Assembling Neoliberalism

Expertise, Practices, Subjects

Edited by

Vaughan Higgins
Wendy Larner

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Vaughan Higgins • Wendy Larner
Editors

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palgrave
macmillan

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ISBN 978-1-137-58203-4 ISBN 978-1-137-58204-1 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-58204-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017935053

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Nature America Inc.
The registered company address is: 1 New York Plaza, New York, NY 10004, U.S.A.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank, first and foremost, all contributors for their commitment to the production of this book. This collection would not have been possible without their intellectual contribution and willingness to support the project. We are also grateful to the efforts of Mireille Yanow, Mara Berkoff and Alexis Nelson from Palgrave Macmillan, New York, who provided editorial advice and assistance and who enthusiastically supported the project.

Our thanks go also to the following people who generously gave their time to review chapter drafts: Christian Berndt, Hugh Campbell, Stephen Collier, Gareth Enticott, Lisa Hoffman, Rebecca Lave, Katharine Legun, Richard Le Heron, Robyn Mayes, Bronwen Morgan, Janet Newman, Russell Prince and Carol Richards.

Finally, our most important acknowledgement is to our partners—Melanie and Don—for their support throughout the process of preparing the manuscript.

Contents

1 Introduction: Assembling Neoliberalism 1
Vaughan Higgins and Wendy Larner

Part I Expertise 21

2 Neoliberalism and Rule by Experts 23
Stephen J. Collier

3 Assuming Everything, Except Responsibility: On Blaming Economists for Neoliberalism 45
Russell Prince

4 Assembling Climate Expertise: Carbon Markets, Neoliberalism and Science 67
Samuel Randalls

5 The Politics of Expertise: Neoliberalism, Governance and the Practice of Politics 87
Janet Newman

Part II Practices 107

6 **Assembling Citizenship in Austere Times** 109
Samuel Kirwan, Morag McDermont, and John Clarke

7 **(Re)assembling Neoliberal Logics in the Service of Climate Justice: Fuzziness and Perverse Consequences in the Fossil Fuel Divestment Assemblage** 131
Robyn Mayes, Carol Richards, and Michael Woods

8 **The Mouse That Died: Stabilizing Economic Practices in Free Trade Space** 151
Nick Lewis, Richard Le Heron, and Hugh Campbell

9 **Mapping Neoliberalism: Animal Health and the Spatial Practices of Disease Management** 171
Gareth Enticott and Vaughan Higgins

10 **Mapping Happiness, Managing Urban Emotions** 195
Jessica Pykett and John Cromby

Part III Subjects 217

11 **Sharing Subjects and Legality: Ambiguities in Moving Beyond Neoliberalism** 219
Bronwen Morgan and Declan Kuch

12 **"Doing Good": Affect, Neoliberalism, and Responsibilization Among Volunteers in China and the United States** 243
Lisa M. Hoffman and Hope Reidun St. John

13 The Resilient Subject 263
Lisa J. Hill and Wendy Larner

14 Economic, Experiments, Evidence: Poor Behavior and the Development of Market Subjects 283
Christian Berndt and Marc Boeckler

Part IV Conclusion 303

15 Conclusion: Awkward Assemblages 305
Wendy Larner and Vaughan Higgins

Erratum to: Conclusion: Awkward Assemblages E1

Index 313

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List of Figures

Fig. 9.1	Mapping and neoliberal governance	186
Fig. 11.1	Network graph of tweets using socentau hashtag 26 Oct to 3 Nov 2015	230
Fig. 11.2	Network graph of follow relationships between twitter users on the socentau hashtag 26 Oct to 3 Nov 2015	231

List of Maps

Map 9.1 bTb Parish Testing Intervals (2005) Indicating Frequency of Disease Surveillance Activities 176
Map 9.2 Map of Australian BJD Zones 180
Map 10.1 The Geography of Happiness 198
Map 10.2 Happiness in the UK 201

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Assembling Neoliberalism

Vaughan Higgins and Wendy Larner

Since the 1980s, neoliberalism has become one of the most defining features of economic and social governance worldwide. According to Leitner et al. (2007, 1–2), neoliberalism is increasingly "a hegemonic signifier for 'best practice' governance", displacing "long-running and apparently deep-rooted welfare and interventionist state agendas" and normalizing "the logics of individualism and entrepreneurialism". Indeed, such is the claimed pervasiveness of neoliberalism that it is argued to "have become the ubiquitous political commonsense condition of recent years" (Ward and England 2007, 2). Neoliberalism has also captured the imagination of social scientists, usurping earlier labels referring to specific political projects—such as Thatcherism and Reaganomics—and being used increasingly as a broad descriptor for post-welfarist regimes of governing (Larner 2000).

