

Giving an Account of Entrepreneurial Subjects and Global Spaces:

Social Media and Colombian Cosmetic Surgery

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2016

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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## **Abstract**

Cosmetic surgery tourism portrays the recipients of cosmetic surgery as subjects who must work on themselves by investing in surgical means of self-transformation and self-refinement. However, little research explores how cosmetic surgeons position themselves in such aesthetic ventures through advertising themselves online. Drawing upon ethnographic methods and theoretical contributions from governmentality studies, this thesis explores how cosmetic surgeons in Colombia, an increasingly popular destination for cosmetic surgery tourism, come to be “entrepreneurs of themselves” through performing governmental discourses of neoliberalism and globalization. I present findings from a research project that incorporates 20 interviews with cosmetic surgeons in the cities of Barranquilla, Cali, and Bogota. By analyzing participants’ understandings of what compels, complicates, and contests such entrepreneurial practices, I discuss how governmental discourses enable yet constrain the very subjects that are produced in such relations of power. This thesis thus examines the performativity of ethical practices and technologies of the self, thereby further developing an analysis of both the everyday and imminent forms of conducting oneself in a proliferating “global” economic sphere.

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## Chapter 1: The Production of Subjects, Space, and This Study

### Introduction

It seems many theses begin with a descriptive, maybe first-person account of the student's study, in which they illustrate, among other things, the context of their research, the place of their study, the object of investigation, and, sometimes, who they are—then and there. What becomes their starting point, what permits their account to go any further, comprises not only their reasons for initiating such a project but also the ethic that guides it. They account for the questions, problems, and directions toward possible answers that compel both the study and themselves. Therefore, giving an account of themselves and the contexts, reasons, means, and often indeterminate ends of research at once inaugurates the study and the student.

In this sense, these introductions are far from descriptive—they are performative; they bring into being both the study and the student *through* these very accounts. Neither pre-exists their enunciation. Here, past tense becomes tricky. What students *did* merges with what they are *doing*, in which *why* they did it, or shall I say, *do* it, seems to hold the account together. Therefore, these accounts of how their research has formed mark a turn back upon the study and the student, but this figure that is turning and the object to which they point have yet to form, themselves.

If we can call the student the “doer” in this account, reading Judith Butler (1990) on gender, then what is brought into being—*through the deed*—“is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (p. 34); it is only *through* the practices of *doing* the “study” and *being* “student” in relation to a prevailing matrix of ethical norms that both come into being. Therefore, the one that gives an account of oneself and their study is caught in a

“paradox of referentiality”—that which refers to something that does not yet exist, something that never does fully form (Butler, 1997b, p. 4).

So, to make this introduction rather difficult, I ask the reader to bear with me as I make an effort to give an account of what something “is,” to explore how things and their relations to others unfold, to unsettle the “grounds” of their ongoing emergence. Specifically, as I discuss in more detail below, I analyze the governmental processes whereby “global” and “entrepreneurial” subjects and spaces are (re)produced. Generally speaking, I “examine the normative yardsticks that are part of a social and historical reality to which they critically relate” (Lemke, 2012, p. 61). In particular, I analyze the production of such “yardsticks” and their “realities,” the discursive assemblages of knowledges, techniques, and rationalities that govern the “conduct of conduct” of “entrepreneurial” subjects that work in “global” spaces. However, I explore how such “yardsticks” and “realities” come to be *through* the practices of subjects that they produce.

Therefore, to add to a critical project that heightens a “historical awareness of our present circumstance” (Foucault, 2000b, p. 329), I ask how governmental discourses of neoliberalism and globalization produce certain subjects and spaces yet never guarantee them—how governmental discourses only “take effect” relationally through specific practices, by specific subjects, and in relation to specific spaces that never cease to form. As governmental discourses depend upon their “doers” that are constituted by their “deeds,” I ask how one partakes in such discourses *as* a certain subject and *in relation to* certain spaces whereby certain practices are made possible. In all, I ask how certain subjects and spaces performatively produce the very governmental discourses that enable yet constrain them.

To further introduce this project and area of research, below, I draw upon literature that avoids confusing the “expressions” of various governmental discourses as their “results.” In light

of this literature, I go on to ask how subject formation and the production of space are performed in relation to unfolding governmental discourses. Specifically, by analyzing “global” and “entrepreneurial” social media and advertising practices of cosmetic surgeons in Colombia, I call for governmentality studies to reconsider its scope of analysis. I argue how research on governmental discourses needs to question not only the “schemas” and “grammars” of globalization and neoliberalism (Brady, 2016; Bröckling, 2016, p. xiii)—that is, how certain subjects and spaces are *accounted for*—but also how those articulated by technologies of power and the self give *accounts of themselves* (Butler, 2005; Lerner, 2012).

In this inaugural chapter, I situate this research within the recent ontological “turn” toward the subject in geographies of neoliberalism and globalization and the social sciences more broadly. I then give an account of the context, site specificity, reasons, and ethic for this research project. In particular, I discuss my site selection, research process, and analysis concerning ethnography and a “narrative-discursive” method. I conclude with an outline of the chapters to come.

## **Accounting for a Present Circumstance**

### *A Turn to Ontology*

Like many student accounts, this one is indebted to seminal contributions from influential scholars that continue to inspire and stimulate a wide range of critical research. Namely, this project draws on the work of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, two scholars whose work consistently appears, whether explicitly or rather tacitly, throughout the wide range of both the theoretical and empirical literature reviewed below and in the chapters to come. I do my best to engage with such cornerstone thinkers in order to not only review the seminal contributions to governmentality studies and its shared intersections with cultural, economic, and political

geographies, but to use the “tools” suggested by them and on the “grounds” that they illuminate. I do so because such “tools” and “grounds” are those that challenge and trouble the very workings of “tools” and “grounds,” “truths” and “rationalities,” that work within and throughout them and others.

Thus, drawing upon Foucault, this project adds to the critical project that maintains how any “rationalization” cannot be reduced to a conception of universal Reason. Rather, this broader “project” contends that an analysis of “specific rationalities” lends to the specificity of a historical event, in addition to the relations that run through and sustain its constitution (Foucault, 2000b, p. 329). This form of critical analysis does “not take as a whole the rationalization of society or of culture, but ... analyze[s] this process in several fields” (Foucault, 2000a, p. 299). Accordingly, this area of research focuses on the *event* and *field* of specific rationalities (Foucault, 2000a), whether in the context of the 18th-century prison (Foucault, 1977), the 19th-century clinic (Foucault, 1973), or, as I examine in this thesis, “global” and “entrepreneurial” practices within the cosmetic surgery industry.

In particular, the study of what exists, otherwise known as historical ontology (Hacking, 2002), does not necessarily require researchers to question what *is* true, but enables an analysis of what *becomes* true. Accordingly, as Harrison (2006) discusses, such analyses do not take “truth” as absolute, but as “the sedimentation of a history of mutations and conflicts over definition, the strata of which outline attempts to wrestle control of the term’s meaning” (p. 3). Therefore, this critical project approaches *the ontological* as a form of *questioning*—rather than *determining*—what exists, what comprises the “subjects,” “objects,” and the relations between them, in addition to the “context” in which all of the above are (re)produced (Hacking, 2002; Joronen & Häkli, 2017).

Thus, as a study of not only what exists, but how things *come to be*, historical ontology is also wary of its own conditions of emergence, in which Foucault (2000b) calls for this “analytic” to match the “conceptual needs” (p. 327) that the historical event in question motivates. Therefore, this study comprises a reflexive space for questioning just how “we” constitute ourselves as certain “subjects” in relation to a given domain of “objects” and the relations that enmesh it all—while also asking what compels our current usage of these terms *as* certain subjects endowed with certain knowledges and abilities within certain times and places.

Thus challenging Kant’s program of ethics, one in which we universally constitute ourselves as moral agents (Hacking, 2002), Foucault historicizes this program, thereby considering *how* constituting ourselves takes specific forms in specific times and places. This idiographic and nominalist approach follows Foucault’s (1985) critical and historical “ontology of the present,” in which he understands “ethics” as “the elaboration of a form of relation to self that enables an individual to fashion himself [sic] into a subject of ethical conduct” (p. 251).

How one “conducts their own conduct,” then, pertains to the ability of governmental discourses to at once enable yet constrain one to take oneself as both the *subject* and *object* of its own government (Foucault, 1988, 1991b, 2000b). These governmental discourses consist of different knowledges, techniques, and rationalities, heuristically split into “technologies of power” and “technologies of the self,” which form the “contact point” of government (Foucault, 1988). Yet, what forms a persistent question in governmentality studies relates to how the technologies and rationalities of governmental discourses work through the practices they name and require. If “we are the ones who constitute ourselves as subjects by the mechanisms of power in which we participate” (Hacking, 2002, p. 4), then how exactly one “engages” and “participates” calls for study of not only what governmental discourses prescribe, enable, and

constrain, but how their regarding practices by certain subjects in relation to certain spaces are performative.

### **The Place of the Subject in Geographies of Globalization and Neoliberalization**

How subject formation “takes place,” and how subjects “get placed” yet evade “tightly woven webs of identity, meaning and embodiment” (Pile, 2008, p. 209), therefore, form central questions in geographic study as they point to the spatializations in which subjects are produced—even as the subject serves as “the ‘location’ that we use to ‘site’ ourselves” (p. 211). Therefore, due to the interstitial and relational constitution of subjects, as Pile and Thrift (1995) demonstrate, “mapping” the subject, or, more specifically, asking how the subject is mapped, proves to be a crucial task.

Instead of “mapping” the subject in order to locate its source, origins, or essence, however, critical research on subject formation does not seek to provide a singular ontology for the subject, but asks how multiple, conflicting, dominant, or subaltern *ontologies* are produced, sustained, and contested (Oksala, 2010). This area of study asks how the mutability and instability of subject formation relate to ever-unfolding spatializations of the “subject” and its “place”—contrary to the prevailing understanding of *the* singular and universal subject that exists *in* (Cartesian and Euclidean) space (Glass & Rose-Redwood, 2014; Oksala, 2010).

As Pile (2008) describes, the subject pertains to “neither one position nor one process of positioning” (p. 209). Therefore:

To place the subject, or to explore the spaces of the subject or the spatialities of subject formation or the positioning of the subject or the relational spaces between and so on, requires that subjects are grounded in ways that do not presume that geography itself can simply provide this ground. (p. 214)

Again, an imperative for geography and the social sciences more broadly is to move beyond a foundational ontology that takes space as a pre-existing container or an absolute plane—the so-called “grounds” for social, cultural, political, and economic processes (Glass & Rose-Redwood, 2014). Thus, in light of research that marks the spatial, relational, and ontological turns in geography (Escobar, 2007; Joronen & Häkli, 2017; Massey, 2005), scholars must be wary of the “grounds” by which the subject is mapped—or, rather, what such maps are “made of” and who “makes” and “reads” them.

