time limitations, I assumed the role of a participating observer, rather than observing participant. My goal was to probe the subjectivity of the

³⁴ Wanda Vrásti, "The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations," *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 37, no. 2 (2008): 293.

³⁵ Vrásti, "The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations," 293.

³⁶ Hörschelmann and Stenning: 348.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 355.

interviewees, so I relied on unstructured interviews that allowed me to treat the interviewee as “as an active subject, and not merely a reporter of facts or experiences.”³⁸ The interviews became semi-structured at some points by me asking them to talk about their experiences with the state, foreign donors, or memorable projects. I minimized my influence on the interviewees by controlling the language I used: I restricted my questions to asking simple open ended questions requiring broad description of events instead of focusing their narrative by looking for specific answers.

The pragmatic advantage of choosing Serbia as a case study is my familiarity of language and culture. This made interviewing activists and NGO workers an effective way of inquiry into the topography of power. But the proximity of the culture also problematizes the intersubjectivity of my findings. However, instead of putting myself in the role of ‘researcher-miner’ and looking for ‘true’ meaning by minimizing my bias, I assumed the role of ‘researcher-traveler’³⁹ embracing the cultural background that allows me to understand the histories that people were retelling me. Talking to people who represent a culture different than mine, but with whom I share a common post-Yugoslavian heritage, did not create the abhorred ‘researcher bias,’ but allowed me to notice the peculiarities of cultural meanings produced in Serbia. Thus the fact that I was a Croatian talking to a Serbian nationalist did not impede my research, but gave me more insight into the framing of their ideology for use in everyday life.

An important caveat to my research is the urban bias due to spending time only in the capital. While the newly introduced rationalities may be more easily identifiable in a rural setting, engaging with that part of the country would require a longer time span. Furthermore, spending time in the capital allowed me to engage more with civil society which simultaneously works to disseminate neoliberal rationalities, and serves as a platform for resistance to those same rationalities.

³⁸ "Unstructured Interviews", Universities of Essex and Manchester
<http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/support/interviews/unstructured.asp> (accessed March 12 2013).

³⁹ S. Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (SAGE Publications, 1996), 5.

2. (Neoliberal) Governmentality

2.1. Governmentality

“The exercise of power is ‘conduct of conducts’ and a management of possibilities.”⁴⁰

“This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects.”⁴¹

The novelty of governmentality in the Foucauldian sense is a new rationality of government: power is no longer seen as serving to protect and reinforce the principality of the ruler, but is concerned with ensuring the overall success of the population.⁴² The first move towards this new rationality is the realization that there is a variety of forms of governing: governing oneself, governing the family, governing souls, governing children. Governmentality is concerned with the government of individuals through grouping them in the mass of ‘the population’ which it takes as its object. The concept of population emerges coincidentally with political economy to make the objective of government the economic government of the population. Foucault traces the term ‘economy’ from the sixteenth century when it related to the proper management of goods and individuals to ensure the prosperity of the family.⁴³ The expansion of the notion of economic government from the family to ‘the population’ was enabled by the development of statistics, “specific economic effects” of the population. This made the government responsible for every aspect of life: welfare, happiness, health, etc., just as the father was responsible for all parts of the household.⁴⁴ Political economy thus became

⁴⁰ Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 341. The original version of the essay reads: "The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome." This sheds light to the often used 'conduct of conduct'. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 221. I use the version published in *Power*, 200.

⁴¹ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 331.

⁴² Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures and an Interview with Michel Foucault*, ed. Colin Gordon Graham Burchell, Peter Miller (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 89.

⁴³ Ibid., 92.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 99. Even though the model of family has been degraded from a model to a segment of government, it remains a privileged segment in that it becomes an instrument through which the knowledge of the population is gathered.

the goal of government; the question of "real effects of governmentality."⁴⁵ This change of meaning uncovered the supposedly natural phenomena of 'economics,' the cause of the 'real effects,' which then started to serve as limit to governmental rationality, taking the role of natural rights in classical liberalism. Whereas 'economy' referred to a form of government in the sixteenth century, in the eighteenth century it began to denote a separate "level of reality."⁴⁶ The 'economic' thus became a separate plane of reality, and the market a "permanent economic tribunal confronting government"⁴⁷ against which the success of government is measured, not by its legitimacy or illegitimacy, but by its success or failure.⁴⁸

As a form of power, governmentality separates itself from sovereignty and discipline.⁴⁹ Sovereignty exercises power thorough juridical and executive branches of the state to collect taxes or deal punishment within a territory; it represents what is traditionally understood as the 'state government.'⁵⁰ Contrary to the universal norms on which sovereign power depends, disciplinary power works through individualization, classification, and hierarchization of individuals in relations to one another, which allows targeting of those who fall outside the scope of the defined normal.⁵¹ Governmentalization is thus more than law departing from sovereign power and becoming a norm, or judicial power being incorporated into different apparatuses such as medical, educational, etc. These moves, combined with the individualizing disciplinary power, create a normalizing society concerned with life itself.⁵² Governmentality retains the techniques of both sovereign and disciplinary power with a goal of shaping every individual to be the carrier of human capital, a resource to be used.⁵³ Instead of replacing the other forms of power, governmentality re-ascribes them as prosperity, efficiency, welfare, happiness: it creates the subject and the ideal for which it will strive. This focus on the life of the subject allows the modern government to be concerned not only with the collection of taxes, and law

⁴⁵ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 15.

⁴⁶ Foucault, "Governmentality," 93.

⁴⁷ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 247.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁹ Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (Los Angeles, London: SAGE, 2010), 29.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1979), 223.

⁵² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality - Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans., Robert Hurley, 3 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 144.

⁵³ Dean, 29.

and order within its territory, but with micro relations and states of individuals; their happiness, fitness, practices of citizenship, personal views, and quotidian actions.

Governmentality defined as the rationality of governing is used to analyze the temporal transformation of power from sovereign power, to disciplinary power and biopolitics, or from the state of justice, through the administrative state, to the governmentalized state.⁵⁴ The temporality of this transformation guided Foucault's genealogy of the art of government from the early 16th century to the 20th century, but it must not mislead us into a linear understanding of this development. At any point there exists a triangle of "sovereignty-discipline-government," which has as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism the "apparatuses of security." Governmentality allows us to analyze these relations in different constellations in which they appear at different points in time.⁵⁵ So by governmentality we mean a specific way of conducting conduct; molding of freedom through "structuring and shaping the field of possible action of subjects."⁵⁶ This can take different forms, like communitarianism or neo-conservatism,⁵⁷ but today we are concerned with a specific form of governmentality, the neoliberal governmentality.

2.2. Neoliberal governmentality

"The relationship proper to power would therefore be sought not on the side of violence or of struggle, not on that of voluntary contract (all of which can, at best, only be the instruments of power) but, rather, in the area of that singular mode of action, neither warlike nor juridical, which is government."⁵⁸

A useful way to understand the specificity of neoliberal governmentality is to juxtapose it with classic liberalism: there are two main differences between the classical liberal and neo-liberal governmental rationalities.⁵⁹ The first is concerned with the relation of the economy and the state. In classical liberalism, the state monitored and defined market freedom, occasionally correcting the negative effects of the market. In neoliberal rationality, the market now serves as the organizing

⁵⁴ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 145.

⁵⁵ Foucault, "Governmentality," 102.

⁵⁶ Thomas Lemke, "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique," *Rethinking Marxism* 14, no. 3 (2002): 52.

⁵⁷ Dean, 176.

⁵⁸ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 341.

⁵⁹ Thomas Lemke, "'The Birth of Bio-Politics': Michel Foucault's Lecture at the College De France on Neo-Liberal Governmentality," *Economy and Society* 30, no. (2001).

principle for the state and society, and not vice versa.⁶⁰ Thus any negativity produced by capitalism becomes a problem of too much government, rather than the uncontrolled perverse nature of the market.

The second difference is in the basis of government. Classical liberalism relied on entrepreneurship, while neoliberalism requires constant competition paired with it. Instead of relying on a natural freedom which would determine the border of government, neoliberalism “posits an artificially arranged liberty: in the entrepreneurial and competitive behavior of economic rational individuals.”⁶¹ Instead of intervening in the market, a plane of reality now considered ontologically prior, the government must intervene into the “fabric and depth” of society to allow competition to become an omnipresent mechanism for shaping behavior and thus allow the market to perform its natural regulatory role.⁶²

This subsumption of government under market rationalities makes important the difference between the political liberalism of Kant, Rousseau, and Hobbes and the economic liberalism of Hume, Ricardo, Smith, and James and Stuart Mill.⁶³ While the former group used humanism to establish the legitimacy of power through notions of individual rights, rule of law, and liberty of expression, economic liberalist find the market rationality a sufficient limit to the government and a tool for the betterment of individuals. While the majority of liberal IR is concerned only with political liberalism, governmentality collapses the two and allows us to see how economic liberalism became the “paradigmatic mode for governing the present,” and at times employs the ideals of political liberalism to mask its economic aspirations.⁶⁴

Along with the free market, procedural democracy and civil society work as the other two pillars of neoliberal governmental rationality.⁶⁵ Through these pillars, neoliberal governmental rationality creates free and responsible subjects, and at the same time utilizes their choices and freedoms. By creating these three areas of action as natural and populated by free individuals guided by

⁶⁰ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 116.; Lemke, “The Birth of Bio-Politics”, 200.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 145.

⁶³ Vrasti, “Universal but Not Truly ‘Global’,” 59.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 59-60.