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V. Higgins, W. Larner (eds.), *Assembling Neoliberalism*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-58204-1_1

Social scientists have sought to make sense of neoliberalism in a number of different ways including as an ideological-hegemonic project (e.g., Harvey 2005; McMichael 2012), as an interconnected set of policies and practices that share commonalities despite their variegated expression across different sites and spaces (e.g., Peck 2004; Peck and Tickell 2002; Brenner et al. 2010) and as a form of governmentality (e.g., Dean 2014; Lemke 2001; Brown 2015; Larner 2000). Despite the theoretical diversity, recent years have seen increasing overlap in the use of perspectives as part of a general move away from monolithic understandings of neoliberal rule towards greater acknowledgment of what Brenner and Theodore (2002) describe as "actually existing neoliberalism". The term "neoliberalization" (Peck and Tickell 2002) is used increasingly to grasp the geographical and temporal unevenness of the processes involved. This work highlights the forms of experimentation, adaptation and mutation through which neoliberalism is enacted and rendered workable across different spaces (see, e.g., Peck and Theodore 2015). The application of neoliberalism in a wide variety of theoretical and disciplinary contexts has also given rise to concerns that it is increasingly an incoherent and problematic term with "multiple and contradictory meanings" and therefore of "diminished analytic value" (Venugopal 2015, 165, see also Clarke 2008). From this perspective, neoliberalism has become an abstraction, a catch-all term to explain what are often diverse processes and events (Weller and O'Neill 2014) and accommodations to longer-term rhythms of sociocultural change (Barnett 2005).

While agreeing with these critiques, we argue that it is nonetheless important to recognize *how* heterogeneous elements may come together in ways that have neoliberal effects and the challenges and contestations that limit the possibilities of coherence in neoliberal programs and forms of rule. To date there has been limited systematic or detailed exploration of such processes of assembling. Monographs and edited collections have focused predominantly on the rise of neoliberal thought (Harvey 2005; Mirowski and Plehwe 2009; Peck 2010), the contestations and crises that surround neoliberalism (Leitner et al. 2007; Overbeek and Van Apeldoorn 2012) and broad overviews that analyze neoliberalism, its effects and its uptake in a wide range of substantive spaces and domains (Saad-Filho and Johnston 2005; Wolf and Bonanno 2014; England and Ward 2007; Heynen et al. 2007; Brown 2015). Despite widespread scholarly interest in the diversity, adaptive capacity and hybridity of neoliberalism, there has been limited engagement with Larner's (2003, 511) call over ten years

ago to pay attention to the "mundane practices through which neoliberal spaces, states, and subjects are being constituted in particular forms". This gap has become particularly pertinent following the global financial crisis as "more market" understandings have begun to mutate in the context of the politics of austerity and new approaches to public policy, and as increasing numbers of commentators have begun to speculate about "post-neoliberalism" and "after neoliberalism" as emergent political alternatives in a number of countries.

This book addresses this gap. Whereas much of the existing literature presupposes the tenets of neoliberalism, and then examines how it articulates with other political processes (from neo-conservatism to feminism), our focus is on how neoliberalism itself is *assembled* from multiple and diverse elements. Informed broadly by an assemblage-based analytics, the book aims to understand what Anderson et al. (2012, 175) refer to as the "processes of composition that produce durable [neoliberal] orderings, and of the ontic indeterminacy of what might ordinarily be thought of as totalizing practices and processes". Recent contributions by Larner et al. (2007), McGuirk and Dowling (2009), Newman (2013) and Prince (2010) provide examples of the contribution that "assemblage thinking" can make to existing understandings and theorizations of neoliberalism. However, despite these contributions, assemblage-based analyses of neoliberalism are fragmented. The purpose of this book is to explore in a more integrated and comprehensive way how assemblage thinking can inform and advance scholarship on neoliberalism. In doing so, the collection highlights the diverse, complex and ambiguous ways in which different spaces, sites and subjects are constituted and held together as "neoliberal".