This focus on what is *produced* through relations of power enables complementary and intersecting disciplinary work that asks how practices *become* social, cultural, and political, in which even economic practices, subjects, and spaces, for example, must be studied as they are produced *as* “economic.” Therefore, geographies of subject formation may take space, place, and the subject as unbounded, contingent, historical, and social (Probyn, 2003); however, if so, research must also look to how spatializations bind space, place and the subject—how certain relations of power produce them as ostensibly permanent, essential, and absolute.

Accordingly, geographies and interdisciplinary studies of subject formation shed light on how globalization, neoliberalism, and the economy form complex and interrelated processes that *produce* the realities they purport to be describing (Callon, 1998, 2007; Gibson-Graham, 2008; Glass, 2016; Massey, 2005; Prince & Duffy, 2009; Stäheli, 2011). These processes relate to unfolding and emerging social-spatial relations, in which research examines the constitution of these historical “spheres” as specific domains of reality (Lemke, 2002; Prince & Duffy, 2009). Therefore, studies of neoliberalism and globalization as governmental discourses largely build off of Foucault’s (1991a, 2007a, 2008) seminal lectures, in which they focus on the production of economic discourses that cite an economic “reality” that does not exist separate from its

enunciation—the reiterative and recursive practices that sustain it. Thus, such study lends itself to an analysis of the assemblages of institutions, policies, norms, and everyday practices within such “spheres” as they “acquire a life of their own” (Bröckling, 2011, p. 274; Larner & Le Heron, 2002; Lemke, 2012; Read, 2009). For example, Bröckling (2011) calls for study of “economic” practices and the constitution of “the economy” as they are socially produced, in which the aim of such study is not to discover “‘pure’ economic logics, but to look at the discursive and cultural constitution of self-referential modes of the economy” (p. 274).

To reiterate, these questions and directions for research that comprise a loosely defined area of governmentality studies focus on how subjects govern themselves and others, in which they “conduct their own conduct” in relation to the “production of truth” through governmental discourses and technologies of both power and the self (Foucault, 1991a, p. 79). As Larner and Walters (2004) explain, such studies ask how governing necessitates certain knowledges, truths, and technical practices for producing “governable” subjects and spaces and how they are to be “governed.”

Therefore, governmental discourses like globalization and neoliberalism pertain to performative knowledges, strategies, techniques, and rules of government that condition and prepare the “field of possibilities” and the subjects that they at once represent and produce (Foucault, 2000b; Lemke, 2012). Governmentality studies thus focus on how concepts such as globalization and neoliberalism “are as much the objects of analysis as what they claim to represent,” in which economic “logics” and rationalities, for example, link to “technologies of government that induce new sets of economic practices, new modes of self-understanding and new spatialisations of economic activity” (Prince & Duffy, 2009, p. 1746).

Yet, despite such “groundbreaking” research, that is, research which unsettles the “grounds” for “economic” subjects and spaces, there is a lack of study on technologies of the self and their linkages to ethical practices that are performed by subjects, those produced in the broader “contact point” of government (Binkley, 2009b, 2011; Brady, 2014; Campbell, 2010; Karakayali, 2014; Musilek, 2015). In other words, there remains much room for governmentality research to explore this “contact point” of government, where “coercion-technologies” and “self-technologies” meet (Allen, 2013, p. 347)—or, more specifically, *how* such technologies come to be. Consequently, the loosely defined area of research that this thesis seeks to expand largely focuses on how various “agencies, authorities, organisations and groups seek to shape, and to incite the self-formation of, the comportments, habits, capacities and desires of particular categories of individuals with particular ends” (Huxley, 2008, p. 1642). Yet, comprising a growing critique of such forms of governmentality studies (Ball, 2016; Barnett, 2005; Barnett, Clarke, Cloke, & Malpass, 2008; Martin & Waring, 2018; Savransky, 2014), this “top-down,” or “macro-level,” focus does not adequately address how “subjects subjectify” (Prince & Duffy, 2009, p. 1753), or how the “micro-level” practices of both “governing” and “governable” subjects (re)produce such discourses.

To address this lacuna in geographical contributions to governmentality studies, studies of globalization as a governmental discourse, for example, draw particular attention to the *articulation* of technologies as they play “an active, not merely reflective, role in fixing globalization, speaking in its name, giving it presence and durability” (Larner & Walters, 2004, p. 499). As Larner and Walters (2004) argue, it is through “‘curves of visibility’ and ‘of enunciation’ that globalization comes into existence” (p. 499), and studies of governmentality

look to the emerging contexts in which various governmental discourses merge and intersect through the production of *productive* practices, subjects, and spaces.

Similarly, critical research on neoliberalism as a governmental discourse examines how “neoliberal,” or “entrepreneurial,” subjects come to be *through* their active practices as economic subjects—those joined with their bodily potential as “‘enterprise units’ for ‘capital-ability’” (Kiersey, 2016, p. 168). To bolster a focus on the “micro-level,” everyday productive *practices* of neoliberalism, neoliberalization, rather, emphasizes the processual, relational, variegated, and, overall, performative processes of “neoliberal” subject-making (England & Ward, 2016; Glass, 2016; Peters, 2016). This conceptualization forms a critique of neoliberalism as it does not exist as a “fixed edifice,” an “equilibrical complex,” nor a “finite end-state” (England & Ward, 2016; Springer, 2010). As an unfolding set of *discursive practices* (Barnett et al., 2008; Lerner, 2000; Springer, 2016), neoliberalization, therefore, speaks to the ongoing and *active* role of “neoliberal” subjects and spaces as they unfold through the practices that require their name. Therefore, this area of scholarship examines how neoliberalism forms a “normative political project” whereby “neoliberal subjects” conduct *their own* conduct, aligning themselves as both the subject and object of governance (Allen, 2011; Dilts, 2011; Hamann, 2009; Lorenzini, 2018; Read, 2009).

However, as discourses of neoliberalization thus depend upon the active practices of “neoliberal subjects” (Barnett et al., 2008), research risks identifying any discursive practices as an indicator of the more-or-less “successful” or “total” production of such subjects. Although the extent of the “economizing matrix” of such governmental discourses are understandably great (McNay, 2009, p. 58), more research needs to explore how the discursive practices of “neoliberal subjects” incorporate a variety of intersecting subject positions that do not necessarily result

from “coherent” programs of rule (Barnett et al., 2008). Thus, if “individuals are compelled to assume market-based values in *all* of their judgments and practices in order to amass sufficient quantities of ‘human capital’ and thereby become ‘entrepreneurs of themselves’” (Hamann, 2009, p. 38), research must explore the conditions of possibility for such discursive practices. Consequently, Barnett et al. (2008) challenge just how “coherent” and “ambitious” neoliberal programmes of rule are, in addition to how well existing research incorporates the active and messy practices of subjects that embody and traverse a multitude of subject positions.

Similarly, as Bröckling (2011) discusses:

The figure of the “entrepreneur” has proved to be a very successful analytical tool, which, however, also tends to suffer from its excessive success. There is nearly no social sphere that has not been analysed in terms of “entrepreneurialism”: be it the consumer and her/his decisions, the science entrepreneur or even the social-care client, who becomes responsible for his own well-being. The problem of this success lies in its uniformity: What has started off as a critique of a homogeneous understanding of economization, tends to end up with a surprisingly homogeneous figure of the entrepreneur, whose formal logic of control applies to a plurality of fields. (p. 273)

Thus, in light of these trends in research, recent study directs attention to the mundane, everyday, and practiced dimensions of neoliberalization to explore the complexity of such productive discourses (Brady, 2014, 2016; Li, 2007; Collier, 2011; Musilek, 2015). Here, such research pertains to how such a “contact point” of technologies of power and the self must emerge *through practice*, while highlighting how this contested process does not guarantee a theorized atomistic, autonomous, calculating, self-interested and rational actor (Brady & Lippert, 2016)—one presumed by so-called “endeavouring” and “aspiring” governmental discourses (Barnett et al., 2008).

As feminist research largely shows (see Gannon & Davies, 2007; Macleod & Durrheim, 2002; McLaren, 2002, Oksala, 2013), the task in specifying the everyday processes of

neoliberalization and globalization leads to “fleshing out” these overlapping themes and to highlight the taken-for-granted, subtle, and “micro-scale” happenings of subject formation and governmentality. This area of interdisciplinary research thus promotes analysis of how governmental discourses and their spatializations are accounted for by the very subjects *as* they undergo such ostensibly “total” yet contested and dynamic formations.

Forming the objective of this thesis, I examine the specific technologies and ethical practices of the self of cosmetic surgeons’ marketing, advertising, and social media practices in Colombia. I ask how those who participate in cosmetic surgery, who do so in quite a hands-on manner, give accounts of themselves both online and in the space of the interview, in which they perform governmental discourses as they refine and transform themselves and others.

Next, I continue my account of this research project by focusing on the “pragmatic” and practiced elements of my study.

## **Accounting for My Research Project**

### *Reflexive Questions*

As I alluded to above, what exactly forms this introduction, this inaugural starting point for this thesis, is precisely the context, means, reasons, and ethic for me and my study. In other words, in terms of governmental discourses and ethical practices of the self, I engage “reason” and “ethic” directly; I ask how certain forms of “constitution,” “production,” or “formation” of subjects and spaces takes place *on* some sort of “grounds” or *in* some sort of “arena”—that is, *through* some sort of rationality and practice that are reiterated by, and in relation to, the very “products” in question. Therefore, throughout this research process, I try to ask these questions without dismissing myself from critical interrogation. I ask: How do I partake in my own ethical

practices within the research process? What governmental discourses am “I” enmeshed in? How, therefore, is it even possible to study reason and ethical practices *directly*?

With momentous developments in feminist research (England, 1994; Haraway, 1988; Rose, 1997), it is easy to eschew the pursuit of achieving any form of “objectivist” research and to instead recognize one’s positionality and situatedness in and through the subject positions that afford such reflexivity. This form of reflexivity serves as a useful starting point for asking how reflexivity as an ethical practice, itself, is differentially afforded, practiced, and produced in relation to different norms in different places (Li, 2007). As a self-concerning ethical practice that predicates taking oneself as both an object and subject of reflection (Binkley, 2009a), this critical reflexivity enables and contributes to a study that continually questions the spatialities, temporalities, relations, and conditions of possibility for one’s own reflexivity and others’.