⁶⁵ Tagma, Kalaycioglu, and Akçali. forthcoming

independent interests, neoliberalism becomes a mode of governing social actors “through shaping and utilizing their freedom.”⁶⁶ In transitional societies, civil society has an even more important role to create the freedom which will then be used to limit the government. In countries like Serbia, civil society facilitates the creation and proper functioning of both democracy and the capitalist economy by building the capacities of individuals to perform their neoliberal role of limiting the state. This is done through a variety of techniques that I will discuss in the chapter on civil society.

2.3. Universal or global governmentality?

Foucault recognized the importance of the international, saying “the state only exists as states, in the plural,”⁶⁷ but he traced the neoliberal rationalities only as they developed in Germany and the US. However, even though Foucault focused on the developed West, it is not hard to look at the international and see the global diffusion of the same art of government which presents itself as the developmental ideal to be strived for.

Despite the difficulty of combining a statist ontology common in IR with a focus on the micro techniques of power which constitute the state, instead of deriving from it, Foucauldian approaches have been domesticated in IR. The earliest application of his analysis of the relation of power and knowledge was used to challenge the alleged positivism of realist theories in the 1980s.⁶⁸ Merlingen usefully divides them into three categories: 1) discourse analysis which examines the power/knowledge relationships, 2) biopower studies which focus on the productive, as opposed to oppressive, manifestations of power and 3) governmentality studies which touch both “to study the thinking underpinning de-centered governance beyond the state.”⁶⁹ This definition of governmentality studies touches upon an important contribution of governmentality studies to IR: their ability to consider the macro without ignoring the micro, and account for both the regimes of truth created by the discourse of sciences and ideology and the micro workings of biopolitics. With globalization facilitating the ever

⁶⁶ Nikolas Rose, "Governing "Advanced" Liberal Democracies," in *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government*, ed. Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 54.

⁶⁷ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 5.

⁶⁸ For an overview of Foucauldian contributions to IR, see Giorgio Shani and David Chandler, "Assessing the Impact of Foucault on International Relations," *International Political Sociology* 4, no. 2 (2010). entire forum.

⁶⁹ Michael Merlingen, "Applying Foucault's Toolkit to CSDP," in *Explaining the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: Theory in Action*, ed. Xymena Kurowska and Fabian Breuer, Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 190.

faster and wider diffusion of ideas, standards, and ideals, it is even more tempting to use the concept of governmentality to account for global relations. But such application is problematic because Foucault was primarily concerned with individual populations, the German and the American, when discussing the development of neoliberalism. In the following section, I review the objections recently raised against using governmentality in IR and present Vrasti's defense of the universality of governmentality. I will offer a reconciliation of the two sides by differentiating between two concepts: exporting neoliberal rationalities to societies which do not function as advanced liberal democracies and thus are opened to influence and intervention of more developed actors, and applying these rationalities within a specific territory. It is my contention that even in cases where societies do not develop the 'freedom' needed for neoliberal governmentality, we can still trace the exportation of neoliberal rationalities to those societies.

The objections to applying governmentality to the international level raised by Jan Selby, Jonathan Joseph, and David Chandler, are summarized in a recent article by Wanda Vrasti.⁷⁰ The first objection relates to the fact that Foucault developed his ideas in relation to a specific population and therefore cannot be scaled up to address the "specificity and irreducibility of the international."⁷¹ Joseph joins Selby in this objection, but at the same time resolves the issue by saying that the "regulation of states takes place through the targeting of populations," and rationalities are exported to precisely those places where this governmentalization of populations fails.⁷² The differentiation between contingent and imposed (and more often failed) development of neoliberalism is crucial. However, if "those places lacking the kind of developed economic, social and political institutions that neoliberal governmentality requires"⁷³ fail to develop into proper neoliberalism, the usefulness of the concept of governmentality does not end - we can still use it to track the imposition of neoliberal rationalities in the form of exporting governmentality from the more developed regions. This targeting of populations which do not fit the ideal of government confirms Vrasti's claim that neoliberalism has

⁷⁰ Vrasti, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global'," 50.

⁷¹ Selby: 326.

⁷² Joseph, "Governmentality of What?" 427.

⁷³ Joseph, "The Limits of Governmentality," 233.

become a universal tendency, i.e. all other forms of government are measured against it and rendered 'less developed' if they do not match. I will return to this issue in the final section of this chapter.

The second criticism questions the applicability of governmentality to societies outside the developed West.⁷⁴ This reminds of Spivak's argument that power does not function productively in the periphery of the capitalist world system, as opposed to the productive biopolitical manifestations of governmentality in the developed countries.⁷⁵ Similarly to Spivak, Joseph notices that there is a difference between societies in which the development of neoliberalism is contingent and 'natural,' as opposed to societies that are today perceived as 'less developed' and thus become the target of externally introduced reforms which are supposed to facilitate development. Nonetheless, the failure of targeted societies to develop proper neoliberal governmentality does not negate the imposition of those rationalities. Governmentality studies allow us to move away from wondering whether the neoliberal project has 'succeeded' or not,⁷⁶ and provide us with tools to examine the actual power and subject formations on the ground, i.e. the exportation of rationalities from one area to another, and the transformations that happen to them during application, while they interact with the local populations and existing social structures. If we were to follow the path of 'successful or unsuccessful application of neoliberal governmentality' we would unavoidably fall into the trap of linearly presenting the development of different parts of the world, not very differently than the early euro-centric democratization theories. Whereas democratization scholars accepted liberal democracy as a universal norm disregarding the differences in actual social structures of different locales and the terrible consequences of blindly trying to reproduce the results seen in other societies, the liberal project can present itself as a universal ideal which renders all differing societies as 'underdeveloped' and by it susceptible to interventionism and neo-colonialism.

Joseph comes dangerously close to the aforementioned linear presentation of development with his differentiation between governmentality and a "more basic" disciplinary power to which societies

⁷⁴ Joseph, "Governmentality of What?."

⁷⁵ Pheng Cheah, "Biopower and the New International Division of Reproductive Labor," *Boundary 2* 34, no. 1 (2007): 83.

⁷⁶ Joseph, "The Limits of Governmentality," 236.

which experience unsuccessful attempts of governmentalization revert.⁷⁷ He overlooks the fact that governmentality, as an attempt to link the art of government to a particular regime of truth, is more than a form of power, it includes both disciplinary power and biopower.⁷⁸ The development of neoliberal governmentality does not involve a substitution of one form of government with another, but a shift of emphasis.⁷⁹ Disciplinary power may relate more to the underclasses of the society in question with creating the states of exception needed for the proper functioning of neoliberalism, while the biopolitics may have different goals than the creation of individual consumerist neoliberal subjects.

Joseph is right in pointing out that some places fail to develop into true neoliberal societies despite the efforts of foreign actors to introduce neoliberal rationalities.⁸⁰ However, the receiving populations still interact with these new rationalities and create something beyond the previous form of government, they do not 'revert' but 'distort.' The distortion can range from over-appropriating the market rationality like Cheah's case of state managed emigration or small NGOs fiercely competing for funding as a means of survival, to developing resistance movements within the same logic of government. These issues will be clarified in a later discussions on subject formation and resistance. In any case, there are still both disciplinary and biopolitical techniques of government, but developed and employed differently. It would be irresponsible to see this transformation as a regress to older forms of government or to stretch the concept of neoliberalism to fit these new developments.

Salwa Ismail's investigation of Egypt's moment between neoliberal reforms and authoritarian governmentality is a good example of the need to differentiate between the exportation and individual application of neoliberal rationalities. She successfully points out that the production of subjectivities through governmental techniques is influenced by "global economic arrangements and geostrategic contests,"⁸¹ i.e. she points out the introduction of exogenous rationalities through exporting governmental techniques developed on an international level. But does this produce neoliberal subjects? In Egypt, surveillance of the population happens through the omnipresence of the police

⁷⁷ Ibid., 225, 243.

⁷⁸ Dean, 29.

⁷⁹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 471.

⁸⁰ Joseph, "Governmentality of What?" 426.

⁸¹ Salwa Ismail, "Authoritarian Government, Neoliberalism and Everyday Civilities in Egypt," *Third World Quarterly* 32, no. 5 (2011): 848.

force which practices the operations of ‘stop’, ‘question.’ and ‘arrest.’⁸² While this individualizes the subjects, how does it compare to Bentham’s panopticon, the ideal of government in the Foucauldian sense, in which the observed are never sure of whether they are observed or by whom? A similar question can be asked about the lamenting of a taxi driver who blames the bad behavior of citizens on the streets on the fact that the state has left them “to their own devices to fend off hunger and fight for survival.”⁸³ A key characteristic of the neoliberal subject is its freedom and individual responsibility; can this be reconciled with the driver’s complaints about the retrenchment of the state? Ismail notes that adopting the view of (Islamist) traditions as resistance to neoliberalism would be ‘reductionist and totalizing,’⁸⁴ but we cannot avoid asking whether the hybrid conduct that is born out of this interaction can really be subsumed under neoliberalism, even though it is a consequence of neoliberal reforms brought about by global circumstances shaped by neoliberalism of most developed nations. More empirical and theoretical development would be necessary to decide whether this hybrid form of government is a cooperation of Islamism and liberalism or a polices state-neoliberal governmentality, but the fact remains that the introduced neoliberal rationalities have been distorted during application and thus failed to produce neoliberal subjects. We need to investigate not only the techniques imported into these societies, but also the developments on the ground and their results. This will both prove the usefulness of the concept in investigating global relations, and probe the hybrid forms of government created by the interaction of imported neoliberal rationalities and existing social structures.

Despite the argumentative tone of Vrasti’s paper, I see similarities in her and the positions of Selby and Joseph. The difference is in the point of analysis: while Joseph talks about unevenness and existing structures as the cause for some societies not developing into neoliberal governmentality despite the efforts to do so,⁸⁵ Vrasti talks about the same thing as the cause and prerequisite for the hierarchical ordering of the international which allows the liberal project to be exported to non-Western societies, making the neoliberal project a universal standard with a global tendency.⁸⁶ Joseph’s

⁸² Ibid., 849.