Assemblage Thinking and Neoliberalism

It is not our intention in this chapter to provide a detailed overview of assemblage thinking, how it emerged and the different ways it is theorized. Comprehensive reviews of these issues have been conducted by other scholars (DeLanda 2006; Anderson and McFarlane 2011; Anderson et al. 2012; Marcus and Saka 2006). Our aim here is to highlight key features of assemblage thinking and the implications of each for social science understandings of neoliberalism. The purpose of examining the intersections between assemblage thinking and neoliberalism is to provide basic conceptual scaffolding for the book. This scaffolding will be developed in different ways by each of the contributions.

Inspired by post-structuralist theorizing, including governmentality, actor-network theory, feminist and Deleuzian accounts, assemblage thinking comprises part of the "relational turn" in the social sciences. According to Anderson et al. (2012, 172–173), assemblage thinking "is a distinct response to a series of emerging tensions and problems in 'relational' thought", including (a) the naturalizing of forms or processes—such as flows, networks, fluids—that have been identified by relational work; (b) reconciling "the systematicity of certain orders on the one hand, and change and emergence of new orderings on the other"; and (c) the limits in accounting for how some relationally constituted entities hold together "across multiple differences and contradictions" while others do not. Assemblage thinking provides a response to these problems in three inter-related ways: foregrounding processes of composition and the heterogeneous actants involved; focusing on social formations as a diversity of parts that do not necessarily form a coherent whole; and an emphasis "not just on how agency produces resultant forms, but on how the agency of both the assemblage and its parts can transform both the parts and the whole" (Anderson et al. 2012, 186). We elaborate on these three features in the sections that follow.

Composition and Holding Together of Heterogeneous Elements

In broad terms, assemblage thinking focuses on the composition of heterogeneous elements "into some form of provisional socio-spatial formation" (Anderson and McFarlane 2011, 124). It emphasizes in particular the work of assembling entities and practices that may be "diffuse, tangled and contingent" (McFarlane 2009, 562). As Li (2007, 264) argues, "Assemblage flags agency, the hard work required to draw heterogeneous elements together, forge connections between them and sustain these connections in the face of tension. It invites analysis of how the elements of an assemblage might—or might not—be made to cohere". From this perspective, emphasis is placed on how human and non-human entities are drawn together, the ways in which relations between these entities hold and are sustained and the resultant effects for agency, power and governing.

In placing analytical emphasis on processes of assembly, rather than resultant formation, assemblage thinking also highlights the contingency and provisionality in holding together the elements of an assemblage. As Anderson et al. (2012, 177) observe, assemblages are "both the

provisional holding together of a group of entities across differences and a continuous process of movement and transformation as relations and terms change". This means that while heterogeneous elements may be drawn together, they can also come apart and be *disassembled*. Indeed, as DeLanda (2006, 12) argues, "one and the same assemblage can have components working to stabilize its identity as well as components forcing it to change or even transforming it into a different assemblage". The holding together of an assemblage is therefore a provisional process in which "relations may change, new elements may enter, alliances may be broken, new conjunctions may be fostered" (Anderson and McFarlane 2011, 126). In this way, assemblage thinking is "attentive to the practices and processes of formation that enable the composition of assembled orders while maintaining a sensitivity to the diversity of assemblage forms" (Anderson et al. 2012, 183).

An emphasis on the composition and holding together of assemblages is particularly useful to critical scholars of neoliberalism. Regardless of the theoretical approach utilized, neoliberalism has tended to be framed as "a hegemonic (albeit hybrid) political project with a core of common, salient features and a tendency towards structural coherence" (McGuirk and Dowling 2009, 176). An assemblage-based analytics involves a rethinking of this framing where all practices, processes and institutions are ultimately read as neoliberal. Rather than foregrounding the "commonality, coherence and resilience, and incremental advance" of neoliberalism, its "starting point is close empirical investigation of the fine-grain of practice with the aim of building process-oriented accounts of the multiplicities, complexities and contradictions at work in situated instances of political-economic process" (McGuirk and Dowling 2009, 177). Taking a slightly different approach, Prince (2010, 83) argues that assemblage thinking enables researchers to open the "black box" of neoliberalism and show the contingent assembly work involved in "aligning divergent political motivations, translating different ideas, and rendering appropriate subjects and spaces". Therefore, an assemblage-based analytics of neoliberalism focuses on the composition and provisional holding together of social and economic arrangements without presupposing that these arrangements are reflective of neoliberal rationalities and strategies. These emergent assemblages may cohere in ways that constitute spaces, sites and subjects as "neoliberal", but they may also at the same time involve multiple, contradictory and overlapping projects and practices that exceed any straightforward reading as neoliberalism.