Therefore, again, giving an account of this project and myself is difficult; how can I account for my empirical project that recognizes how the “truth of ontology is necessarily beyond empirical verification because it conditions it” (Oksala, 2010, p. 458)? How can I (reflexively) account for the ever-forming relations that constitute my positionality and the conditions of possibility for me and my research? As there may only be an indeterminate series of “effects,” rather than “causes,” that I may cite, I provide here a partial account of that which enabled/enables my research project.

### *Studying Cosmetic Surgery*

In the summer of 2015, I traveled to Colombia to visit my partner’s family. There, while constantly thinking about potential research projects for my upcoming Master’s program, I initially looked to spaces of consumption, such as large American-style shopping malls, to question how certain consumer subjects and spaces are performatively produced—especially in

highly surveilled places that continually blur the distinctions between the military and the police (Barnett et al., 2008; Binkley, 2009b). In these malls, in addition to most of the billboards throughout the cities I visited, many of the subjects represented in advertisements were not consumers, but, rather, producers. Here, those who were featured in these advertisements for cosmetic surgery were not only patients, but cosmetic surgeons, themselves.

Therefore, in questioning how “production” and “consumption” are intertwined and productive on one another (Mansvelt, 2005), I asked: How do these “producers” engage in “consumption” as well? What practices of the self do they partake? Do cosmetic surgeons have surgery on themselves in order to “sell” these advertisements that sell cosmetic surgery? How may the discursive practices of neoliberalism inform the production of these increasingly “global” subjects that advertise *themselves* and these advertisements *by themselves* internationally through the Internet? In light of growing literatures on entrepreneurial social media use and online publicity (Türken, Nafstad, Blakar, & Roen, 2016), in addition to the increasing array of discourse analyses on cosmetic surgery (Bell, Holliday, Jones, Probyn, & Taylor, 2011; de Casanova & Sutton, 2013; Livingston, 2015; Viladrich & Baron-Faust, 2014), I looked to social media use and online advertising to query the performative production of “neoliberal” and “global” subjects and spaces through the “contact point” of government.

### *Why Colombia?*

After observing the prevalence of cosmetic surgery advertisements when visiting Colombia in 2015, it did not surprise me that Colombia later placed tenth in the world for the greatest number of cosmetic procedures performed, in which 18.6% of patients in 2016 were from abroad (“ISAPS Global Statistics,” 2018). As participants describe, to be discussed in Chapter 3, this is largely due to Colombia’s largely privatized medical system, in which the low

cost of such procedures forms the single most determinant factor for cosmetic surgeons' business. Not only do these relatively low costs for procedures and surgeries attract international patients outright, they enable cosmetic surgeons to market "tourist packages" while not exceeding the price international patients may pay domestically. Consequently, cosmetic surgeons offer airport shuttles, hotel reservations, and even recuperation or "spa" services, thus providing patients with "all-inclusive" packages and thereby elevating the appeal of cosmetic surgery tourism (see Premium Care, 2018, for an example of such forms of cosmetic surgery tourism advertisements).

As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, Colombia's unique history regarding cosmetic surgery also positions the country as a particularly interesting case study. As some participants noted, cosmetic surgery in Colombia grew hand-in-hand with narcotics trafficking as Cartel leaders purchased cosmetic surgeries for their romantic partners. The cosmetic surgeons that first performed cosmetic surgery in this context were paid handsomely and became famous for their trend-setting roles, in which the "narco-aesthetic" that developed with this industry continues to position Colombia and other countries, such as Mexico, as hubs for this type of cosmetic surgery and, presumably, a certain degree of fame for surgeons who "specialize" in these types of surgeries. Existing literature that explores the wide-ranging role of this "narco-aesthetic" focuses on "aesthetic nationalism" and related national (re)branding techniques (see Edmonds, 2010; Hunt, 2015; Rojas-Sotelo, 2014). However, little to no English-speaking literature delves into the historical and political role of this "narco-aesthetic" for cosmetic surgeons' current advertising and social media techniques. I return to this historical and geopolitical dimension of study in Chapter 4 in a discussion of directions for future research.

The ability to pursue this project was largely a product of available resources and my research assistant's family connections. As my partner and her family are from Colombia, we had many relatives who were more than willing to house and feed us, those of which conveniently lived in the large cities where most cosmetic surgery procedures are offered.

### *Methods*

Given the prominence of cosmetic surgery tourism in Colombia and the use and creation of social media and advertisements by Colombian cosmetic surgeons, I analyzed Colombian online advertising media and marketing and advertising “resources,” to be discussed in Chapter 3 in more detail. These methods served as a useful starting point, in which the initial observation of cosmetic surgeons' advertisements of themselves largely inspired the study.

However, the bulk of my analysis pertains to 20 semi-structured interviews that my research assistant and I conducted with 21 surgeons in the cities of Barranquilla, Cali, and Bogota in July and August 2017 (two participants opted to participate together). With Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) approval from the University of Victoria, my research assistant and I recruited participants through personal contacts and email, in which we contacted over 500 cosmetic surgeons by publicly available email addresses found on the Sociedad Colombiana de Cirugía Plástica Estética y Reconstructiva (Colombian Society of Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery [SCCP]) website (<https://www.cirugiaplastica.org.co/>). Two participants responded directly to our initial recruitment emails, while I recruited 19 participants through snowball sampling with the help from personal contacts and existing participants who extended the contact information and details of the study to other cosmetic surgeons.

Following the methods, recruitment, confidentiality and anonymity protocols approved by HREB, all interviews took place within 15 days, in which my research assistant and I conducted as many as three interviews in one day. This condensed schedule reflected the necessity to spring up at any moment's notice to accommodate participants' dense schedules, in which we even conducted our first interview within a few hours of reaching Colombia when we first arrived.

Also with HREB approval and the consent of participants when applicable, I observed and photographed the mixed-use office complexes, malls, and other buildings and plazas where cosmetic surgeons practice. However, considering the inclusion of such photos in this thesis, I decided to leave them out—especially the photos of advertisements and specific offices and workings spaces of participants as they violate the anonymity and confidentiality of participants.

### *Ethnography, Narrative, Discourse*

So far, I have highlighted how giving an account of oneself and one's study speaks to the narrative dimensions by which subjects, objects, and the relations between them come into being. Therefore, for a situated and in-depth description and analysis of discourses as they are produced and productive within "everyday life," I look to ethnography as it serves as a means to employ and practice such forms of investigation (Brady, 2014). Ethnographic methods enable researchers to pay closer attention to multiplicities of technologies, rationalities, and subjectivities—as they may coexist, work alongside one another, build off of one another, or obscure and occlude one another *through practice* (Billo & Mountz, 2016; Brady, 2014, 2016; Crang & Cook, 2007; Ferguson & Gupta, 2002). Importantly, the researcher and the research project—replete with their own and shared practices—are not immune to this form of analysis.

More specifically, narrative approaches to ethnographic analyses inform the “conduct, interpretation and presentation of interview talk,” while enabling researchers “to take account of research participants’ own evaluations” (Wiles, Rosenberg, & Kearns, 2005, p. 89). Although narrative approaches often take aim at discerning sequences of connected events that are joined by some form of thematic, structural, and temporal coherence, such analyses also enable both participants and researchers to focus on the discursive and performative production of such coherence, in which participants explain and organize experience, negotiate discourses, and provide accounts of themselves and others *through* relations of power (Esin, Fathi, & Squire, 2013; Prokkola, 2014; Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007; Wiles et al., 2005). Hence, “narrative-discursive” methods incorporate such biographical, descriptive, and interpretive accounts not only as participants reflect on existing subject positions, spaces, objects, and the relations between them, but how all of the above are performatively produced through their very accounts (Morison & Macleod, 2013; Taylor & Littleton, 2006). The reiterative process of giving such performative accounts relates to “slowly bending citations” that are simultaneously conditioned by, yet in turn affect, “discursive resources,” norms, and “interpretive repertoires”—all of which enable participants through their own self-referential formation (Morison & Macleod, 2013; Fraser, 2003; Wetherell, 1998).

Moreover, as Riach, Rumens, & Tyler (2016) discuss, “anti-narrative” research seeks to interpret such accounts and their formative and productive qualities while challenging the fixing effects of narrative accounts by focusing on how such accounts *make* as they *unmake*, *do* as they *undo* (Butler, 2004b). Looking at the role of the narrator in more detail, following Butler (2005, 2015b), Riach et al. (2016) describe how “narrative is not simply ‘telling a story about oneself’, but is rather the response we are compelled to provide when being ‘held to account’ for oneself”

(p. 2076). Therefore, comprising an analytic of power more broadly, this research asks how coherency of one's account is at once compelled and constrained so as to attend to "the ways that certain objects, subjects, concepts and strategies make particular thoughts, actions and behaviours possible" (Nicholls, 2009, p. 3).

In all, ethnographic, (anti)narrative-discursive methods enable the analysis of how discourses are constitutive, broadly speaking—how they shape the relations that exist between subjects, objects, and spaces, in addition to the very "subjects," "objects," and "spaces" *themselves* (Lees, 2004). As discourses incorporate practices that mark the production of a "particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it" (Rose, 2016, p. 257), they constitute "culturally-specific mode[s] of existence" (Dittmer, 2010, p. 3). Thus, as "deeds" constitute their "doers," analysis cannot easily examine "doers" "deeds" without consistently questioning how such "doers" and the spaces in which they practice never fully form.

## **Thesis Outline**

As this introduction suggests, bringing together governmentality and performativity holds promise for renewed efforts to flesh out and explore the processes whereby certain subjects and spaces are produced. Not only do these theoretical and methodological approaches resonate with one another, but each holds potential to inform and widen analysis of a broader geohistorical ontology of the present. Although this approach and base of research is growing (Brady, 2011; Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Li, 2007a, 2007b; Musilek, 2015; Rudnyckyj, 2004), in which the recent special issue published in *Foucault Studies*, "Ethnographies of Neoliberal Governmentalities," demonstrates its contemporary focus, the study of the "multiplicity and context" that such methods enable still require highly exploratory research (Brady, 2014; Dean,

2015). Thus, as this project explores such theoretical and methodological directions for further research, I focus the following chapters on a more concerted discussion of the seminal developments of these kindling projects and some findings that I add to the broader discussion.

Therefore, in Chapter 2, I continue the literature review that I initiated above, in which I provide an in-depth review of some of the seminal works that continue to catalyze governmentality studies and related geographic research. Specifically, I introduce Michel Foucault's seminal discussions of governmentality, technologies of the self, the subject, and power, in addition to Judith Butler's developments of performativity and the narrative dimensions of subject formation. I further specify the "contact point" of government and the great expanse of "ground" that geographical study has yet to cover with ethnographic research and more attention to the narrative dimensions of subject formation.