⁸³ Ibid., 851.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 859.

⁸⁵ Joseph, "Governmentality of What?" 426.

⁸⁶ Vrasti, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global'," 54.

insistence on the fact that the imposed neoliberal reforms in some societies still do not lead to neoliberalism, confirms Vrasti's claim about governmentality not being 'truly global,' but does not challenge her claim of its universality as a standard, a norm against which other forms of government are measured to be abnormal. Joseph talks about this when he says that "governmentality appears not to work in certain parts of the world, yet where international organizations seek to intervene precisely on this basis."⁸⁷ Vrasti acknowledges this effort to specify "where governmentality can be applied (and) what sort of governmentality is being applied"⁸⁸ because the fact that some populations have social structures preventing the development of neoliberal governmentality opens the doors to foreign influence and exportation of governmentality. Thus more research on the cases where governmentality has been exported to, but failed to create neoliberal subjects, is useful to "pre-empt reified images of global power, on the one hand, and premature celebrations of global community, on the other."⁸⁹

The way out of this debate is in Vrasti's 'universal but not truly global' claim: while the unevenness Joseph speaks about allows the liberal project to make "certain states susceptible to foreign intervention or influence,"⁹⁰ the same uneven conditions on the ground prevent the foreign intervention and influence to reproduce true neoliberalism thus preventing it from becoming 'truly global.' The point to emphasize is that the governmentality as an explanatory framework can still be used even in societies which do not become fully governmentalized. Here, governmentality becomes a tool to examine the exportation of governmental rationalities from Western actors to receiving societies, and by identifying them as such, allows us to trace their development on the ground.

The last criticism identified by Vrasti in Joseph and Chandler is reminiscent of Spivak's critique of Foucauldian thought in her article *Can the Subaltern Speak?*⁹¹ Even though neither Vrasti nor Joseph mention Spivak, the common argument is that a major deficit of governmentality is its disregard for "national interests, power struggles, violence and imperialism."⁹² In Spivak's words, Foucault's failure to connect his theory to any kind of imperialism makes Foucauldian subject formation valuable to

⁸⁷ Joseph, "Governmentality of What?" 427.

⁸⁸ Joseph, "The Limits of Governmentality" 235. quoted in Vrasti, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global'," 55.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 54.

⁹¹ Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Carry Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (University of Illinois, 1988).

⁹² Vrasti, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global'," 50.

scholars investigating the “decay of the West,” but have nothing to offer to subaltern subjects outside Western democracies.⁹³ It follows that without more interest paid to less than peaceful characteristics of the international, such as imperialism, wars, and the international division of labor (IDL), governmentality scholars create a ‘liberal turn in IR theory’ and ignore the issues of political representation instead of critiquing the liberal world order.⁹⁴ Walzer put it succinctly when he said that the ‘bottom up’ approach used by Foucault inevitably ignores the fact that the world is not all bottom: there are such things as capitalism and imperialism which function on the top, and the analysis of power viewed as radically dispersed inevitably robs radical politics of its subject.⁹⁵

The solution to the lack of subject is usually offered in a form of a more Marxist⁹⁶ application of governmentality which would account for the capitalist structures and conditions which make the international an uneven competitive terrain. Thus it is not surprising that those raising these objections might overlook a distinctly non-Marxist theory of interests in Foucauldian thought as “political instruments that are fabricated by calculation.”⁹⁷ Whereas Marxists differentiate interests from ontologically prior needs, Foucault stays away from such judgments and reads both as manifestations of power.⁹⁸ This not only complicates the combination of Foucauldian with Marxist thought, but also makes subjectivation a necessary field of investigation: how exactly are subjects and their needs, interests, and aspirations produced. This removes the Marxist ontological grounding of needs and interests because they, along with the subject, are created by power and thus cannot be in direct confrontation with it. Cheah resolves this problem with two subject constitutions which are wildly different, but the consequence of the same global capitalist system: one producing the liberal working

⁹³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 90.

⁹⁴ Vrsti, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global'," 57.

⁹⁵ Michael Walzer, "The Politics of Michel Foucault," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1986), 58.

⁹⁶ Selby argues that it is necessary to add a Marxist explanation of ‘why’ of power to the Foucauldian focus of ‘how.’ (Selby: 341.) Such application remains outside of the scope of this paper, but for a review of possible combination of governmentality with neo-Marxism and autonomous Marxism see Jason R Weidner, "Governmentality, Capitalism, and Subjectivity," *Global Society* 23, no. 4 (2009).

⁹⁷ Cheah: 86.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 87.

mother in the developed country, and the other the FDW who migrates to fill in the gap.⁹⁹ I will elaborate on this in the discussion on subject formation.

The second problem of the neoliberal subject refers to its implications for political representation. This problem is voiced by Chandler in his critique of a “political community without political subjects.”¹⁰⁰ He contrasts the utopian optimism of the critical theorists in the group of liberal cosmopolitans with the more pessimistic view of the modern post-territorial community inspired by Foucault, such as that by Hardt and Negri.¹⁰¹ While the liberal cosmopolitans see the adoption of universal norms, rights, and international law as a move towards a post-political community exemplified by the emergence of a global civil society, the radical critics see it as a form of hegemonic domination and imagine a global resistance like Hardt and Negri’s multitude.¹⁰² Chandler summarizes his objection in three points: 1) both the liberal and radical critical approaches rely on abandoning the state approach without finding an appropriate alternative, 2) both approaches lack the political subject which would be the bearer of rights, and, in my reading, needs and interests, and 3) both approaches ignore the direct confrontations with power, both from the elites at the top and protest movements at the bottom.¹⁰³ This removal of the people as the political subject in both of the two schools of thought makes the choice between seeing the emerging global power as benign, as liberal cosmopolitans do, or oppressive, as critical theorists do, a normative, rather than an empirical choice.¹⁰⁴ The problem of subject voiced in these different critiques is almost common in Foucauldian readings of power and it needs to be resolved in order to use the governmentality approach as a critique of neoliberalism, as it was intended. It is therefore crucial to account for both issues of subject in neoliberal governmentality: the difference in biopolitical subject formation in the developed and developing parts of the world by taking into consideration the inequalities stemming from capitalist expansion, and the creation of subject as the bearer of agency needed for resistance.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 97-8.

¹⁰⁰ Chandler, "Critiquing Liberal Cosmopolitanism?" 58.

¹⁰¹ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹⁰² Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).

¹⁰³ Chandler, "Critiquing Liberal Cosmopolitanism?" 56.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 67.

3. States and individuals as subjects

“...Those who fail to conform will become second-order citizens, confined to slums and ghettos, doomed to perform low-skilled and tedious jobs, or perpetually developing states stuck in a tight spot between foreign intervention and humanitarian assistance.”¹⁰⁵

3.1. Creating the ‘backward’ state as the subject

“The ideal points of penalty today would be an indefinite discipline: an interrogation without an end, an investigation that would be extended without limit to a meticulous and ever more analytical observation, a judgement that would at the same time be the constitution of a file that was never closed, the calculated leniency of a penalty that would be interlaced with the ruthless curiosity of an examination, a procedure that would be at the same time the permanent measure of a gap in relation to an inaccessible norm and the asymptotic movement that strives to move in infinity.”¹⁰⁶

Foucault was clear about his intention to ‘cut off the king’s head’ and by doing so made us abandon the statist ontology in favor of the micro approach of governmentality. Even though this abandonment of the state is precisely what differentiates governmentality from other frameworks, it is crucial to create *the state in need* before engaging with its population directly or through influencing state policies. Similarly to the way individuals have to be created and molded a certain way to be free, the state has to be molded so it can become a free democracy marked with ‘good governance.’¹⁰⁷ Even though we may not observe successful application in complete governmentalization of non-Western societies, we can still identify the attempts of governmentalization by exporting neoliberal rationalities from Western societies, through the power of IGOs, INGOs, and other actors who assume the role of steering the direction of development. The most blatant examples of spreading neoliberal rationalities are thus found in international relations, specifically in campaigns to shape countries perceived to be ‘lagging behind’ an ideal model of democratic societies. Regardless of the language we use, the West and the outside, the core and the periphery,¹⁰⁸ the dominant and the dominated in the international division of labor (IDL), the uneven distribution in the international is undeniable. And it happens that those countries in which Foucault traced the development of neoliberalism as contingent and natural,

¹⁰⁵ Vraști, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global'," 64.

¹⁰⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 227.

¹⁰⁷ Kurki: 353.

¹⁰⁸ Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis," *Comparative studies in society and history* 16, no. 4 (1974).

are on the more developed side of the ladder, they become the universal ideal of government against which all other forms of government are measured.

In the recent decades we have seen a creation of an 'optimal model' in the form of "a remarkable 'global diffusion' of the belief in 'markets and democracy' as the key to solving both national and global problems."¹⁰⁹ The creation of this magic formula is the first step of disciplinary normalization which "consists in trying to get people, movements, and actions to conform to this model, the normal being precisely that which can conform to this norm, and the abnormal that which is incapable of conforming to the norm."¹¹⁰ Thus each country which fails to conform to the model is open to foreign intervention and influence.

The interventions and influence most often happen through IGOs. The process is twofold: first countries must be differentiated using different discipline techniques; after completion, this individualization allows for influence through international socialization. Merlingen was the first to successfully draw the parallel between making individuals governable by differentiating them through different disciplines and disciplining countries.¹¹¹ He adopts the idea of international socialization as a process which seeks to change the behavior to a more acceptable form through different mechanisms, and has the asymmetry of power as a prerequisite.¹¹² The asymmetry of power is created with normalizing judgements and examinations; discipline techniques which ultimately "render visible the space brought under their [IGO's] governance by monitoring countries, comparing their behavior to international institutional standards of normal statehood and developing the meticulous knowledge through which countries can be corrected and controlled."¹¹³ These examinations are done in ways ranging from credit ratings from private, but global and influential finance corporations, never-ending EU reports in which the progress towards fulfilling membership requirements is measured, to Freedom House ratings, etc.