Exteriority of Relations

A second key feature of assemblage thinking is the focus on what is termed the "exteriority of relations". In much social theory, wholes are assumed to be characterized by "relations of interiority", in that they have "an inherent organic unity" in which "there is a strict reciprocal determination between parts" (DeLanda 2006, 9). Without these relations of interiority, a whole has no unity and becomes simply different parts that bear little relationship to one another. In contrast, assemblages are characterized by *relations of exteriority* in which the different components are not reducible to and "can never explain the relations which constitute a whole" (DeLanda 2006, 11). In other words, while the different parts of an assemblage may relate to one another, these relations are *contingently obligatory* (DeLanda 2006, 11), rather than logically necessary, and are not integrated into some kind of higher unity. This implies that "a component part of an assemblage may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different" (DeLanda 2006, 10), and equally that "entities are never fully actualized within any of the relations that constitute an assemblage" (Anderson et al. 2012, 179).

For Anderson and McFarlane (2011, 125), a focus on the exteriority of relations is central to assemblage thinking in terms of understanding how "heterogeneous elements come together in a non-homogeneous grouping". In particular, it "enables an ethos of engagement with the world that is deliberately open as to the form of the unity, the types of relations involved, and how the parts will act" (Anderson et al. 2012, 176). The notion of assemblage is therefore a useful resource with which to "address the problem of the heterogeneous in the ephemeral, while preserving some concept of the structural so embedded in the enterprise of social science research" (Marcus and Saka 2006, 102).

Applied to neoliberalism, the focus of assemblage thinking on the exteriority of relations shifts the emphasis from studying neoliberalism as a relatively unified and ascendant formation to interrogating the relationship between heterogeneous elements that do not have a logically necessary neoliberal coherence. From this perspective, just because some relationships may give rise to emergent "neoliberal" forms, this is not indicative of an underlying and all-encompassing neoliberal logic. Indeed, rather than assuming structural coherence, it is important to follow the advice of Anderson et al. (2012) in being deliberatively open to the form of unity

and how the different parts will act. This enables a focus on how diverse practices, rationalities, policies and so forth are assembled without assuming that these are unified in an integrated neoliberal whole.

The merits of taking such an approach are illustrated by Larner et al. (2007) in their analysis of neoliberalism in New Zealand. Rather than taking neoliberalism as their starting point and then looking for the different ways in which it is manifested and/or contested in social, economic and cultural life, they examine five different political "projects" and "focus on the changing designation of their objects of governance, thereby identifying and exploring their implications for understandings of social and economic relations" (Larner et al. 2007, 242). For Larner et al. (2007, 243), these projects do not and will not cohere into a broader neoliberal unity, since each is "internally contested, power laden, and riven with contradictions" involving "a multiplicity of political forces always in competition with one another, producing unintended outcomes and unexpected alignments". If assemblages are made up of multiple and overlapping projects that do not add up to a coherent neoliberal whole, as Larner et al. (2007) and others argue (see McGuirk and Dowling 2009; Weller and O'Neill 2014), this raises fundamental questions around neoliberalism as a way to describe contemporary social, economic and political arrangements and forms of governance. In this context, does the term neoliberalism lose much of its analytical value (Venugopal 2015), and should we look for alternative post-neoliberal terminologies? This is an issue that we revisit in the concluding chapter to this collection.

Re-thinking Agency and Power

Thinking with assemblage in the ways discussed above has implications for how social scientists understand agency and power. In particular, it involves "a re-thinking of agency in distributed terms and causality in non-linear, immanent, terms" (Anderson et al. 2012, 186). It involves also a re-thinking of power. In assemblage thinking there is an emphasis on power's plural and shifting nature; power does not flow from a center, and nor can it simply be witnessed in terms of its effects. There are three key dimensions to an assemblage-based understanding of agency and power.

First, it involves a shift from a focus on relational effects to the actants involved in assembling and dis-assembling. These actants "may be singular or multiple, large or small, within or outwith the assemblage, and their operation may be sudden or gradual" (Anderson et al. 2012, 180).