Following this stand-alone "review" chapter, I then move to a dedicated "discussion" chapter, Chapter 3. Thus, after I briefly introduce research that focuses on cosmetic surgery and cosmetic surgery tourism and their interconnections with governmentality studies and critical feminist research on neoliberalism and globalization, I discuss my research project in more detail, further contextualizing cosmetic surgery in Colombia. I dedicate the rest of the chapter to presenting my research findings and a thorough discussion of my analysis, in which I pay particular attention to ethical practices and technologies of the self that comprise both the explicit "resources" for cosmetic surgeons' entrepreneurial practices. I begin my analysis with a discussion of how the presence and production of these discourses indicate the pertinence of this project. In short, I discuss how governmental discourses are produced by the very subjects they pertain to, in which cosmetic surgeons produce and refine themselves and the skills, knowledges, and practices for such transformations. However, as participants' discussions strayed from such

practices, I then focus on the multiplicity of practices that participants identify as integral to what they see in Colombia, in addition to their diverse and variegated array of techniques and rationalities that permeate such practices.

I leave a discussion of my positionality and my relation to this research for Chapter 4. Given the importance of such performative accounts, as I introduced in this chapter, I reflect on this thesis as an ethical practice of the self that is replete with its own relations to various technologies and a “régime of truth” in which it is enabled yet constrained.

## Chapter 2: Giving an Account of the “Contact Point” of Governmentality, Subject Formation, and Geography

### Introduction

Coming a decade after Margo Huxley’s (2008) publication, “Space and Government: Governmentality and Geography,” I discuss the need for more concentrated study of ethical practices and techniques of the self in order to bolster the overlapping fields of governmentality studies and geographies of subject formation. Like Huxley’s (2007, 2008) seminal contributions, many reviews highlight the importance of governmentality analysis for geography, in addition to burgeoning themes such as biopolitics and the study of neoliberalism and globalization as governmental discourses (see Elden, 2007a; Ettliger, 2011; Larner & Walters, 2004; Legg, 2005; Prince & Duffy, 2009; Rose-Redwood, 2006a; Rutherford & Rutherford, 2013; Schlosser, 2008). However, existing literature still does not draw close enough attention to the intimate spaces and practices in which both the technologies and rationalities of governmental discourses unfold *through* ethical practices of the self. In this chapter, I discuss how “ethics,” “the elaboration of a form of relation to self that enables an individual to fashion himself [sic] into a subject of ethical conduct” (Foucault, 1985, p. 251), calls for geographical study of governmental subjects’ own practices of self-government and how they *understand* such compartments—not just how they are *understood* by broader technologies of power.

Although existing research avoids limiting itself to “top-down” workings of power when considering the formation of subjects, it nonetheless resorts to a rather nebulous “realisation” and “infiltration” (Martin & Waring, 2018), or “operationalization” and “acquiescence” (Häkli, 2009; Prince & Duffy, 2009), of technologies and rationalities of government. Thus, the “contact

point” between technologies of power and technologies of the self still requires much attention to understand how “coercion-technologies” and “self-technologies” inform government, in its broadest sense (Allen, 2013, p. 347). By proposing a methodological focus on ethical practices of the self, I argue how ethnographic study can open up research to an overlooked aspect of this “contact point” by paying closer attention to not only how subjects are *accounted for* by technologies of power and the self, but how subjects *account for themselves* through ethical practices of the self.

As recent interdisciplinary research from *Foucault Studies*, *History of Human Sciences*, *Cultural Studies*, *Culture, Theory, and Critique*, and *Theory, Culture, and Society* demonstrates, the study of governmentality and various governmental discourses prove to benefit from a reappraisal of the mundane and everyday workings of discourse and power-knowledge and, therefore, a revamped focus on the performed techniques and ethical practices of the self in subject formation (Binkley, 2009b, 2011; Brady, 2014; Campbell, 2010; Karakayali, 2014; Musilek, 2015). Here, difficulty arises when reviewing this broad area of study in the face of complex and interminable philosophical and theoretical debates that surround questions of identity, subjectivity, embodiment, and self-hood (Larner, 2012), not to mention the conceptual cleavages between interpellation, subjection, subjugation, subjectivation, subjectification, care of the self, and the art of government (Davies, 2006; Davis, 2012; Milchman & Rosenberg, 2007). However, emerging literature on techniques and ethical practices of the self provides a promising direction forward for qualitative research on the production of governmental discourses, while accommodating the ongoing productive tensions and unfurling directions of these conceptual debates and broader analytics of power.

Below, I review Foucault's seminal discussions of "technologies of the self," "the subject," and "power" in more detail so as to introduce his contributions to the unfolding "toolkit" that continues to propel this emerging body of research. Following this review, I then introduce where geographic research contributes to governmentality studies. I argue how a focus on the narrative dimension of subject formation and the spaces produced through practices of the self calls for ethnographic study that will bolster critical geographical research and better accommodate and aid in the understanding of the intricate and spatial processes of ethical practices of government. Therefore, drawing on Judith Butler's (2005, 2015b) work, in particular, I conclude how this theoretical and methodological focus will propel geographical research in asking how "[t]he individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is an effect, it is the element of its articulation" (Foucault, 1980, p. 98).

## **Technologies, Subjects, and Power**

### *Technologies of the Self*

Forming a type of "objectification," Foucault (1988, 2000b) questions "how the self constitute[s] *itself* as subject," looking to "*practices* [emphasis added] whereby individuals, by their own means or with the help of others, [act] on their own bodies, souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being in order to transform themselves and attain a certain state" (Martin, Gutman, & Hutton, 1988, p. 4). With this focus, Foucault (1988) asks what one must know about oneself in order to undergo ethical practices of the self and how certain technologies permit subjects to engage in such "pragmatic" work on the self (Foucault, 2011, p. 5). Specifically, Foucault's (1988) focus on the historical constitution of the self draws attention to the ruptures and discontinuities of the "'truth games' related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves" (p. 18). In this sense, "technologies of the self" pertain to the historically

specific and imminent “modes of training and modification” (Foucault, 1988, p. 18), whereby one takes oneself as both subject and object of (trans)formative practices.

Therefore, the study of the “method” of such practices serves as a “technical question” (Foucault, 2005, p. 417), in which, despite his own weariness of the term, Foucault (2005) poses how a focus on “ascetics,” or even an “ethnology of ascetics,” may serve as a possible line of analysis for:

the more or less coordinated set of exercises that are available, recommended, and even obligatory, and anyway utilizable by individuals in a moral, philosophical, and religious system in order to achieve a definite spiritual objective. By “spiritual objective,” I understand a certain transformation, a certain transfiguration of themselves as subjects, as subjects of action and as subjects of true knowledge. This objective of a spiritual transmutation is what ascetics, that is to say, the set of given exercises, must make it possible to achieve. (p. 417)

Similarly, elsewhere, Foucault (1984) uses slightly different terminology to elaborate how a “genealogy of ethics” pertains to a four-part analysis of: (1) ethical substance, the object of one’s ethical practices; (2) the mode of subjection (*assujettissement*), pertaining to the “way in which people are invited or incited to recognize their moral obligations”; (3) self-forming activities, or ethical work; and, (4) *telos* (*téléologie*), the “kind of being to which we aspire when we behave in a moral way” (p. 355). To be discussed in more detail below, Foucault specifies such an analytic of government of oneself and others in reference to the conjoined role of “technologies of power” and “technologies of the self” that comprise rich “framework[s] of these practices of the self” (Foucault, 1984, p. 369).

Yet how exactly are such sets and frameworks of exercises, such modes of transformation, transfiguration, and transmutation, *exercised*? How are they *practiced* by the very subjects in production? Contra to certain conceptions of governmentality, as I discuss in more detail below, I argue that governmentality research must be attentive to Foucault’s focus on

*practices of the self* beyond their “grammars” in order to flesh out how these frameworks are taken up and produced through their usages (Bröckling, 2016, p. xiii). Yet, first, I discuss the relational and productive dimensions of the subject and power to preface my discussion of how geography and governmentality studies must account for “the way[s] in which the subject constitutes himself [sic] in an *active fashion* [emphasis added]” (Fornet-Betancourt, Becker, Gomez-Müller, & Gauthier, 1987, p. 121).

### *The Subject*

The subject that Foucault discusses is one that is historically constituted, one “constantly dissolved and recreated in different configurations, along with other forms of knowledge and social practices” (O’Farrell, 2005, p. 113). In other words, as O’Farrell (2005) describes, “[t]he subject is a form, not a thing, and this form is not constant, even when attached to the same individual” (p. 113). Thus, while being both enabled and constrained by various techniques for fashioning the self—predicated by what is knowable and practicable in that time and place—the subject is “subjected” to the very constraints that enable it to speak and act. In other words, the subject may become an object to itself and, contingently, to broader social actors and institutions by which it is relationally and imminently enmeshed.

Contrary to the dualistic conceptions of the “passive body” or “social agent,” McLaren (2002) highlights how Foucault’s rejection of an *a priori* subject aids in the reconception of a *decentered* subject that is embodied and constituted relationally through social norms (Foucault, 2000a). Instead of committing to an individualistic, solipsistic, or voluntaristic conception of the subject, McLaren (2002) argues that Foucault rather understands the subject as one that is born from its historical relations, in which his critique of the “rational,” disembodied subject of the Enlightenment maintains a thorough rejection of any anthropological universals. In the co-

constitution of social norms, practices, and institutions, the “subject” of concern here arises as such norms, practices, and institutions define, yet are simultaneously defined by, both the “material” and “discursive” field in which subjects engage through their practices *as* certain subjects. In other words, Foucault’s seminal contribution to theorizing the formation of subjects pertains to the critical appraisal of the very ontological “field” that is coextensive with the power relations that form the ever-forming subjects in question (Oksala, 2010).

### *Power*

Foucault, therefore, provides a “toolkit” for the ongoing study of productive processes which continually bring subjects into being as well as the “field” of their “political, social, institutional, technical and theoretical *conditions of possibility*” (Gordon, 1980, p. 243). Accordingly, the study of subject formation may take the subject as enabled, animated, and produced by certain power relations, yet constrained by those very positions which give it the possibility for (un)intelligible, or potentially (un)livable, life (Butler, 1993, 1997b, 2004). In other words, this form of analysis considers how the subject is produced in its ostensible fixity, while also asking how it is *reproduced*—and, in part, even reproduced by itself, as an object to itself.

As Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 1997b) largely develops, a focus on the productive role of the subject and power lends to Foucault’s (2000b) direction out of the disabling circle of trying to understand the two in terms of cause and effect, in which power misleadingly takes the form as simply domination and repression. Thus, Foucault (2000b) suggests that we focus on the “how” of power, in terms of its exercise and practice by considering the question: How are subjects and objects—the “who” and the “what”—produced through the “exercise” of power? With this question, Foucault (2000b) shows how such a relational understanding of power is

paramount for its study, in that power “brings into play relations between individuals (or between groups)” (p. 337), thus producing and configuring “practice” as well. Again, the ontological production of the relations between subjects and objects—and subjects and objects themselves—forms the very locus of study. In other words, to take the “what,” “why,” and “how” of power, in terms of a “thematic of power,” would mean to be wary of the geographical and historical “truth games” by which such themes and ways of doing things become intelligible (Oksala, 2010).

“Truth,” then, is contingent and historical, only produced in relation to power-knowledge. Foucault’s focus on knowledge, however, does not concern what “truth” *is* in an absolute and universal sense, but, as Hall (2001) maintains, how knowledge, “linked to power, not only assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ but has the power to *make itself true*” (p. 76). The “effectiveness” of power-knowledge, and how certain knowledges “become true” lends to an epistemological analysis of how power-knowledge affects the conduct of others and oneself, in which practices are *enabled* and *enabling* (Hall, 2001, p. 76). As Foucault (1977) highlights, “there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations” (p. 27).

This analytical formulation rejects structural understandings of power, as structures suppose “that certain persons exercise power over others” (Foucault, 2000b, p. 337), in which fixed rules between so-called concrete and *a priori* positionalities (such as “man” and “woman”) result in ostensibly immutable and universal relations. However, if such identities and subject positions are rather “regulated fictions” of power relations, in which the supposedly fixed relations between them rather take on the sedimented and durable *appearance of fixity*, then we

can take such subjects of power as the in-between “effects” that are imminent to the field of possibilities that their performative citation instills (Butler, 1990, 1993; Foucault, 2000b).

To reiterate, then, Foucault (1990) calls for power to be thought less as a “theory” than as an “analytics”; there exists the need to move “toward a definition of the specific domain formed by relations of power, and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis” (p. 82). Therefore, power does not pertain so much to its *form*, nor does it simply mirror the social relations and the subjects and objects that it “produces.” Rather, as a “multiplicity of force relations imminent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization,” Foucault (1990, p. 92) speaks of power, or power relations, as an imminent process of formation. In this sense, power traces its own domain of subjects and objects in accordance with the technologies, instruments, and rationalizations that sustain these very relations: “Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society” (Foucault, 1990, p.93). Instead, the “form” of power ebbs and flows in mutable, historically contingent rationalities each with their own “internal régime” (Foucault, 1980, p. 112).

Therefore, focusing on this element of *strategy*, Foucault (2000a) discusses how power relations do not solely pertain to their often assumed judicial, punitive, and prohibitive forms, in which power can be ostensibly possessed by certain “sovereign” individuals that can “exercise” power “over” others in forms of “refusal, limitation, obstruction, [and] censorship” (Foucault, 1980, p. 139). The imminent subjects that power provisionally sustains gain their very ability to “grasp” and “exercise” power by the strategic, geohistorical conditions that power produces; subjects are never fully determined, nor exactly exterior (nor prior, for that matter) to the

conditions of their possibility. Therefore, strategies of power pertain to “the exploitation of possibilities which [power] itself discerns and creates” (Gordon, 1980, p. 251). Power, to reiterate, is thoroughly relational even though it can be instrumentalized *as* substantial, fixed, and discrete; the “exercise” of power “operates on the field of possibilities in which the behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself” (Foucault, 2000b, p. 341). In sum, power relations are coterminous with the subjects and objects that such relations name and require (Gordon, 1980), in which, as introduced above, “[t]he individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is an effect, it is the element of its articulation” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98).

It is through historically contingent dispositifs, or apparatuses, that power-knowledge permeates the conduct of others and what possibilities, problems, and realities are visible, knowable, and manageable, “while simultaneously obscuring other connections, practices and subjectivities” (Huxley, 2008, p. 1646). Dispositifs pertain to the play and strategies of power through “said and unsaid” heterogeneous ensembles of “discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, [and] philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions” (Huxley, 2008, p. 1646; see also Foucault, 1980). Intimately tied to such dispositifs are the forms of government that “act on the actions of others to bring about particular comportments, behaviours and subjectivities” (Huxley, 2008, p. 1635), in which geographical study ties spatial analyses of mentalities of rule to technologies of both power and the self that produce certain governable subjects and spaces. As Huxley (2007) specifies, such study pertains to the “exploration of the rationalities that underpin programmes and practices of government, focusing on logics that attribute causal effects to space and

environment and that seek to manipulate these toward governmental ends” (Huxley, 2007, p. 185).

However, it is my contention that geographical literature is lacking in terms of how exactly “logics” of *self*-government come to be through performative ethical practices of the self, and whether the “technical,” or “instrumental,” here, as Campbell (2010) discusses, refer to an “ambitious schema of calculative, technocratic utility, or to something more modest, such as the ‘practical’ or ‘do-able’ qualities of governmental techniques, discourses and practices in their experiential immediacy” (p. 39). To be discussed in the sections to follow, reading Foucault in the terms of the latter enables analysis of the geographical specificity of self-government, in which the mentalities, rationalities, and technical abilities sustained by power rather pertain to “everyday ‘how-to’ or ‘know-how’” (Campbell, 2010, p. 39). Therefore, geographical research must be wary of its ability to take for granted such “fixing effects” of the programmes and practices of government, yet center them as the *practiced phenomena* by the reflexive, active, and intentional subjects that power relationally sustains (Barnett et al., 2008; Martin & Waring, 2018; Savransky, 2014).

### **Geographies of Governmentality**

Before going any further, it is important to note that research in the realm of “Foucauldian” or “governmentality studies” is often reflexively admitted as “provisional,” or “imminent,” so as to highlight the contingency of such scholarly feats; like Foucault’s (2000, 2007b) claims, the terms of research must be derived from and applied within the historical context in which they emerge. In this sense, geographical research in this loosely defined area of study avoids reading Foucault dogmatically and rather employs his works as a set of resources, or an unfolding “toolkit,” as introduced above, for an imminent critical analysis—one that is

reflexive of the very “fixing” forces that it seeks to understand and contest. In order to avoid solidifying and further supposing a predefined research “tradition,” this area of scholarship strives to evade formalizing an approach which eschews formalization and evades set rules or procedures (Nicholls, 2009; Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

Therefore, to highlight the historical context of this form of analysis, governmentality studies are largely inspired by Foucault’s “Governmentality” lecture, which took place in 1978 (see Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991). Specifically, Foucault’s (2007a, 2008) courses, “Security, Territory, Population” and “The Birth of Biopolitics,” compel critical research on how sovereignty, discipline, and security interrelate to form a mode of governing populations through political rule, thus analyzing the intertwining of “political rationalities” and “technologies of government,” otherwise known as technologies of modern power (Elden, 2007b; Hamman, 2011; Rose-Redwood, 2006a, 2012). Moreover, Foucault (1988) further develops the concept of governmentality as that which speaks to the interconnections between technologies of the self and technologies of power, in which “we are governed within particular rationalities of government defined broadly as ‘conduct of conduct’” (Musilek, 2015, p. 22).

These imbricated themes that comprise the bulk of interdisciplinary governmentality studies continue to invigorate geographical research including, yet not limited to: governance (Mackinnon, 2000); geopolitics (Flint, 2003), detention and imprisonment (Martin & Mitchelson, 2009); cartography (Crampton, 2003); territory (Elden, 2007a); nature, climate change, and the environment (Bakker, 2010; Dowling, 2010) and cultural, political, and economic geographies more broadly (Bratich, Packer, & McCarthy, 2003; Prince & Duffy, 2009). Moreover, this broad area of research concentrates a diversity of interdisciplinary scholarship through the development

of book-length volumes and edited collections (Bröckling, Krasmann, & Lemke, 2011; Crampton & Elden, 2007; Dean, 2010; Larner & Walters, 2004; Lemke, 2012).

As Ettlinger (2011) describes, governmentality is geographic at “its core,” in which such research largely builds on relational frameworks for the analysis of techniques of power—“calculated tactics that guide everyday citizen-subjects to act in accordance with societal norms” (p. 538). Although there exists a theoretically distinct yet interrelated “side” to governmentality, that is, technologies of the self, Ettlinger (2011) highlights how geography has largely engaged with the former, in which the discipline occupies itself with the study of governance of the population, the “art of governance at a distance” and the objectivising powers of “external gazes” (p. 540). However, the other “side” of governmentality exists in an agonistic relation to its counterpart, and Ettlinger (2011) claims there is much room for the geographical study of governance of the self, the “art of living,” and the subjectivising “internal gaze” of ever-forming subjects (p. 540).

As Häkli (2009) outlines, this broader “split” within the growing interdisciplinary study of governmentality pertains to, on the one hand, the interrelated role of “knowledge production in relation to the rationalities of rule (how regimes of truth constitute the social world as governable and administrable)” (p. 630). While, on the other hand, other research focuses on “the technologies and practices of government (the operationalization of governmental rationalities in material processes and acts)” (p. 630). This bifurcation in research resembles Rose’s (1999) distinction between the study of programmatic thinking and techniques and technologies for the conduct of conduct, what he argues forms the sole analytical object of governmentality, and “sociologies of practices,” “the actual organization and operation of systems of rule, of the relations that obtain amongst political and other actors and organizations at local levels and their

connection into actor networks and the like” (p. 19). This distinction, as Brady (2016) describes, follows Foucault’s (1997) analytical focus in *Discipline and Punish*, in which he does not aim to understand “real life” or “living reality,” but to rather “analyze the connection between ways of distinguishing between true and false ways of governing oneself and others” (p. 233). Here, Foucault (1977) looks to how “theoreticians’ schemas” form “fragments of reality that induce ... particular effects in the real” (p. 233).

As such, Rose (1999) argues that studies of governmentality are:

of a particular ‘stratum’ of knowing and acting. Of the emergence of particular ‘regimes of truth’ concerning the conduct of conduct, ways of speaking truth, persons authorized to speak truths, ways of enacting truths and the cost of so doing. Of the invention and assemblage of particular apparatuses and devices for exercising power and intervening upon particular problems. They are concerned, that is to say, with the conditions of possibility and intelligibility for certain ways of seeking to act upon the conduct of others, or oneself, to achieve certain ends. (p. 19)

However, challenging Rose’s (1999) distinction between studies of governmentality and sociologies of rule, Brady (2016) highlights how recent ethnographic research, to be discussed below, demonstrates that one cannot be so easily distinguished from the other. Here, exactly *how* such speaking of truths happens, *how* persons are authorized to speak truths, and *how* enacting truths and the cost of doing so requires a study of the rationalities and techniques of rule and governance *as they are practiced* (Martin & Waring, 2018; Savransky, 2014).