¹⁰⁹ Milja Kurki, "Politico-Economic Models of Democracy in Democracy Promotion," *International Studies Perspectives* (2013).

¹¹⁰ Michel Foucault, Michel Senellart, and Arnold Ira Davidson, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-1978*, ed. Francois Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, trans., Graham Burchell (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 83.

¹¹¹ Michael Merlingen, "Governmentality Towards a Foucauldian Framework for the Study of IGOs," *Cooperation and Conflict* 38, no. 4 (2003): 369.

¹¹² Ibid., 363.

¹¹³ Ibid., 369-70.

Once this ‘interrogation without an end’ created the state in need, the other part of the process begins. This process includes transferring the ‘proper’ governmental rationalities on two levels. On the macro, country, level by international interventions into specific countries which are encouraged, required, or offered as help in efforts to spread ‘good governance.’ And on a micro, non-governmental, by channeling these rationalities through civil society which practices ‘social engineering’ and partners with both the state and the population to facilitate the ‘democratization process’.

Merlingen shows how IGOs transfer these rationalities through teaching, intermediation, social influence and material inducement from IGOs,¹¹⁴ mainly the EU. Material inducement works on two levels. Firstly, the different stages of access to different European funds which are provided to both the government and the civil society reward countries for making progress on the EU defined parameters. This gives the EU its material power. Secondly, the EU, despite its recent economic crisis, still represents a ‘better tomorrow’ (bolje sutra) for many societies in the Balkans. This adds a normative power dimension to the material inducement.

Teaching occurs through a spate of NGO projects providing training. ‘Training’ (trening) has become somewhat of a joke word among the NGO workers in Belgrade because it was not used until the post 2000 explosion of schools of democracy, human rights, civil society, etc. While ‘training’ is provided to small NGO workers by their more powerful counterparts so they learn to apply for more funding governed by EU bureaucracy, civil society also educates the public directly on democratic values, human rights, etc. The goal is developing a civil society capable of functioning as the limitation of government. One of the NGO workers who deals with youth, angrily cites that “63% of students cannot name a democratic value” and has an EU funded, simplified ‘democracy for dummies’ pamphlet in mind as a solution. Another NGO worker who works in a NGO funded completely through USAID has a similar opinion. The NGO in question has shifted its efforts from assisting in developing ‘good governance’ (mentioned in English) through education of government officials and parties, to encouraging the development of ‘grassroots’ (also in English) movements. Their goal is to teach them how to form interest groups which would end the ‘inertia which plagues the Serbian society’ and

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 363.

provide 'checks and balances' (used in English) to the government. In other words, they goal is to create a civil society which would serve as the limitation of government. I'll expand on this important role of civil society in the last chapter.

The biggest intermediation presentation took place during my stay in Belgrade at the Prishtina - EU - Belgrade talks where Serbia accepted conditions for partial autonomy of Northern Kosovo Serbs from the rest of Kosovo, while convincing the public that this, in fact, does not entail 'true independence' of Kosovo. An important change in discourse has been brought to my attention by one of my interviewees: while the Kosovo issue in Serbia always related to 'the position of Kosovo in Serbia' i.e. how much autonomy Kosovo should and can have within Serbia, in about a month leading up to the talks in Brussels the issue was reframed as 'the position of Serbs in Northern Kosovo' i.e. how much autonomy will the Serbian municipalities have from the state of Kosovo in whose territory they are, but whose independence is still refuted. This contradicting situation in which the Serbian government is negotiating with the government of a state which it does not officially recognize, exemplifies the necessity of cooperating with the EU, even when it leads to such paradoxes. After the concluded negotiations in Brussels, the Prime Minister and First Deputy Prime Minister defended their cooperation with the EU as something which had to be done in order to obtain EU's approval, no matter how undesirable the agreement itself is. This shows that instead of trying to develop a healthy relationship with Prishtina, the Serbian government was trying "to imitate the political structures and to adopt the norms of peaceful conflict resolution prevalent among Western members."¹¹⁵

The above example demonstrates the magnitude of the EU's social influence which works by trading the adaptation of behavior to IGOs expectations and norms in exchange for a dose of legitimacy.¹¹⁶ And the ultimate legitimacy is drawn from EU membership. Since the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, EU membership represented the final validation of independent statehood, so much that, until the Kosovo issue emerged, it was accepted as given even in mainstream politics in Serbia, just

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 364.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

postponed due to 'war situations'.¹¹⁷ When looked at through the concept of logic of consequentialism as Merlingen does, the EU looks almost omnipotent due to the terrible consequence of 'closed doors to Europe.' In his speech before the ratification of the agreement made in Brussels, Aleksandar Vučić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, presented the Brussels negotiations as a choice between a bad (accepting the agreement) and a horrible option (not accepting and being reprimanded by the EU): "Everyone knows that if we decline the agreement, no matter how bad it is and how bad it looks, the doors to the world will be closed for Serbia."¹¹⁸ Prime Minister Ivica Dačić expressed a similar position in his speech in the Parliament leading up to the vote on the ratification: "This is not a question of the agreement or anything that might be in it, this is the question of the course of development for this country."¹¹⁹

The ultimate goal of these efforts is to transform post-socialist countries, to "make the apparatuses of the state fit for the government of the free and individuals fit for self-government."¹²⁰ This point is crucial for proper usage of governmentality: while the export of governmental rationalities is traced between IGOs and INGOs and states, the analysis cannot be separated from their impact on the actual conduct of individuals.

The two processes discussed above are crucial parts of the statebuilding project which 1) identifies weak states and 2) develops techniques to build capacities for good governance within them. The overlap of governmentality and the liberal peace project promoted by statebuilding proves the usefulness of the governmentality framework for exploring the relationship between state actors on different sides of the statebuilding project. Both governmentality and the liberal peace project rely on creating 'free citizens', they both seek to govern without coercion, they both depend on an active civil society, and they both rely on self-management of the homo œconomicus as the entrepreneur of its own destiny.

¹¹⁷ This was brought to my attention in a conversation with Professor Vladimir Ribić, Associate Professor at the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. Belgrade, April 17, 2013.

¹¹⁸ My translation of: RTVojvodine, 2013. "Vučić: Biramo Između Dva Katastrofalno Loša Rešenja," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ysOqjtcg94> (accessed May 10, 2013).

¹¹⁹ My translation of the speech "Skupština, 26. 04. 2013," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrWPlpubQQU> (accessed May 10, 2013).

¹²⁰ Merlingen, "Governmentality Towards a Foucauldian Framework," 372.

3.2 Creating the individual subject

“I would like to say, first of all, what has been the goal of my work during the last twenty years. It has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, not to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, humans are made subjects.”¹²¹

As pointed out earlier, there is a risk of reading this subjectivating power differently in Western and non-Western societies, or on the other hand ignoring the capitalist uneven development and the differences in subjectivation it causes. The solution is elegantly presented by Pheng Cheah in his article where he contradicts Spivak’s denial of productive biopolitical power outside the Centre, and the subsequent rigidity of the Centre-Periphery divide. He shows how the uneven development in South East Asia made exportation of labor a biopolitical technique which strong states would never use, but it nevertheless becomes a governmental technique of the less developed states. He reveals how neoliberalism produces two “different but constitutively interdependent subjects” on both sides of the IDL divide: the liberal middle-class professional woman in the hyper developing Singapore and the docile female domestic worker (FDW) in struggling Philippines and Sri Lanka.¹²² The FDWs who migrate to more developed countries are thus constituted through two different biopowers: one that has created the modern consumer in the more developed state and their need for cheap labor to sustain their way of life; and the biopolitical management of emigration in less developed states as an answer to this global demand for cheap labor.¹²³

The important insight from Cheah’s analysis is that the “inhuman consequences” of FDW migration fueled by global capitalism do not need Marxist ideological class struggle to be explained, but the biopolitical constitution of two different worker subjects with similar governmental technologies: in FDWs that is the creation of the need to improve their lives through emigration; while in their employers that is the need for a replacement of their reproductive labor by FDWs, created by the biopolitical effort to increase human capital by encouraging entry of middle class women into the

¹²¹ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 208.

¹²² Cheah: 96.

¹²³ Ibid., 91-93.

workforce.¹²⁴ Thus the problem is not the lack of biopolitical productive power as Spivak notes or not acknowledging the differences in global development in the uneven realm of the international, but the different biopolitical objectives and the exportation of governmental techniques which are the same time the cause and the consequence of that unevenness. Once again, this proves that governmentality really works on the international level, but also warns that we need to explore the different developments of governmentality encountering different conditions on the ground. In other words, we need to develop a new “economy of power relations” which would explain the different ways governmentality works. The first step towards this analysis is the exploration of subject formations and, as Foucault points out, the resistance innate in it.¹²⁵

3.3. The possibility of resistance

This kind of analysis inevitably takes us to the level of local subjects where both subjectivation and resistance occur. The importance of the local has already been recognized in democracy promotion and statebuilding literature and framed as a call to focus on local knowledge, processes, and resources,¹²⁶ the contextualization of the critical voice of civil society on the ground,¹²⁷ explorations of resistance,¹²⁸ refocusing the efforts on local ownership,¹²⁹ or straightforward policy recommendations for foreign aided popular revolutions.¹³⁰ Although it deserves both systematic theorizing and empirical research, finding the true local voice is reminiscent of the struggle to let the subaltern speak, and the quest to find it in IR will not be any easier than finding the voice of the subaltern in post-colonial studies.¹³¹

¹²⁴ Ibid., 97-8.