Focusing on the heterogeneous actants involved in assembling, researchers are able to identify "the multiple forms of power involved at different times" (McFarlane 2009, 565) through which "particular relations are held stable, fall apart, are contested and are reassembled" (Anderson et al. 2012, 180). In this way, power is never distributed equally across an assemblage. A distributive notion of agency recognizes that agency (and power) involves a "variety of virtual modes of expression, and which subset will be actualized at any given moment is not predictable with confidence" (Bennett 2005, 457). Second, assemblage thinking is concerned with the agency of component parts of an assemblage and how these relate to the agency of the whole. According to McFarlane and Anderson (2011, 162), it "attends to the agency of wholes and parts, not one or the other", or what Bennett (2005, 447) terms "a distributive and composite notion of agency". From this perspective, "while individual entities and singular forces each exercise agentic capacities", there is also "an agency proper to the groupings they form" (Bennett 2005, 447). Third, an assemblage-based analytics focuses on "how causality emerges through the non-deterministic enactment of practices of world-making" (Anderson et al. 2012, 181). Here, causality is always emergent "where instead of an effect obedient to a determinant, one finds circuits where effect and cause alternate position and rebound back upon one another" (Bennett 2005, 459).

Newman (2013) provides an excellent illustration of how an assemblage-based approach can be used to understand the relationship between agency and neoliberalism. Whereas many analyses tend to view neoliberal forms of rule as contributing to an erasure of feminist politics, Newman (2013, 200) takes a different angle "which foregrounds the multiplicity of ways in which feminist politics is practiced, and which challenges a view of neoliberalism as a singular and all consuming force". Rather than being erased, feminist struggles are selectively appropriated into assemblages that are always incomplete. In this context, the tensions between multiple neoliberal rationalities and activist projects "are worked, contained or reconfigured through gendered labour" (Newman 2013, 218). For Newman (2013, 218), the generation of these "spaces of power" opens up "the possibility of contingent and temporary forms of intervention through which activist projects can be pursued". In contrast to Newman, who identifies spaces of power *within* "neoliberal" assemblages, other approaches, including those of Hoffman (2013) and Muehlebach (2011), focus on processes of subject formation associated

with rationalities of governing often assumed to be separate to, or outside of, neoliberalism. Thus, Hoffman in her work on volunteerism in China (see also Chap. 12 in this collection) questions the notion that decentralization of state authority contributes to greater local autonomy. She shows how efforts to decentralize involve the formation of responsibilized subjects "who will 'voluntarily' step into spaces previously planned and managed by the state" (Hoffman 2013, 847). In this context, volunteerism becomes an important part of making neoliberal reform workable. Similarly, Muehlebach shows how the Italian state is making compassion productive through new regimes of voluntary labor (see also Muehlebach 2012). For Muehlebach (2011, 75), unpaid volunteering work involves the assembling of new forms of subjectivity in which peoples' relationship to work is changed from "pleasure through work" to "pleasure in work". This gives rise to the mobilization of an ethical citizenry who contribute to broader neoliberal reforms (Muehlebach 2012).

In summary, assemblage thinking provides a valuable contribution to social science scholarship on neoliberalism and neoliberal governance in three important ways. First, rather than conceptualizing neoliberalism as a hegemonic and stabilized formation, an assemblage approach focuses on the work involved in composing and holding together different elements that may cohere provisionally in ways that constitute spaces, subjects and practices as "neoliberal". Second, in contrast to those analyses that take a unified view of neoliberalism as their starting point and then look for its local manifestations, an assemblage approach focuses on multiple political projects and how these interact in ways that do not necessarily add up to form a unified and coherent neoliberal whole. Third, rather than viewing neoliberalism as a singular force that enhances the agency of already powerful actors, while undermining the possibilities for contestation and resistance, assemblage thinking provides a more nuanced approach in which agency and power is distributed in different and context-dependent ways that cannot always be predicted in advance.

Outline of Chapters

The preceding discussion highlighted key features of assemblage thinking and how these provide a way of problematizing the predominant emphasis on neoliberalism's structural coherence and hegemony. In this section of the chapter, we outline how an assemblage-based analytics of neoliberalism is taken up and applied by the contributions to this book. In doing so,

we structure the contributions according to three core themes in neoliberal scholarship: expertise, practices and subjects. Our aim in using these themes is twofold. First, it provides a useful way of demonstrating how assemblage thinking can inform and advance existing approaches to neoliberalism across diverse contexts, spaces and domains. Second, it enables individual contributions to engage with, and develop, an assemblage-based analytics of neoliberalism in different ways while at the same time maintaining a focus on the common features of assemblage thinking that make it distinctive from other relational approaches.