Although Bröckling (2016) claims studies in governmentality are more concerned with a “grammar” of governing and self-governing rather than what subjects “say or do” (p. xiii), Barnett et al. (2008) argue that a such a focus takes for granted just how technologies of power and the self so strongly “‘elicit’, ‘promote’, ‘foster’, ‘attract’, ‘guide’, ‘encourage’ and so on” (p. 628). Therefore, more research needs to examine the production of technologies of power and the self throughout the mundane and specific discourses that cannot be so easily separated into

“grammars” and “real” practices. It is precisely the productive “contact” of techniques of power and techniques of the self that enable, or “operationalize,” particular “conduct of conducts” of the self and others—yet any analysis of the “field of possible actions” for governmental subjects must not look to programmes of government as if they exist on their own, separate and “above” ethical practices of the self (Binkley, 2009b, 2011; Elden, 2007b; Häkli, 2009; Hamann, 2011). Therefore, the study of government, or the “contact point” between technologies of power and the self, must be attentive to how governmental discourses are not produced through “theoreticians’ schemas” alone, but how they are also produced through practice—*by* those that become both the subjects and objects of government.

As Foucault (2000c) clarifies elsewhere, *Discipline and Punish* was not the study of prisons, but the “*practice of imprisonment*,” an analysis that investigates “a ‘regime of practices’—practices being understood here as places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken-for-granted meet and interconnect” (p. 225). Hence, an analysis of “how men [sic] govern (themselves and others) by the production of truth” (Foucault, 2000c, p. 230) cannot assume that the production of truth originates from “theoreticians’ schemas” without also asking how “theoreticians” are themselves produced through their own specific practices. Similar to critiques of sovereign performativity (Glass & Rose-Redwood, 2014), Savransky (2014) therefore calls for governmentality studies to go beyond taking “‘official’ textual sources at face value” so as not to reduce “the multiplicity of vectors to those concerning authority” (p. 104). Thus, governmentality studies must still concern the technologies and rationalities of authority, yet with attention to *how they become* authorized and authorial.

In review of Foucault's "later" works that focus on the productive practices *of subjects*, Brady (2016) highlights the emerging area of governmentality research that employs ethnographic methods to analyze the intersections of governmental schemas/programmes and the "world" both they and other subjects transform *through* situated and reflexive practice (Li, 2007, Collier, 2011). As I discuss in the next section, governmentality research must further extend itself to how technologies and rationalities of government unfold *through* ethical practices of the self.

### **Practice: Between Technologies of Power and Technologies of the Self**

Although supposedly "top-down" technologies of power and "bottom-up" technologies of the self are neither contradictory nor incoherent (Allen, 2011), Binkley (2009b) highlights that neoliberal governmentality, in particular, presumes a sort of "continuous series" that runs from "macro-technologies by which states govern populations, to the micro-technologies by which individuals govern themselves" (p. 62). Therefore, to challenge this "series" of governmental discourses, recent study focuses on the unstable "contact point" between techniques of power and techniques of the self—that which Binkley (2009b) argues forms a lacuna in governmentality studies and a general lack of attention to the indeterminacy of this process. This gap in research pertains to how individuals "translate and incorporate the rationalities of political rule into their own methods for conducting themselves" (Binkley, 2009b, p. 62), or, as Burchell (1993) describes, how "the self-conduct of the governed [integrates] into the practice of their government and the promotion of correspondingly appropriate forms of techniques of the self" (p. 276).

In light of this need for study, Musilek (2015) calls for a thorough reading of the interconnections between technologies of power and technologies of the self, yet not to merely

fill-out the lack of scholarship on the latter. As Musilek (2015) discusses, the bulk of scholarship on neoliberal governmentality, for example, focuses on the production of the subject as an effect of neoliberal reforms, programs, and technologies, but only as it is presupposed in such institutional settings. This “macro-level” focus limits itself to the very ideal neoliberal subject, for example, presupposed by “grand designs” and the “tools designed to form [such a] subject into particular shape” (Musilek, 2015, p. 23)—therefore, sedimenting the very “cookie-cutter” subject presupposed by neoliberal rationalities (Brady, 2014, 2016). As ethical practices of the self are left understudied, or, what is worse, simply assumed to take place through the mere “downloading” of technologies of power and the self (Binkley, 2009b, 2011; Brady, 2014; Mitchell, 2006), research needs to focus rather on the exercise of government that becomes both thinkable and practicable in a “heterogeneous space, constituted through multiple determinations, and not reducible to a given form of knowledge-power” (Collier, 2009, p. 98).

Although geographical research is weary of the “slippage” between governmental aspirations and its intended outcomes (Huxley, 2008, p. 1645), research still assumes a split between “aspirations” and “outcomes” of technologies of power, thus missing the “molecular,” or “molar,” dimensions of governmentality (Brady, 2016). Therefore, to not get lost in the diagrammatic study of governmentality—a supposed genus replete with specific species of mentalities that stem from such “grand designs” and “master-planned” technologies of power that somehow extend to technologies of the self (Collier, 2009)—scholars must ask how the “individual self *participates* in the process of subject-formation *in an active fashion*” (Karakayali, 2015, p. 105). Here, contrary to a conceptualization of “passive” subject formation, governmentality studies must look to such active, or animated, and practiced dimensions of

subject formation, in which subjects are produced through practices that simultaneously enable yet constrain.

In terms of the instability and indeterminacy of this process, in which there is no guarantee for the subject as a finished and coherent product (nor, for that matter, is there a guarantee for the set of ethical practices of the self that a subject might engage in), the ambivalence of this “contact point” lends to a consideration of “the active dynamics of self-governmental practices” (Binkley, 2009b, p. 66). Here, such “active dynamics” refer to how self-governing subjects may reflexively work on, negate, transform, or defend parts of themselves while reflecting upon, reworking, and deploying governmental technologies (Collier, 2011; Karakayali, 2015; Musilek, 2015). Therefore, governmental discourses are never completely prior to practice—they perpetually unfold *through* practice and the matrices of multiple technologies, both past and present.

Building off of Foucault’s (1984) four-part analysis introduced above, Musilek (2015) discusses how a productive framework for a more concentrated study on techniques of the self pertains to the conceptual focus of “ethical substance” and “ethical work.” Foucault (1985) describes how the former relates to “the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself [sic] as the prime material of his moral conduct” (p. 26). Therefore, as both the “basis” and object for self-governing acts, ethical substance refers to the material that is at once the vehicle and the result of various techniques of the self. This paradoxical role, therefore, pertains to how “substance” should not be confused as the underlying basis, or model, for the subject, but, rather, a figure for the “process whereby the subject reflexively relates to itself” (Smith, 2015, p. 137). With regards to the techniques, or the “tools” and “methods,” performed

by the subject-in-production, then, ethical work refers to the very practices of this process that individuals perform on themselves toward a certain end (Binkley, 2009b; Musilek, 2015).

Musilek (2015) illustrates how discourses of professional self-development, for example, pose an ethical substance of the “authentic self” as a basis for a particular technology of the self that is grounded in the ethical work of introspection. Therefore, Musilek (2015) claims how a focus:

on the micro-level in which subjects are called upon as agents undertaking self-forming work allows us to see how subjects are actually addressed, what interpretations of their lives within the contemporary constellations of government of conduct are offered to them and how are they realities of contemporary society construed into an ethical problem for practice of everyday life. We can see how subjects are invited to become entrepreneurial agents seeking not only maximisation of profit and individual gain, but also searching for meaning and connection of their individual life with larger political and social narratives. (p. 34)

In short, if governmentality research asks what exactly is made intelligible, practicable, and knowable by technologies of power—that is, what ethical problems are “construed,” how subjects are “addressed,” and what forms of conduct, or ethical work, are “offered”—then, as Musilek (2015) demonstrates, research needs to also look to what subjects themselves *understand* as intelligible and practicable, in addition to how such understandings relate to their practices of self-government. In other words, governmentality studies need to not only look to how governmental practices are “offered” and how subjects are “addressed” and “accounted for,” but how they are “taken up”; more research needs to analyze how subjects “address” and “account for” *themselves* through various forms of “ethical work” and in relation to an “ethical substance” that only forms through such performative practices.

As introduced in the review above, Foucault (1996) discusses how “practices of the self” are not “something invented by the individual himself [sic],” but are rather the “models that he

finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, and his social group” (p. 441). This is not to take practices of the self as purely determined from the “outside,” nor is it to presume an autonomous, self-inventing, subject that is layered upon some underlying substrate (Karakayali, 2015). The complexity in subject formation points to how research needs to look to how subjects are enabled to certain degrees *within the constraints of their emergence*—how subjects are not merely understood, but how they understand and give accounts of themselves only *through* the practices that inform—yet are formed by—culturally intelligible modes of being (Butler, 1990, 1993, 2005). Recalling our review of Foucault above, the subject is precisely *of* power; the subject is anything but “outside” power relations—it is thoroughly produced through them, working, or “acting,” while always being worked and acted upon (Butler, 2009).

Therefore, more focus is needed on the practices whereby the self fastens and builds a relationship to itself, which holds promise for research that aims to specify the geohistorical conditions of these non-linear and heterogeneous relations of power (Campbell, 2010). In order to examine what ethical substances and forms of ethical work certain individuals or groups engage in, in particular, Brady (2014, 2016) argues that ethnographic methods are particularly useful. Methods such as interviewing and participant observation enable analysis of the multiplicity, context, and dynamics of everyday life and the diversities of various governmental discourses and the technologies of both power and the self that constitute them. In the case of neoliberalism, for example, Brady (2014) argues how ethnographic methods therefore “avoid polemic generalities that render neoliberal rationalities always and everywhere the same” (p. 14). This focus thus accommodates an extended range of practices constitutive of governmental

discourses that may not necessarily be neatly tied to discourses that are “intended” for the rather direct and spelled-out conduct of conduct (Barnett et al., 2008, p. 641; Brady, 2014).

Therefore, the analytical imperative for ethnographies of governmentality lies with the treatment of governmentality not as a “master concept,” but “as part of an exploration of more generalized relations of power in which different forms of power, technologies and techniques are often redeployed in new configurations” (Brady, 2014, p. 26; see also Collier, 2009). In short, there is no analytical distinction between governmental discourses and everyday practice (Brady, 2014). With careful attention to everyday practice, therefore, methods such as interviewing and participant observation can open a window, albeit always situated and partial one, into the cultural and social spaces in which governmental practices unfold.