¹²⁵ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 329.

¹²⁶ See Beatrice Pouligny, "Civil Society and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Ambiguities of International Programmes Aimed at Building 'New' Societies," *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 4 (2005).

¹²⁷ See Andrew Harmer and Robert Frith, "'Walking Together' toward Independence? A Civil Society Perspective on the United Nations Administration in East Timor, 1999-2002," *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 15, no. 2 (2009).

¹²⁸ See Marta Inguez de Heredia, "Escaping Statebuilding: Resistance and Civil Society in the Democratic Republic of Congo," *Journal of Intervention & Statebuilding* 6, no. 1 (2012).

¹²⁹ Jens Narten, "Dilemmas of Promoting 'Local Ownership': The Case of Postwar Kosovo," in *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations*, ed. Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (Taylor & Francis, 2008).

¹³⁰ Michael Ledeen, "Tehran Takedown: How to Spark an Iranian Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* (2012) (accessed March 14, 2013).

¹³¹ Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?."

Vrasti points out this difficulty by explaining how both Marxist and Foucauldian critiques of neoliberalism overlook the problem of subjectivation: the fact that neoliberalism as a holistic project creates its own subjects and their needs and interests, thus rendering resistance almost impossible.¹³² While Marxist assume a priori that there is an agency waiting to resurrect out of the ashes of crumbled capitalism, governmentality scholars mostly ignore that the caring side of neoliberalism, which incorporates within capitalism itself the social goals usually seen as perversely missing from it, in post-fordist capitalism is a necessary precondition for its survival. However, not all parts of the world function with this advanced capitalist mode, and it is precisely in those parts that resistance is much more visible because it is tied to historical materiality of religion, nationalism, or flat out rejection of Westernization.

Resistance is found in what Laclau and Mouffe call the no-man's-land. Once we see neoliberalism as a project transcending politics and economics, we can think of it as an attempt at creating a discursive totality. In their work, Laclau and Mouffe emphasize that there can never be such thing as discursive totality: because the constitutive relational logic is always "incomplete and pierced by contingency," there emerges a "no-man's-land," which makes any identity susceptible to "a discursive exterior that deforms it and prevents it becoming fully sutured."¹³³ Following this logic, we can look at neoliberalism, the all encompassing project in the Foucauldian sense, as a hegemonic project attempting to constitute all economic, social, and political identities by using the logic of the economic market and individual responsibility and erasing all other differences – it is a project to become the global hegemonic relational logic. In parts of the world not functioning as neoliberal societies, we can observe a vast area where that logic gets deformed. Thus, what Laclau and Mouffe call the "no-man's-land," emerges.

This no-man's-land becomes the limit of governmentality by opening up a space for both the instinctive distortion of neoliberal rationalities and organized movements of resistance. Some of the resistance is thus articulated by pegging it to a certain ideology, some of it is reactionary as it has been

¹³² Vrasti, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global'," 61. and Wanda Vrasti, "'Caring' Capitalism and the Duplicity of Critique," *Theory & Event* 14, no. 4 (2011).

¹³³ Ernesto Laclau and Mouffe, Chantal, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, trans., Winston Moore and Paul Cammack (London: Verso, 1985), 110-1.

evoked by Scott in *Weapons of the Weak*.¹³⁴ But even within this area of resistance, a discursive struggle is visible, the most obvious of which is the struggle between connecting anti-imperialism to international solidarity as found in Marxism, and a competing attempt to wrap it into a nationalist exclusionary rhetoric. To investigate these points of resistance, the following chapter will introduce the civil society with its twofold role: 1) as a vehicle for transferring neoliberal rationalities from foreign actors to the local population and government, and 2) as a platform for resistance to those same rationalities.

¹³⁴ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

4. Civil Society

“Since the nineteenth century, civil society has always been referred to in philosophical discourse, and also in political discourse, as a reality which asserts itself, struggles, and rises up, which revolts against and is outside government or the state, or the state apparatuses or institutions. I think we should be very prudent regarding the degree of reality we accord to this civil society.”¹³⁵

Foucault focused on discussing governmental practices as an alternative to considering concepts such as sovereignty, the people, the state, and civil society as “primary, original, and already given object[s].”¹³⁶ He devoted a lot of time to tracking the development of civil society as “the necessary correlate of the state.”¹³⁷ Civil society is indispensable for the functioning of neoliberal governmentality because of its twofold role: 1) it serves as a habitat for the homo œconomicus as “the concrete ensemble within which these ideal points, economic men, must be placed so that they can be appropriately managed,”¹³⁸ and 2) provides an ‘object-target’ of government which needs to be defended against the further expansion of the state.¹³⁹ Civil society thus becomes a new ‘field of reference’ for the limitation of government.¹⁴⁰

Contrary to the ‘prudent’ vision of civil society Foucault calls for in the above quote, liberal thought often imagines civil society as a value free solution to the problems of modernity and a prerequisite for democracy. Michael Walzer sees it as a ‘project of projects,’¹⁴¹ a place which would make good life happen in ways in which the leftist politics of democratic citizenship and socialist production, and the oppositional projects of free enterprise and nationalism, provided only limited progress.¹⁴² This reading reminds of another utopian conception of civil society: the one found in Habermas. Comparing Habermasian and Foucauldian conceptions of civil society is useful even though, while still acknowledging Habermas’ contributions, Foucault considered Habermas to be

¹³⁵ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 296-7.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 2. This, however, does not mean that they are not real. Some accuse Foucault of reducing everything to discourse and thus denying any kind of reality, but he is clear on the point when defines concepts such as civil society, madness, and sexuality as ‘transactional realities,’ as things “which, although they have not always existed are nonetheless real, are born precisely from the interplay of relations of power and everything which constantly eludes them, at the interface, so to speak, of governors and governed” (*Birth of Biopolitics*, 297).

¹³⁷ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 449.

¹³⁸ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 296.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 187.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 295, 297.

¹⁴¹ Michael Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument,” *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* 94, no. 1 (1991): 11.

¹⁴² Ibid., 10.

‘utopian,’ while Habermas responded labeling Foucault ‘cynic’ and ‘relativist.’ The comparison gives us a better understanding of the key assumption of a Foucauldian vision of civil society: that it is never free of power relations.

In his search for a foundation to democracy and good life, Habermas saw ‘consensus without force’ to be constitutive of that foundation.¹⁴³ His procedural conditions of generality, autonomy, ideal role taking, power neutrality, and transparency thus provide us with a recipe for objective writing of constitutions and making of institutions, resulting in perfect rules for ensuring the proper functioning of society and democracy.¹⁴⁴ Through this reliance on rules and procedures, Habermasian ethics function within the realm of sovereignty and law, a position which Foucault does not tolerate.¹⁴⁵ Such a vision of civil society as the perfect platform for the development of state laws and constitutions explains the ‘bottom up’ focus of the liberal statebuilding project on civil society: a well functioning civil society, which creates fair constitutions and institutions, is a prerequisite for a well functioning state.

Foucault acknowledges the indispensability of civil society for the functioning of the neoliberal state and presents it as a contingent development characteristic for Western societies. This development allowed civil society to work as ‘checks and balances’ of the state and seemingly limit it through the rationality of the ‘art of least government.’ To do this, civil society must be populated by free acting neoliberal subjects. Moreover, by creating natural conditions, i.e. economics, which now determine the success and failure of government, freedom starts to function “not only as the right of individuals legitimately opposed to the power, usurpations, and abuses of the sovereign or the government, but as an element that has become indispensable to governmentality itself.”¹⁴⁶ This contrasts the classic liberal reliance on natural rights as the limit of government and marks a shift to neoliberal governmentality.

¹⁴³ Bent Flyvbjerg, "Habermas and Foucault: Thinkers for Civil Society?," *British Journal of Sociology* (1998): 213.

¹⁴⁴ Jurgen Habermas and Ciaran Cronin, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 31., cited in Flyvbjerg: 213.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 451.

4.1. *'Local ownership' as the vehicle for neoliberal rationalities*

The liberal peace project has accepted this notion of civil society as the platform for the development of strong states. Moreover, this kind of focus on civil society as the most important facilitator of democratic development has caused a recent shift to a 'bottom up' approach in democratization theory, democracy promotion, and statebuilding.¹⁴⁷ This makes governmentality the appropriate tool for the investigation of these actions because of the common emphasis on 'bottom up' techniques.

In addition, governmentality offers another unique contribution for analyzing democracy promotion. By rejecting the Habermasian/liberal notion of civil society devoid of power relations, and joining Nietzsche and Derrida in the assumption that there is no communication independent of power, that rationality cannot be separated from power and made objective,¹⁴⁸ Foucault made governmentality capable of overriding the view of democracy promotion as value free. This makes governmentality capable of providing "an innovative angle into the analysis of democracy promotion techniques, its power-dimensions, and its politico-economic foundations."¹⁴⁹ To further quote Kurki, using governmentality in investigating democracy promotion has an important contribution:

"Creation of particular kinds of 'free individuals' and a 'productive and active' democratic civil society would be seen, not as simply an unbiased facilitation of freedom, but as, potentially, a deep-running form of governmental control over the nature of individuals, society, and governance in target states."¹⁵⁰

In her study of EU democracy promotion, specifically the European Instrument for Democracy Promotion and Human Rights which has an explicit civil society focus, Milja Kurki finds neoliberal governmentality techniques in three out of the five EIDHR objectives, "to enhance respect for human rights in countries most at risk," "strengthen the role of the civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform," and to "support actions on human rights and democracy issues."¹⁵¹ These objectives do not rely on democracy promotion to change state policies directly or to change the international perception of the target countries, but are concerned with "changes in the views, mindsets

¹⁴⁷ For example, see Béatrice Pouligny, *State-Society Relations and Intangible Dimensions of State Resilience and State Building: A Bottom-up Perspective* (European University Institute, 2010), 1028-3625.,

¹⁴⁸ Flyvbjerg: 216.