Expertise

The first theme focuses on the forms of expertise that underpin neoliberalizing objectives and contribute to their workability. We have included four chapters in this subsection, beginning with Stephen Collier on the relationship between neoliberalism and technical expertise. In contrast to recent social theory that assumes the authority of neoliberalism is grounded in technical expertise, Collier takes a different approach. He explores neoliberalism not as a specific kind of expertise but as a form of critical techno-political reflection on the way that the authority of truth and the legitimate exercise of political power both ground and limit each other. Focusing on the work of the political scientist Vincent Ostrom, Collier's chapter examines how American neoliberalism emerged as a critique of expert rule established during the Progressive Era and the New Deal and as an argument in favor of an alternative model of administration embedded in a "polycentric" democratic polity. He proposes that Ostrom's work challenges critical scholars to reformulate their approach to neoliberalism. On the one hand, they must acknowledge the perhaps uneasy convergences between neoliberalism and left-wing critiques of technocratic government. On the other hand, they must ask whether a critique of expertise remains the most salient position in challenging neoliberal forms of governing.

Similar to Collier, the chapter by Russell Prince also problematizes the critique of expertise within analyses of neoliberalism. Focusing on the technocratic assemblage, Prince asks whether economists are to blame for neoliberalism. He argues that as neoliberal ideas from the Mont Pelerin Society have found their way into the technocracy in recent decades, they have, to varying extents, changed the ways these objects are understood in themselves and in relation to each other, with consequent changes in how

they are assembled. But despite these changes, there are continuities, not least the ongoing significance of the technocracy and the imagined distance its expertise maintains from its objects. Through his analysis, Prince argues that rather than blaming economists for neoliberalism, scholars need to give greater emphasis to the topological relationship between economic expertise and their objects and the ways in which this relationship leads to neoliberal ideas territorializing as policy in different settings.

Samuel Randalls's chapter examines the relationship between climate expertise and the emergence of market-oriented climate change policy interventions. For Randalls, carbon markets are not a simple rolling out of neoliberalism. They have involved various forms of expertise—economists, policy practitioners and scientists, some of whom are connected to neoliberal think tanks—assembling a policy architecture enabling markets to be constructed as a "solution" to climate change with minimal impacts on business. Through exploring the historical emergence of aspirations and plans for carbon markets, the role of political actors in their actual formation and the way in which these markets have been re-configured in the event of various crises, the chapter highlights that carbon markets are neither a simple neoliberal fix for climate change nor a stable formation that has successfully internalized and translated diverse actants. Rather, carbon markets are continually being re-assembled in ways that enhance and at the same time provide opportunities to challenge neoliberal ideas.

Finally, in this theme, Janet Newman provides a slightly different way of problematizing the relationship between expertise and neoliberalism. Newman conceptualizes neoliberalism as an assemblage of multiple—and sometimes competing—regimes of power. Her focus is on those working across and negotiating these multiple forms of power, developing new forms of expertise while also managing their relationship with "traditional" forms of power/knowledge and exploiting the contradictions that result. Drawing on her earlier research on women "working the spaces of power", as well as related research, Newman generates three composite figures of politicized actors negotiating with dominant ruling relations: the cultural entrepreneur, the politicized state worker and the activist researcher. Each is implicated in opening up projects of neoliberalization. Yet, each also seeks to use their expertise to contest forms of neoliberal exploitation and oppression. As such, their labor has costs: the strain of "looking both ways", managing tensions between different identities and the embodied and affective costs of negotiating the contradictory relationships between neoliberalism and its others.

Practices

The second theme focuses on the diverse socio-technical practices that make neoliberalism governable as well as contribute to the contestation and undermining of neoliberalizing objectives. Samuel Kirwan, Morag McDermont and John Clarke begin by examining how citizenship is assembled in times of austerity. Drawing on a study of *Citizens Advice* organizations in England, the authors explore how people manage and make sense of different orientations to, and elements of, citizenship, how they assemble citizenship in practice in the context of a citizen-to-citizen network of advice-giving and how conceptions of citizenship as a horizontal relationship are negotiated in the face of the dis-assembling of citizenship in politics and policy. Through their case study, Kirwan and co-workers argue that the relationship between citizenship and neoliberalism is a complex field of negotiation. In practice, the articulation of other projects, forces, discourses and imaginaries means that citizenship remains a site of political struggle in which neoliberal incorporation or subordination is rarely complete or successfully stabilized.