In all, ethnographic studies of governmentality highlight the messiness of “actual practices” of governance, tensions between subject formations in different times and places, and the need for critical engagement with “fixed” yet contingent understandings and productions of governmental discourses that enable subjects’ own accounts of themselves. As I discuss in the next section, careful attention to how exactly subjects give paradoxically impossible accounts of themselves calls for such ethnographic methods.

### **Giving an Account of Oneself and Ethnography**

Recalling the review of techniques of the self, the subject, and power above, the subject, rather than a noun, can be conceptualized as a process, a verb, in which the reiterative and unfolding practices and techniques of its *formation* require special attention. In particular, attention needs to be paid to exactly *how* the one who gives an account of oneself serves as both the subject and object of self-governance. First, following Butler (1993), it is important not to confuse power as a subject in subject-verb formation, in which power *affects* subjects. Instead,

power, the subject, and the technologies of its formation rather comprise relational practices, in which the “matrices” of these practices mark the subject as an imminent site of becoming. In other words, as a site, the subject is at once constructed and a place of construction—produced, yet the “grounds” for production; rather than being interchangeable with “the person” or “the individual,” the subject, as Butler (1997b) explains, “ought to be designated as a linguistic category, a placeholder, a structure in formation,” in which “the subject ... emerges as a ‘site’” (pp. 10-11).

Butler’s (1990, 1993) earlier and more direct discussions of *performativity* speak to how the formation of a decentered yet embodied subject points to how subjects are imminent to their constitutive practices; they *come into being* through the regulatory norms, institutions, and practices that they themselves recite and reiterate. As Butler (1993, p. 142) describes, the subject “appears to produce that which it names, to enact its own referent, to name and to do, to name and to make” (Butler 1993, p. 142). Therefore, the norms, institutions, and socially and culturally intelligible ways of thinking/acting enable the subject, in which subjectivity forms a “doing,” yet “not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed” (Butler, 1990, p. 33). Such “doing” is marked by repetition and reiteration, in which such practices are paradoxically performed and given an account by a belated subject—in and through the embodied practices that bring it into being (Butler, 1993, p. 95, 2015b, p. 2). Thus, the subject forms a verb, rather than a noun, in which various subject positions are “produced” through performative acts—yet only as unfinished and ever-unfolding “products.”

Butler’s (1993, 1997a) theorization of performativity follows Foucault’s analytics of power to explore how identity, the subject, the self, the “I,” and the body all come to be, *materializing* as ontological “effects” through repetitive and citational practices. Therefore,

constitutive, performative practices stabilize over time to produce the effect of boundary and fixity of “matter” (Butler, 1993, p. 9). Here, Butler (1990) discusses how gender, for example “is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (p. 33). Even if “material” forms like “the body” are that which may exceed any attempt to capture them in discourse, such forms cannot be approached as “extra-discursive”; Butler (1993) maintains that there cannot be unmediated access to a pre-given nature, body, or material realm, in which any “success” in demarcating the “material,” or non-discursive, is itself a performative accomplishment.

Therefore, subjects “take shape” and thereby more closely resemble the performative “effects” rather than “causes” of relational discursive practices that congeal, sediment, and make durable the seemingly stable “grounds” for self-referential practices. As discussed above, the subject does not have the capacity to act—in and of itself—without at once being acted upon (Butler, 2009). This poses difficulties for theorizing the figure who speaks of an autonomous and seemingly coherent “I.” I quote Butler (2005) at length as she details the complexity of the narrative dimension of subject formation:

The “I” does not stand apart from [a] prevailing matrix of ethical norms and conflicting moral frameworks. In an important sense, this matrix is also the condition for the emergence of the “I,” even though the “I” is not causally induced by those norms. We cannot conclude that the “I” is simply the effect or the instrument of some prior ethos or some field of conflicting or discontinuous norms. When the “I” seeks to give an account of itself, it can start with itself, but it will find that this self is already implicated in a social temporality that exceeds its own capacities for narration; indeed, when the “I” seeks to give an account of itself, an account that must include the conditions of its own emergence, it must, as a matter of necessity, become a social theorist. (pp.7-8)

Similarly, elsewhere, Butler (2015b) argues that subjects come to use the first-person pronoun, “I,” only after they are affected by something outside of themselves, something understood as prior that both “activates and informs” (p. 1). This “narrative sequence” whereby subjects may give an impossibly “authorial” account of themselves marks the belated presence of the “I” that is already affected before it can say “I” at all.

Consequently, Butler (2015b) discusses that these propositions “fail ... to describe the threshold of susceptibility that precedes any sense of individuation or linguistic capacity for self-reference” (p. 2). In other words, the “methodological problem” of susceptibility pertains to how the “I” is speaking from a retrospective position—one that more closely resembles an indeterminable effect, rather than a determinable cause. This belated account of the “I” signals, for Butler (2015b, p. 2), how the subject may proceed by marking the “paradoxical condition” of trying to relate something about one’s formation that is prior to one’s “narrative capacity”—that which also brings such “narrative capacity” about. Butler (2015b) questions:

is it possible to try to give a narrative sequence for the process of being affected, a threshold of susceptibility and transfer [that I] might reflect upon and relay, a life that did not yet exist and that, in part, accounts for the emergence of that I? (p. 3)

In all, giving an account of oneself is intimately tied to the formation of the subject, and, while looking to the discussion of the contact point of technologies of power and the self above, the paradoxical form of ethical substance shaped by ethical work. Although the impossibility of accounting for one’s own narrative sequence and the relation to the norms that precede the subject indicate a certain difficulty for an analysis of how subjects actively give accounts for themselves, I argue that, again, the pertinence of an analytics of power does not lie in the ability to locate any “source” of power, nor how it “affects” subjects. In other words, it is less important to study what affects subjects as compared to how subjects are effected.

Again, giving an account of oneself positions the subject as a “social theorist,” or “speculative philosopher” and “fiction writer” as Butler (2005, 2015b) describes elsewhere, in which their active reiteration of norms and technologies that come before them stimulates the relations of power that enable them. In other words, not only are subject “positioned in power,” but they actively engage in their own “positioning” whereby the imminent and belated account that is necessary for a subject’s formation ties them to this process in which *they* must be the ones who give the final account, the paradoxically inaugural one.

Therefore, to better understand the conditions of emergence, in addition to what is exactly emerging, governmentality studies may look to the narrative dimensions of subject formation by centering, or at least incorporating, subjects’ accounts of themselves, that is, their ethical practices of the self. In this sense, ethnographic study may account for what subjects *produce* in their accounts of themselves, whereby they *site* the ontological field and matrices of norms and technologies of power and the self that *they* bring forth through their reiterative practice. In other words, research must not take for granted what is produced through the *reiteration* of “macro-level” discourses of technologies of power and the self. Since the subject—through its formation—unsettles the site, or the “contact point,” in which it is formed, the “contact point” of technologies of power and the self, therefore, must extend to ethical practices of the self as they incorporate the very accounts whereby the subject is exacted, as it exacts itself.

To reiterate, with regards to the pertinence of the “site” of the subject and its paradoxical role in its account of itself, I add to the call for ethnographic methods in governmentality studies as they focus on such active relations of power. This is not to say that the only things that condition the subject must be captured in what comes through their mouths. Rather, I argue for a

careful attentiveness to how “macro-level” technologies of power and the self may be exacerbated, disrupted, or simply complicated by “micro-level” ethical practices of the self.

Ethnographic methods, such as interviewing, for example, enable a closer view of participants’ ethical practices of the self in relation to technologies of power and the self. Significantly, not only may participants reflect on ethical practices of the self that occur outside the space of the interview, but their active accounts of themselves form ethical practices—then and there. Also, participant observation may open a partial window into the various everyday practices in which participants are compelled to give accounts of themselves and engage in other ethical practices of the self.

To conclude, the scene of address forms the field, or the site, in which a matrix of power relations produces the subject in a way that the subject’s formation or “grounds” for its accounts are never finalized. Therefore, interviewing serves as a site for such imminent formation, in which participants’ accounts of their ethical practices—and how they give such an account—sheds light on the techniques of the self and power in which they are called upon and then reiterate. To engage the “contact point” between technologies of power and the self, then, I argue that geographical study of governmentality must take heed of Butler’s (2015b) theoretical considerations, in which the “narrative dimension of the theory of subject formation is impossible, yet necessary, inevitably belated” (p. 4). This consideration will develop understudied research avenues that look to “discern how the subject is initially animated by what affects it and how these transitive processes are reiterated in the animated life that follows” (Butler, 2015b, p. 4).

## **Conclusion: Focusing and Expanding the “Contact Point” of Government**

While advocating for a more concentrated research project on the “contact point” between technologies of power and technologies of the self, I have also argued that research must pay more attention to how governmental technologies interact with practice. With the help of ethnographic methods, this broader “contact point” of government will bolster study that aims to understand the relational character of subject formation, in which power, the subject, and the technologies of their production cannot be thought of in isolation. I argue how technologies of power and the self must be studied *as they are practiced*, in which the formation of the subject is reiterated in its very own account of itself. As subject formation pertains to the geohistorical conditions by which certain subject may emerge (Karakayali, 2015), in which “truth” and the techniques that make certain practices on the self and others knowable, intelligible, and practicable, further research needs that look to how subjects give accounts of themselves in different times and places, in different positions as they position themselves.

The pertinence of the double character of being enabled yet constrained in one’s self-reflexive formation points to the need for analysis that examines both ethical practices of the self and technologies of power and the self through ethnographic methods. However, this form of research must not produce a false binary between technologies and practices; study of how technologies of government “operationalize governmental rationalities and construct the very ‘objects’ of government as in some sense ‘knowable’” (Rose-Redwood, 2006b, p. 43) need to incorporate the formative practices of subjects—both the “governing” and the “governable”—in relation to the broader discourses that they contribute.

To conclude, governmentality studies need to reconsider how the subject is an “effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is an effect, it is the element of

its articulation” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). In order to expand upon the “how” of the “operationalization” and “acquiescence” of mentalities and rationalities of government, a closer look at the “contact point” between technologies of power and technologies of the self lends to an analysis of the subject and space as it serves as a site—the paradoxical vehicle and object of self-government—by which governmental discourses are made thinkable, intelligible, and practicable. Therefore, although subjects and spaces are *accounted for* through technologies of power and the self, more research needs to ask how subjects *account for themselves* through ethical practices that enable the site and the “contact point” of government.