¹⁴⁹ Kurki, "Governmentality and EU Democracy Promotion," 350.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 351.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 356.

and assumptions of target state populations and civil society organizations.” This bypasses the coercive or conditional democracy promotion usually associated with state level changes and elites. Democratization ‘from below’ works through “manufacturing a certain vision of ‘good life’ held by target populations so as to produce ‘capacity’ for them to challenge authoritarian practices within their home states.”¹⁵² It democratizes by molding subjectivities that fit the Western ideals of free democracies.¹⁵³ Contrary to European Endowment for Democracy’s (EED) mission of “fostering - not exporting – democracy and freedom,”¹⁵⁴ I argue that this approach can be explained as exporting neoliberal governmentality.

While Kurki approached the subject thematically by focusing on EIDHR, the same can be done with various instruments for democratization from below, such as the American National Endowment for Democracy (NED) or its European counterpart (in the making), the EED, or the EU Civil Society Facility Programme. Another approach is concerned with specific target states. Tagma et. al. used this approach to explain the EU involvement in the Arab Spring as exporting neoliberal rationalities. I will use a similar approach to showcase the involvement of Western states and actors in Serbia.

4.1.1. Exporting neoliberal rationalities to Serbia

Even though Serbia was the target of direct intervention during the 1999 NATO bombings,¹⁵⁵ after the fall of Milošević the foreign influence took the form of statebuilding, specifically democratization through developing civil society. Democracy promotion in Serbia functions with the mission of ‘creating and molding’ the freedom necessary for civil society to perform its role as one of the three pillars of neoliberal governmentality. Moreover, I will show that the other two pillars, democracy and market economy, are encouraged through civil society by teaching citizens how to practice capitalism and democracy and thus actively participate in the limitation of government.

Western involvement in Serbia can best be explained through governmentality because of its approach on creating a neoliberal civil society. In their analysis of EU’s involvement in the Arab Spring,

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Tagma, Kalaycioglu, and Akçali. forthcoming.

¹⁵⁴ European Endowment for Democracy, “Our Mission,” <http://democracyendowment.eu/>, (accessed may 15, 2013)

¹⁵⁵ The bombing remains controversial because of its unique mission to implement a UN Security Council resolution without the UN Security Council’s permission. For an overview, see Adam Roberts, “NATO’s ‘Humanitarian War’ over Kosovo,” *Survival* 41, no. 3 (1999), or

Tagma et al. reject the realist perspective because of its assertion that the West should engage with the new government directly after the regime change. The insistence of foreign actors on cooperation with civil society even after the 2000 regime change,¹⁵⁶ makes realist perspectives unable to explain the insistence on a bottom up approach through civil society as a channel for shaping both the population and government practices, or the production of subjectivities on which the project depends. On the contrary, even big NGOs which used to work on building governance capacities within the public sector are moving towards 'grassroots approaches.'¹⁵⁷ On the other hand, liberal theories fail to take into the consideration the problematic acceptance of a norm as universal and applying it to locales with differing social structures. Tagma et al. find two distinct characteristics of neoliberal governmentality in the EU's involvement in the Middle East, and the same can be said about the Western involvement in Serbia: 1) only those civil society organizations which fit Western liberal ideal are supported, and 2) valuable links are created between foreign actors and civil society which then assumes the role of disciplining the government from the inside.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, since EIDHR is actively funds Serbian CSOs, the aforementioned Kurki's analysis is fully applicable

Serbian society has lived under (semi)-authoritarian rule of Milošević, and thus I argue that it did not have the necessary liberty needed to governmentalize itself. Furthermore, while the pre-2000 democratization efforts successfully focused on bringing down Milošević, the problem of subjectivity formation, i.e. the inability of the population to act as a proper neoliberal civil society, started to take place only after the regime change. Even though I am concerned with the current state of civil society in Serbia, it is crucial to note the important role that foreign funded civil society played for the regime change itself. The foreign support of Otpor¹⁵⁹ has become widely known and it relates to both knowledge and resources. In 1999, The Albert Einstein Institute distributed 5500 copies of translated nonviolent action book by Gene Sharp *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for*

¹⁵⁶ The problematization of democratization efforts is visible even in the discourse of the debate concerning the term 'revolution.' I will use the concept 'regime change' because of the contested nature of revolutionary aspects of the change that is usually referred to as a colored or the Bulldozer Revolution. For a review of the debate in political science see Valerie J. Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁵⁷ This was brought to my attention in an interview with an anonymous worker of an NGO.

¹⁵⁸ Tagma, Kalaycioglu, and Akçali. forthcoming.

¹⁵⁹ Social movement the led the protests which brought down Milosevic

Liberation in Serbia; Otpor activists received strategic training from Robert Helvey at a workshop in Budapest, organized by the International Republican Institute, a US nonprofit funded partially from USAID and the Congress and still active in Serbia.¹⁶⁰ In addition to training, foreign actors provided crucial funding which was used for everything from supporting Otpor's activities by printing and buying spray paint, to organizing the internal monitoring of elections through Centre for Elections and Democracy (CeSID) which announced the opposition's victory before the official results were out and thus set the stage for the events of October 5. Funding also helped a spate of independent media, civil society and political organizations, and went to organizing public opinion polls.¹⁶¹ Total Democracy and Governance Assistance per Capita was USD 3,15 with an average of USD 0,77 in the five years before the elections, and USD 1,28 in the two years before the election, which meant a 340% increase in democracy and governance assistance and a 111% increase in electoral assistance.¹⁶²

The success of the regime change was so great that it inspired not only the following Colored Revolutions of Eastern Europe, but it is also associated with the Arab Spring, Burma, and Malaysia. The post-regime change development, however, is rarely described as successful. There is narrative of 'lack of freedom' which blames the inability of the people to 'move forward' for the failures of the past 13 years. It associates life under an authoritarian rule with producing subjectivities which lack modernity, rely on guidance, and thus are unable to function as proper homo oeconomicus in a proper civil society. Thus the perceived failure of Serbian economic transition provides a text book example of the neoliberal defense of the liberal project: it is never the case that the market fails, but the problem is in the society which was unable to introduce it correctly. Hence the solution is not intervening with the market, but with the fabric of society. Serbia has been stuck in various stages of 'transition,' but the explanation repeated to me by NGO workers is that the market doesn't work because of corruption and 'cultural patters' (kulturni obrasci) which make citizens depend on the state instead of on their own abilities and natural competition. They do not wonder about possible imperfections of the market, but blame the backwardness of the society.

¹⁶⁰ Olena Nikolayenko, "Origins of the Movement's Strategy: The Case of the Serbian Youth Movement Otpor," *International Political Science Review* 34, no. 2 (2013): 150-1.

¹⁶¹ Bunce and Wolchik, 103-4.

¹⁶² Ibid., 234, table 8.5.

The discourse of modernization through neoliberal reforms is framed as a choice “between Europe and backwardness.”¹⁶³ In my conversations with employees of NGOs who are focusing on building capacities for democratization, a common theme was teaching people how to do capitalism, in the words of my interviewee: “We don’t know what the free market is, we don’t know how to function in capitalism!” Other areas of improvement are the ‘practice of democratic citizenship’ as exemplified by numerous schools of democracy in Belgrade, and ‘human rights’ as taught in schools of human rights which teach the population both to respect and demand them. Thus, before limiting the government, civil society assumes the role of ‘teaching freedom’ which will then serve as the limitation to the state.

This teaching is largely funded from foreign sources: some reports put foreign civil society funding in Serbia to 75%.¹⁶⁴ EU, whose actions have already been interpreted through the governmentality framework,¹⁶⁵ is the most prominent actor and it works through the CARDS program (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization), the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), the EIDHR, and other programs which include the PROGRESS Program, the Youth Program and the Culture Program. There are also a number of other actors than the EU, which steer development through building a specific type of civil society. Other big multilateral donors are the OSCE and the World Bank. The biggest bilateral donors are the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID.) There are also huge private donors/implementing agencies, such as the Open Society Foundation and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

This exportation of neoliberal governmentality has steered the development of Serbian civil society. Because monetary funds are used to direct the development of the right kind of NGOs, the NGO sector is perceived to be as elitist and distant from the population as the corrupt politicians. In the words of a prominent human rights worker “People are surprised when they see me on the bus!

¹⁶³ Title of the chapter from: Sonja Biserko, *Yugoslavia's Implosion: The Fatal Attraction of Serbian Nationalism* (Belgrade: The Norwegian Helsinki Committee, 2012).

¹⁶⁴ "Foreign EU Funding", *Balkan Civil Society Development Network* <http://www.balkancsd.net/index.php/policy-research-analysis/structured-dialogue/civil-dialogue/national-level/serbia/461-ii23-foreign-eu-funding> (accessed March 12 2013).

¹⁶⁵ Walter and Haar.; Kurki, "Governmentality and EU Democracy Promotion"; David Chandler, "The EU Export of 'Rule of Law' and 'Good Governance'," in *International Statebuilding: The Rise of Post-Liberal Governance*(Routledge, 2010).

They think I have a helicopter that takes me to work every day!” Arriving at the building where the NGO’s in question offices are located, I couldn’t find the sign of the organization on the outside of the building, she explains that “yes, we just moved to this building. And to tell you the truth... our signs often get... different things written on them.” While large NGOs receive grants that secure smooth long term work and resentment from the public, small NGO workers accept funds as a means of survival and thus (over)appropriate the market rationality to civil society. The role of civil society as the limitation to government, or as service providers instead of the government, is distorted to become the means of survival. This will be discussed more in the section on non-articulated resistance.