Robyn Mayes, Carol Richards and Michael Woods's chapter is concerned with how neoliberal elements articulate with social activism aimed at creating a more sustainable economy. Focusing on the fossil fuel divestment movement, Mayes and co-workers draw upon empirical data from face-to-face interviews with key divestment actors in the UK and Australia to explore the entanglements between the divestment and neoliberal assemblages. By approaching the topic through the analytical frame of assemblage, they highlight the fossil fuel divestment movement's appropriation of, and complicities with, underpinning (neoliberal) problematics: namely, the constitution/governance of responsible, if not creative, citizens along with the logic and language of market rule. Mayes and co-workers argue that while the divestment movement achieves its aims in disrupting flows of capital around the fossil fuel industry, it unwittingly reproduces neoliberalizing logics by reinforcing a shift away from the state as the key corporate regulator.

In the following chapter, the complex ways in which neoliberalism is constituted through, and articulates with, other social and political projects is teased out further by Nick Lewis, Richard Le Heron and Hugh Campbell who focus on "neoliberalizing globalization" in the context of bilateral free trade agreements. Drawing upon a post-structuralist political economy approach, and applying this to the 2013 "botulism scare"

associated with NZ milk products exported to China, Lewis and co-workers highlight the forms of "qualculation"—measures, standards, certification procedures, trade law—that are crucial to the creation and partial stabilization of free trade space. They argue that the economic work of qualculation is central to the materialization and holding together of global production networks and supply chains in the free trade space of FTAs. Their account demonstrates the messiness and multiplicity of global trade relations as well as the fragility of practices that are supposed to stabilize them. Through their analysis, Lewis and co-workers conclude that free trade space is assembled and held together by a flawed and incomplete institutional and metrological architecture.

Complementing the previous chapter's focus on the materiality of neoliberal assemblages, Gareth Enticott and Vaughan Higgins examine the role of maps and mapping in the construction of neoliberal approaches to animal disease. Applying three analytical approaches—maps as communication, maps as power and mapping in practice—they highlight the complex ways in which maps are involved in the assembling as well as dis-assembling of neoliberal approaches to disease management. Through their analysis of animal disease management in the UK, New Zealand and Australia, the chapter reveals that maps contribute to neoliberal assembly through instilling "vigilance" amongst farmers and creating new "responsibilized" biosecurity subjectivities, enabling disease responses that interfere as little as possible with trade flows and contributing to the "deprofessionalization" of veterinary expertise. At the same time, Enticott and Higgins argue that maps also impose limits on how neoliberal governance is assembled, through the adaptation of maps by veterinarians to fit local circumstances, the use of maps by farmers to invoke alternative discourses and practices of responsibility, and the mobility and materiality of pathogenic life which undermines the geometry of disease inscribed in maps.

The final chapter in this section by Jessica Pykett and John Cromby focuses on the measuring and mapping of human happiness, which they argue has become a popular and potentially market-shaping activity, and a core governmental concern. In their chapter they question whether the "happiness industry" can be considered straightforwardly as a neoliberal phenomenon. Pykett and Cromby focus attention on alternative and place-based approaches to happiness, which signify an alternative to dominant neoliberal framings. They compare the research approaches provided through geo-informatic analyses of urban psychophysiology, community

activism associated with participatory happy cities initiatives and critical psychologists and geographers who focus in particular on interpretive accounts of emotional subjectivity. In assessing the merits and limitations of these approaches, Pykett and Cromby propose a "critical social psychological geography" as a way forward in researching the relationship between processes of neoliberalization and the governing of happiness, and in providing new understandings of the political significance of happiness measurement and mapping.

Subjects

Our final theme focuses on the practices of/for making up neoliberal subjects, and the tensions, challenges and effects. We begin with Bronwen Morgan and Declan Kuch who, similar to Kirwan and co-workers (Chap. 6), view the articulation of neoliberal elements with other projects and discourses as a complex field of negotiation. Their chapter draws from an extensive study of grass-roots innovation in response to climate change challenges, across a continuum from social activism to social enterprise. Morgan and Kuch examine the diverse motivations of entrepreneurs for starting community-supported agricultural projects, car-sharing schemes or co-working spaces. In doing so, they draw attention to the important ways in which "sharing subjects" operate orthogonally to neoliberal dynamics by democratizing and adding ethical dimensions to markets. At the same time, Morgan and Kuch contend that while sharing subjects may occasionally catalyze opportunities to move beyond neoliberalism, neoliberal elements remain central to the ways in which lawyers and legal techniques shape the process of formalizing social enterprises. Thus, creative collaboration between planners, regulators, lawyers and activists is required to keep open a collaborative infrastructure that will channel activist and entrepreneurial energies into a more sustainable economy.

In the next chapter, Lisa Hoffman and Hope St. John make a similar argument on volunteering. Their chapter eschews dominant analyses of volunteerism as resounding evidence of marketization, privatization and the supplanting of the social by individuals and self-interest. According to this interpretation, volunteer activity represents both the shedding of government welfare programs and the responsibilization of ordinary citizens to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps". In contrast, based on a comparison of volunteering in China and the United States, Hoffman and St. John examine volunteerism as an assemblage of affective relations

of care and compassion *with* neoliberal practices like responsibilization. They contend that affective relations are not simply co-opted by neoliberal ideologies, but are critical both to volunteer and neoliberal practices, functioning to stabilize neoliberalism (albeit contingently) while also producing new and alternative ways of being outside it. From Hoffman and St. John's perspective, neoliberalism does not need to be analyzed as in-opposition to the social, but as a part of generative assemblages of social relations.

Lisa Hill and Wendy Larner, in their analysis of "resilience", also argue that scholars need to move beyond characterizing neoliberalism as either opposed to or colonizing "the social". On the one hand, resilience has been argued to comprise part of a broader neoliberal biopolitics that strengthens government initiatives to decentralize or roll back the power of the state by emphasizing individual and community responsibility and in doing so increases inequality and disadvantages marginalized communities. On the other hand, community groups have mobilized the concept of resilience as part of a very different ideological project. Here, resilience focuses on transformation, strengthening communities rather than maintaining dominant economic and political systems, and carrying with it the potential to animate anti-capitalist activist projects. Taking the UK city of Bristol as a case study, Hill and Larner adopt a different approach and focus on the concept of resilience in neoliberal governance and the emergence of so-called "resilient subjectivities". Drawing on insights from assemblage theory, they argue that resilient subjectivities are processual, mutable and dynamic—ever shifting such that any individual or group might at certain times be more or less resilient than at others. Equally, multiple resiliences are enacted that unfold in different ways over different spaces, times and scales. These resiliences can empower particular subjects at communities while at the same time exerting control, disempowering and disenfranchising.

Finally, Christian Berndt and Marc Boeckler demonstrate the important connection between subject formation and the focus of the first theme of this book—expertise. They examine the rise of behaviorism and experimentalism in economics and the specific ways in which the behavioral and experimental apparatus is being translated into the marketization of poor smallholders in the rural global south. Represented as an alternative to the neoclassical orthodoxy, Berndt and Boeckler argue that behavioral and experimental economic thinking has in fact breathed new life into the neoliberal project. Emphasis is moved from the regulation/deregulation of

markets to regulating human behavior through "technologies of calculation" that render the self an effect of socio-technically distributed rational action. Through their analysis, they tease out the contradictions in a policy script that sets out to engineer seemingly "passive" subjects and point to parallels with similar policies that are targeted at "undesired" behavior in the global north. In doing so, Berndt and Boeckler contend that in addition to "roll-back" and "roll-out" neoliberalism, we may be witnessing the emergence of an additional neoliberal moment of "rolling-in", in which governmental interventions are characterized by the management, direction and coercion of the "conduct of conduct".

Conclusion

Assemblage thinking on neoliberalism is timely in a global context characterized by growing resistance to austerity policies, the questioning of market-based solutions for addressing social issues and the rise of nationalism in parts of the world. These shifts illustrate the fragility, messiness and incompleteness of neoliberalism. At the same time, emerging social and organizational arrangements, such as the "sharing economy", efforts to govern societies and communities through individual capacities and emotions, the use of market mechanisms to address environmental problems such as greenhouse gas emissions and the alignment of social activism with discourses of enterprise and entrepreneurialism, problematize theoretical approaches in which neoliberalism is viewed as distinct from its "others". They point to the need for more scholarly emphasis on the forms of experimentation, adaptation and mutation through which neoliberalism is enacted and rendered workable across diverse contexts, spaces and domains. In applying an assemblage-based analytics, this book enables a systematic analysis of how neoliberalism is constituted from multiple and diverse elements, how these elements are brought together and made to cohere and the challenges, contestations and consequences of doing so. Each of the contributions highlights the complex ways in which social, environmental, political and economic arrangements or projects are held together in provisional "neoliberal" formations without necessarily adding up to a coherent neoliberal whole. In doing so, the collection makes an important contribution to social science debates about the coherence and influence of neoliberalism in everyday life.