Moreover, to discipline the government from the inside, civil society has to engage in a kind of ‘auto-chauvinism’ to make the government face the mistakes of the past, mostly accusations of war crimes in the Yugoslav wars captured in the narrative of ‘facing the past’. The success of this discourse is visible on the streets of Belgrade where two repeating graffiti stencils are noticeable. The first one saying “Evolve already!” The text appears under a monkey carrying a cross: a sign that the lack of modernity is obvious in Serbian reliance on the Orthodox church, and thus ‘evolution’ means leaving behind that what is considered ‘traditional’ and ‘backward.’ Equally visible is the oppositional SNP 1389¹⁶⁶ writing in Cyrillic proclaiming “We protect the state! We defend the Constitution!” This not only creates space for civil society with a mission of ‘social engineering’ in service of democratization, but also for unique sites of resistance framed in defensive nationalism.

4.2. Civil society as a platform for resistance

Kurki successfully finds ‘governmentality practices’ manifestations’ in the EU civil-society focused democracy promotion, EIDHR, but she refrains from analyzing the impact of those same practices in “target states, civil society organization, or target publics.”¹⁶⁷ In this section, I want to expand her analysis by investigating that impact, by creating what Foucault called ‘the new economy of power relations.’

¹⁶⁶ Srpski Narodni Pokret (Serbian National Movement), a radical right organization.

¹⁶⁷ Kurki, "Governmentality and EU Democracy Promotion," 351.

The different readings of power in Habermasian and Foucauldian visions of civil society make Foucault refrain from making recommendations about procedures, as Habermas does, or concrete outcomes; instead he calls for a focus on conflict intrinsic to every relation. By recognizing the power relations involved, and the conflicts coming out of it, we are able to focus on the fight against domination. This fight in civil society is both internal, in relation to different groups, and external, in relation to the government and business sphere.¹⁶⁸ This makes civil society not only the limitation of government, but also a site of resistance, a place of direct confrontations with power, which Foucault called ‘counter-conducts’.

Counter-conducts, or resistance, are essential for governmentality studies because the analysis of governmental power starts precisely from these points of transgression.¹⁶⁹ Counter-conducts have always existed as a reaction against pastoral power, and governmentality is a new form of pastoral power.¹⁷⁰ While the pastorate has a certain way of conducting conduct, counter-conducts “are movements whose objective is a different form of conduct, that is to say: wanting to be conducted differently, by other leaders (conducteurs) and other shepherds, towards other objectives and forms of salvation, and through other procedures and methods.”¹⁷¹ Foucault provides us with a new mission: creating a new ‘economy of power relations’ which would use the resistance to power as the starting point.¹⁷²

4.2.1 Articulated Resistance

Stef Jansen applied the Laclau and Mouffe’s notion of articulatory practice to the discourse of nationalism in Croatia and Serbia. In his example of Croatian educational workers who went on strike to protest the violation of worker’s rights and deteriorating educational standards, the Croatian government responded by labeling the strike as “attack on the government, the ruling party, the Croatian state, and moreover, the entire Croatian nation, as well as Croatianhood itself.”¹⁷³ By this

¹⁶⁸ Flyvbjerg: 224.

¹⁶⁹ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 329.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 334.

¹⁷¹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 259.

¹⁷² Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 329.

¹⁷³ Stef Jansen, *Antinacionalizam: Etnografija otpora u Beogradu i Zagrebu*, trans., Aleksandra Bajazetov-Vučen (Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 2005), 47-8.

move, the Croatian government attempted to “set up a closed symbolic order with fixed meanings, in which any contingency or any alternative would be impossible,” the government tried to create a “hermetic discursive order.”¹⁷⁴ We can observe a similar phenomena in Serbia where any effort to promote human rights, democracy, or equality is seen as ‘auto-chauvinism’ or ‘anti-Serbianism,’ and opened for reinterpretation as imperialism and used by the radical right movement. In their analysis of the Arab Spring, Tagma et al. use precisely the case of Central and Eastern Europe to show that the emphasis on neoliberal economic policies can leave both the state and the traditional left paralyzed and thus fuel the development of right wing extremism.¹⁷⁵ The development of this ‘uncivil society’ populated by actors who are officially CSOs but do not uphold, or directly contradict, the ideals of civil society such as tolerance, diversity, and equality, is already noted in Serbia.¹⁷⁶

A good example of such framing is the effort to hold a Gay Pride Parade in Belgrade which has been framed by the right movement not as promotion of basic human rights, but as imperialist demands coming directly from the EU. A prominent CSO in this area is SNP 1389 which functions as an NGO, but did participate in the local elections in a few districts. In an interview, they explained their political stance in three points: 1) A Great Serbia which includes parts of Croatia, whole of Kosovo, Montenegro, and northern Albania. 2) resistance to EU integration which they see as the New World Order led by France, England and Germany. The gay pride parade, which was their loudest action, is framed as an EU conditionality and thus is unacceptable, and 3) nationalist-socialist, as opposed to privatized, economy. In addition to this, they support Palestine, Qadaffi, Assad, Northern Irish Catholics, and Russia. To explain the American/EU imperialism, their newsletter features an article by Noam Chomsky titled: *What does America really want?*, and articles about radical/fundamentalist liberalism inspired by Joseph Stiglitz. This effort to constitute a new ideology which includes leftist anti-imperialist ideas in line with Chomsky and exclusionary nationalist homophobic stances can only be possible in an ideological no-man’s-land.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 50-1.

¹⁷⁵ Tagma, Kalaycioglu, and Akçali. forthcoming

¹⁷⁶ Florain Bieber, "The Other Civil Society in Serbia: Non-Governmental Nationalism - the Case of the Serbian Resistance Movement," in *Uncivil Society? Contentious Politics in Post-Communist Europe* and Cas Mudde, Routledge Studies in Extremism and Democracy (London, New York: Routledge, 2003).

A similar process can be observed with protests opposing the introduction of genetically modified food products to the market. This issue, which is usually associated with identity based new social movements which draw on cosmopolitan rights, is voiced by the nationalist right organization (now party) Dveri. Even the 99% movement, which is usually associated with the liberal left, is in danger of being hijacked by the right. A young activist described a protest called by the 99% Serbia: “Yes, they had this protest on the square. It was ridiculous. Pokret za slobodu¹⁷⁷ was there and a bunch of other left organizations, and then Dveri showed up and started handing out anti-GMO flyers. It was a complete mess.” A complete mess indicates Laclau and Mouffe’s no man’s land where ideological projects contend for embedding issues within their discursive order. While the government has given up trying to create any kind of relational logic to explain its actions beyond the efforts to join the EU, the extreme right wing saw this as a chance to create its own discursive order which encompasses the anti-imperialist emotions brought about by neoliberal economic reforms and EU conditionality, the left anti-imperialist agenda of anti-GMO and pro-Palestine politics, and their old exclusionary homophobic and xenophobic orientations. In such a discursive order, any EU requirement, even when it calls for work on equality as the case is with gay rights, can be framed as imperialist expansion directed against Serbia and thus fuel more exclusionary politics.

While everyone knows the names of these right wing actors, the leftist organizations are secluded in universities and a few labor unions. A Belgrade professor justified it by the fact “No one goes out to throw rocks because they’ve read too much Marx!” While their stance on imperialism is similar and framed into Marxist concepts of semi-periphery and core, their activities remain on a level not available to the general public. Thus the public cannot recognize the names of Gerusija, Marks21, Pokret za slobodu, or the regional annual meeting of the left, the Subversive Festival, while the names of SNP 1389, SNP Naši, and Dveri, and their actions, are a part of the common public discourse, even if mentioned only when disapproving their extremism.

¹⁷⁷ Freedom Fight Movement, a radical left labor movement.

4.2.2. Non-articulated Resistance

“Where everyday resistance most strikingly departs from other forms of resistance is in its implicit disavowal of public and symbolic goals. Where institutionalized politics is formal, overt, concerned with systematic, de jure change, everyday resistance is informal, often covert, and concerned largely with immediate, de facto gains.”¹⁷⁸

Along with the various forms of articulated resistance, we can also observe a spate of non-articulated resistance in the Scottian fashion of “passive noncompliance, subtle sabotage, evasion, and deception.” For Scott, the *Weapons of the Weak* are “the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth (...) require little or no coordination or planning; they often represent a form of individual self-help; and they typically avoid any direct symbolic confrontation with authority or with elite norms.”¹⁷⁹ Because these efforts are non-articulated, they are not grounded in an ideology as is the case with nationalist or socialist movements. These resistance forms encapsulate those almost instinctive actions which deform the hegemonic discourse on an individual level.¹⁸⁰

In Serbia, we get a glimpse of this unintentional distortion even from the term itself: the NGO part of civil society in Serbia is referred to as the ‘civilian sector’ (civilni sektor) a sphere along the ‘private sector,’ and ‘government sector,’ thus implying that it provides means of survival in form of labor compensation, just as the government and private sectors. This distortion is obvious from talking to NGO workers who belong to small NGOs which compete fiercely for funding. I was introduced to one of them through an informant who, to convince me that he really does represent the NGO workers, emphasized that “he has survived on NGO funding for the past 15 years.” He goes on to describe the NGO sector in Serbia as a “pond that suddenly shrunk, but also got many more alligators,” describing the difficulty in finding funding. He adds: “It was easy before 2000. First of all, Soros funded everything from posters for the national theater to some village organizations who wanted to build nests for storks. Secondly, you just had to put ‘democratization’ on your application, and you’d be approved 100%. Today you have to go through a million EU papers and Calls for

¹⁷⁸ Scott, 33.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 29.

¹⁸⁰ Oliver P. Richmond, “Resistance and the Post-Liberal Peace,” *Millennium* 38, no. 3 (2010).

Applications whose funds always end up with the same big NGOs” The implications are twofold: while this focus on funding definitely prevents the development of an ‘ideal neoliberal civil society’ free of power relations, the NGO workers do not resist is consciously, but by over-applying the market rationality native to neoliberalism.

Slander is another reaction of the majority of the population to the proliferation of NGO workers and ‘civil society capacity building.’ The NGO workers are perceived to be as rich, and their money as corrupt, as the politicians. When asking about people who were active in Otpor, a movement credited with changing not only the Serbian, but societies around the world,¹⁸¹ I was told: “Otpor disappeared after that. Those who knew how to get good positions sold out and went into politics and the NGO sector, while others completely disappeared.” Another form of slander is the perceived elitism of NGO workers which equates them with the corrupt politicians, as explained in the aforementioned instance of people being surprised to see NGO workers in public transport.

In his ethnography of anti-nationalism, Jansen, contrary to Scott, focused on articulated resistance because he encountered many anti-war or anti-regime activists who did not challenge the discourse of nationalism itself. A part of his reasoning was that, at the time of his fieldwork, anti-nationalism was such a distinct discourse that those who engaged in it were most likely to also do it publicly. Resistance by silence often became co-option.¹⁸² Similarly, it is difficult to identify resistance to neoliberalism which is not articulated just because it is not something that people think about. Nobody outside the organized left will complain about the retrenchment of the state or the creation of the consumer subject. However, conversations with NGO workers who actively work on ‘modernizing’ Serbian society to make it capable of practicing democracy and capitalist market economy, gave me an insight to their view of ‘backwardness.’ These ‘backward opinions’ are precisely that non-articulated resistance which obstructs the development of true neoliberalism.

Goran started his political career as a child on his father’s shoulders during the anti-war protests in the 1990s, continued it as a teenager in the 2000 protests and now works for a USAID funded NGO

¹⁸¹ Tina Rosenberg, "Revolution U: What Egypt Learned from Students Who Overthrew Milosevic," *Foreign Policy* (2011). http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/02/16/revolution_u?page=0,0 (accessed February 10, 2013).

¹⁸² Jansen.

which is concerned with promoting democracy worldwide. He bitterly quotes an opinion poll in which “83% of the respondents identify the state as responsible for finding them employment.” He identifies the problem of development in Serbia as chronic inertia of the people who consider “the worker to be a holy cow” and the state as something “up there, almost divine which has money falling from the sky.” The reading is twofold: firstly, it is another example of the need to intervene in society instead of the market to ensure wellbeing, and secondly, it shows that there are some post-socialist legacies that are preventing the development of neoliberal subjects.

I received a similar cultural explanation of the inability of the Serbian society to evolve enough to function as a proper neoliberal society from another NGO worker. After 7 years of working in an NGO focusing on education and European Integration, Sanja became partially disillusioned by the lack of substantial progress and wants to move abroad: “I don’t know whether we (the Balkans) can ever reach the proper functioning of capitalist democracies. I used to joke about this with my father: maybe we (Balkan people) really do need a strong fist to lead us.” Do the people in the Balkans really rely on group guidance and thus cannot perform their neoliberal competitive, self-governing duties? I will stay away from using such cultural explanations to explain the differences in development, but the fact that the narrative exists, proves that the neoliberal project has been attempted and failed.

Another way in which the role of civil society is distorted was repeated to me in stories of national parties founding their own NGOs in order to apply for funding meant exclusively for NGOs. I have not attempted to check the truthfulness of this claim, but for my purposes its confirmation is unimportant – either way it undermines the efforts to develop a civil society in the neoliberal sense, whether by slander or outright sabotage. On the other hand, this resistance is wrapped into a market rationality and self interest, a key feature of neoliberalism. What does this then do for the neoliberal project? Rejects it by undermining one of its pillars, the civil society, or confirms it by applying the market rationality even to resistance?

4.2.3. Non-articulated resistance and the dichotomy of power

“One did not suggest what people ought to be, what they ought to do, what they ought to think and believe. It was a matter of showing how social mechanisms up to now have been able to work...and then, starting from there, one left to the people themselves, *knowing all the above*, the possibility of self-determination and the choice of their own existence.”¹⁸³

This brings us to the problematization of adopting non-articulated resistance at face value. It is tempting to see this quotidian resistance as marking the limit of governmentality. This view has been applied in statebuilding governmentality both theoretically¹⁸⁴ and empirically.¹⁸⁵ De Heredia identifies the liberal peace project in Congo as an attempt to spread neoliberal art of government, and shows how “resistance takes place as a quotidian strategy of mitigation, avoidance and escapism for which civil society acts as a platform.”¹⁸⁶ The problem arises from the fact that mitigation, avoidance and escapism do not know how ‘how social mechanisms up to now have been able to work’ as the above quote states, can they then be considered real resistance?

Even though Scott’s work was inspired by Foucault, it was thanks to the Foucauldian approach that scholars have challenged it. Timothy Mitchell’s analysis contrasts Scottian view of overt/articulated and covert/non-articulated resistance with Foucault’s rejection of such dichotomies. This problematizes the notion of everyday resistance because the concept relies on the differentiation between coercion and persuasion, i.e. the peasants are coerced instead of persuaded, a binary that Foucault would refuse. Mitchell warns of the dangers of such stark differentiation between ideological and coercive power which would preserve political subjectivity by subjugating it only coercively, not ideologically.¹⁸⁷ He recognizes the twofold influence of Scott’s work. Firstly, it resurrects the political subjectivity of the oppressed by acknowledging its resistance, despite its apparent insignificance. This seemingly resolves Chandler’s problem of the lack of autonomous subject. However, at the same time

¹⁸³ Michel Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence," in *Foucault Live: (Interviews, 1966-84)*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, (1989), 156., emphasis added.

¹⁸⁴ Richmond; Oliver P. Richmond, "Critical Agency, Resistance and a Post-Colonial Civil Society," *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, no. 4 (2011).

¹⁸⁵ de Heredia.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 75.

¹⁸⁷ Timothy Mitchell, "Everyday Metaphors of Power," *Theory and Society* 19, no. 5 (1990).

this reproduces the physical coercion/ideological persuasion dichotomy on which modern power structures are built and which Foucault sought to overcome.¹⁸⁸

No matter how we view this unwillingness of the local population to fully embrace neoliberal governmentality, there is no doubt that here we find its limits. The invocation of underlying structures which would allow resistance outside the discourse leads us to another fruitful area of research, the philosophy of critical realism. Inspired by Roy Bhaskar, critical realism goes beyond the poststructuralist reliance on discourses and investigates the underlying structures that allow them to take place. Naturally, the limits of governmentality should also be looked for in these underlying structures. While remaining outside of the scope of this research which stayed away from trying to differentiate between the discourse and the non-discursive structures critical realists would look for, the combination of Foucault with critical realism in a Marxian fashion is a fertile area of investigation,¹⁸⁹ both to move beyond the limits of the radical left horizons in the West, and better appropriate governmentality studies for dealing with societies outside of the West.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 573-4.

¹⁸⁹ For an example, see Jonathan Joseph, "Foucault and Reality," *Capital & Class* 28, no. 1 (2004).

Conclusion

“Global governmentality, with its focus on how power is dispersed, exercised, and experienced in everyday life, has the potential to repopulate the discipline and return it to the promise contained in its title, namely, the study of international *social* relations in all their richness and randomness.”¹⁹⁰

Despite the problems of appropriating governmentality as fitting for explaining global workings of power, we cannot ignore its potential. The objections recounted in this paper are welcome to advance theoretical and empirical inquiries about governmentality on a global level. However, we should not fit Foucault in IR by ‘disciplining him by a discipline.’¹⁹¹ These efforts to ‘tame Foucault’¹⁹² have limited productivity. The beauty of the governmentality approach is that it transcends disciplinary borders and accounts for both the macro and micro workings of power which unravel as neoliberalism becomes “a standard of reference against which all forms of life (individual, communal, political) can be assessed according to modern conceptions of civilization and order.”¹⁹³

This thesis attempted to prove the usefulness of governmentality beyond the developed West by differentiating between exporting neoliberal governmentality to states perceived less developed and the morphing of those rationalities that happens once they interact with the local populations. The important thing to note is that the newly formed conditions brought about by this interaction of neoliberalism and already existing social structures lead to new forms of government. The topography of power of this new form of government includes over-appropriation, distortion, and resistance to the neoliberal techniques.

Further engagement with Foucault in IR can help us investigate these new conditions, but it will require substantial interdisciplinary “unfaithfulness and promiscuity,”¹⁹⁴ taking into considerations the macro level usually discussed in international relations, but also drawing from political anthropology and sociology to account for the bottom part of the biopolitical techniques, and political philosophy to refine the concepts of subject, resistance, and the global social. This is the first step towards

¹⁹⁰ Wanda Vradi, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global'," 66., emphasis in the original.

¹⁹¹ Andrew W Neal, "Rethinking Foucault in International Relations: Promiscuity and Unfaithfulness," *Global Society* 23, no. 4 (2009): 543.

¹⁹² Merlingen, "Applying Foucault's Toolkit to CSDP," 189.

¹⁹³ Vradi, "Universal but Not Truly 'Global'," 64.

¹⁹⁴ Neal.

investigating the ways of conducting conduct without falling into the trap of linear presentation of development or reification of the liberal world order, and a point of departure for Foucauldian approaches further combined with Marxism and critical realism.

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