## Chapter 3: Colombian Surgeons and Surgically Enhanced “Selfies” and “Snaps”

### Introduction

This chapter contributes to interdisciplinary literature on the production of global, entrepreneurial subjects and spaces by examining the “contact point” of government within an industry that epitomizes self-refinement and transformation: cosmetic surgery. Instead of solely studying the “grammars” of government without also asking what subjects “say or do” (Bröckling, 2016, p. xiii), I analyze how governmental discourses of neoliberalism and globalization are performed by the very subjects that they produce. Through presenting findings from a research project that incorporates 20 interviews with cosmetic surgeons in Colombia, an increasingly popular destination for cosmetic surgery tourism, I discuss how “everyday” practices of ever-forming “entrepreneurial” subjects in part produce the “global economic sphere” in which they are able to inscribe themselves and conduct their own conduct.

Therefore, by discussing how governmental discourses are performative, I address a persistent point of tension within governmentality studies: existing research poses the “programmers” and “theoreticians” of government as theoretically distinct from “the governable” while avoiding an account of the otherwise nebulous “realisation” and “infiltration” (Martin & Waring, 2018), or “operationalization” and “acquiescence” (Häkli, 2009; Prince & Duffy, 2009), of the technologies of power and the self that comprise governmental discourses (Brady, 2016). In order to better understand such imminent relations of power, I incorporate ethnographic methods that speak to the “surface aspects, practices, and routines” of participants’ self-government (Larner & Walters, 2004, p. 496; see also Brady, 2014; Li, 2007), rather than

the “programmers” and “theoreticians” grand, calculated schemas of globalization, neoliberalism, and the global market economy. In other words, I ask how governmental discourses of globalization, neoliberalism, and the global market economy *figure* in everyday practice, in which subjects *account for* these discourses just as they are *accounted by* them (Larner, 2012).

Below, I first review interdisciplinary literature on cosmetic surgery and cosmetic surgery tourism that contributes to critical feminist research on neoliberalism and a loosely defined area of governmentality studies. I then introduce my research project and the pertinence of this study amidst the explicit “resources” for cosmetic surgeons’ global development of their “entrepreneurial selves.” However, as such discourses geared for the direct development of “entrepreneurial surgeons” prove to be peripheral to participants’ marketing and advertising practices, I go beyond the usual scope of governmentality analysis by discussing cosmetic surgeons’ performative roles in the (re)production of governmental discourses that extend to ubiquitous and mundane, “everyday” yet “global,” social media practices.

### **Studying Cosmetic Surgery**

Cosmetic surgery is a growing appendage of medical tourism that pertains to elective procedures which are not often covered by public healthcare plans (Bell et al., 2011). Cosmetic surgery procedures are “aesthetic,” in that they aim to enhance the appearance of patients, while the treatment areas of focus function “properly” and do not require “plastic surgery” to “[repair] defects to reconstruct a normal function [and] appearance” (American Board of Cosmetic Surgery, 2018). Yet, as Heyes (2007a, 2007b) explains, the discursive production of “normal,” or even “aesthetic,” serves as an important point for “genealogical” investigation, in which the

conditions of emergence of the assemblages of meanings, practices, norms, and institutions that produce cosmetic surgery in relation to other types of surgery require further attention.

Due to the prominence and growth of cosmetic surgery within the broader medical tourism industry, in which there was a 9% increase in the total amount of cosmetic procedures performed between 2015 and 2016 (“ISAPS Global Statistics”, 2018), a broad range of interdisciplinary research draws attention to the online marketing media and broader discourses of commodified and “market-able” bodies, selves, and places (Bristow & Yang, 2015; Connell, 2006; Edmonds, 2007; Livingston, 2015; Vardanian, Kusneszov, Im, & Lee, 2013). Specifically, such literature focuses on web-based media of often “tropical” tourist destinations, such as those in South America and Southeast Asia, and examines how such services are marketed internationally through producing the places of cosmetic surgery as “resort” and “holiday destinations” for “transnational body projects” (Ackerman, 2010; Bell et al., 2011; Bristow & Yang, 2015; de Casanova & Sutton, 2013; Holliday, et al., 2013; Holliday et al., 2015; Jones, 2011; Viladrich & Baron-Faust, 2014).

The literature on cosmetic surgery tourism thus illustrates how marketing discourses produce “the body,” “the self,” and even “place” as objects of refinement, in which potential “consumers” of cosmetic surgery are thus positioned as subjects *who must work on themselves* by “investing” in the surgical means of self-transformation and self-refinement—while online media represent the “place” of cosmetic surgery as marketable within the “global market economy” (de Casanova & Sutton, 2013; Holliday et al., 2015). For example, Viladrich and Baron-Faust (2014) describe how online cosmetic surgery advertising media reinforce “the notion of patients as consumers free to buy any products (including specialized surgeries) in an increasingly mobile global marketplace” (p. 117). Similarly, Edmonds (2007) observes how

cosmetic surgery “incites the consumer desires of people on the margins of the market economy,” in which “[b]eauty practices offer a means to compete in a neoliberal libidinal economy where anxieties surrounding new markets of work and sex mingle with fantasies of social mobility, glamour, and modernity” (p. 363).

The vast majority of literature on cosmetic surgery tends to focus on the patients of cosmetic surgery, in which analyses of online and television media shed light on the effects of surgeon-patient relations, in addition to the discursive production of a “neoliberal patient” in a world of increasingly “global,” “economic,” and “entrepreneurial” activity (de Casanova & Sutton, 2013; Fraser, 2003; Heyes, 2007a; Holliday et al. 2015; Jones, 2008, 2009; Viladrich & Baron-Faust, 2014). Largely propelled by feminist analyses, this body of literature, as Pitts-Taylor (2009) discusses, moves beyond a binary “dead-end” structure/agency debate (see Morgan, 2009; Jones, 2009), in which emerging scholarship works against such intellectual gridlocks to “decenter” the subject of cosmetic surgery. Therefore, such research investigates processes of subject formation within cosmetic surgery in terms of embodied, discursive practices while exploring how governmental discourses produce culturally intelligible modes of being—especially in the context of more or less “perfect” neoliberal subjects (Gill & Scharff, 2013; McRobbie, 2015; Scharff, 2016). As governmental discourses shape the very “idea of being human” (Cheng, 2016, p. 228), this body of research thus reconsiders “the very relation between the body and self as an outcome of broader developments in neoliberal biocapitalism” (Pitts-Taylor, 2009, p. 160; see also Gill & Orgad, 2015).

Overall, such research contributes to a loosely defined area of governmentality studies by taking aim at discourses and broader dispositifs that enable yet constrain the conduct of conduct. As largely developed by Foucauldian understandings of productive power and the “contact

point” of government, where “coercion-technologies” and “self-technologies” meet (Allen, 2013, p. 347; Foucault, 1980, 1988, 2000b), governmentality studies therefore shed light on the (re)production of “entrepreneurial,” “neoliberal,” and “global” subjects through various rationalities and technologies that center self-refinement and self-transformation. Therefore, recent literature explores the production of “hybrid” subjects and the multiplicity of subject positions that take place at the intersection of transformative practices—especially in the context of subjects’ own roles in an ever-increasing inculcation of biopolitical rationalities in everyday life and broader understandings of health and beauty needs (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017; Fries, 2008; Gill & Scharff, 2013; Jarrin, 2012; Jones, 2011; Morton, 2015).

Yet, forming a persistent lacuna in governmentality studies more broadly, as introduced above, little research asks how exactly “subjects subjectify” (Prince & Duffy, 2009, p. 1753)—how individuals “translate and incorporate the rationalities of political rule into their own methods for conducting themselves” (Binkley, 2009b, p. 62). In the discussion that follows, I ask how subjects are produced and animated to “actively” partake in their own government in relation to the unfolding spatialization of power (Binkley, 2009b, 2011; Brady, 2014; Campbell, 2010; Karakayali, 2014; Musilek, 2015). This question points to how governmentality studies must analyze how “the self-conduct of the governed [integrates] into the practice of their government and the promotion of correspondingly appropriate forms of techniques of the self” (Burchell, 1993, p. 276).

Therefore, I argue that geographies of governmentality must attend to how subjects *perform* governmental discourses in relation to themselves, other subjects, and spaces that have all yet to ever fully form. In order to understand the intimate and “everyday” yet “global” discursive productions of cosmetic surgery, scholars need to ask how subjects and spaces *take*

*part* in neoliberal (a)esthetics and compartments to become the ever-forming “self as enterprise” (Budgeon, 2015; McNay, 2009; McRobbie, 2015). Yet, as very little scholarship examines how cosmetic surgeons—that is, the “producers” of cosmetic surgery—themselves produce *their own* marketable and commodified selves as well as the spaces in which they practice, I explore a broader sense of the “production” of cosmetic surgery and the performative role of such subjects in their own “consumption” and reproduction of governmental discourses.

Although Jones (2009) and Fraser (2003) demonstrate how existing literature delves into the relationships and subject positions between surgeons and patients, in which the subject positions of “artist” (or “sculptor”) and “specimen” (or “product”) are discursively produced through both medical discourses and embodied practice, little if any research asks how cosmetic surgeons become both the producer and the product of their work. Being at once the subject and object of refinement, I ask how cosmetic surgeons are not simply a passive pair of hands with a surgical gaze—the technicians of beauty that wear either white coats or surgical scrubs. Rather, I ask how the intersecting and unfolding subject positions and spaces of cosmetic surgeons’ ethical practice relate to how they are compelled to have cosmetic surgery *done on themselves* while they produce cosmetic surgery and the “global economic sphere” in which they participate. After introducing my research project, I discuss how subjects perform ethical practices that exist in relation to governmental rationalities and technologies of power and the self that they reiterate through their own production *as* certain subjects and in reference to certain spaces.

### **Compelled to Cosmetics in Colombia**

According to the *International Survey on Aesthetic/Cosmetic Procedures 2016* (“ISAPS Global Statistics,” 2018), Colombia placed tenth in the world for the greatest number of cosmetic procedures performed, in which over 500,000 cosmetic procedures took place in the country.

Significantly, in 2016, 18.6% of cosmetic surgery patients in Colombia were, on average, from abroad—the fourth largest ratio of non-resident patients, following Egypt (19.1%), Lebanon (25.3%), and Thailand (47.2%). This is a slight drop from its 2015 figures, in which Colombia received 24.7%, the highest ratio of non-resident patients in the world. Moreover, according to the *2016 Medical Tourism Index Report* (<https://www.medicaltourismindex.com/>), Colombia ranked second in the world in the “Medical Tourism Industry” category, fifth in the world for “Best Medical Tourism Costs,” and twelfth in the world for the reputation and accreditation of its healthcare system, thus placing tenth in the world for medical tourism overall.

Given the prominence of cosmetic surgery tourism in Colombia, I analyzed Colombian cosmetic surgeons’ online advertising media and 20 interviews with 21 surgeons in the cities of Barranquilla, Cali, and Bogota in July and August 2017 (two participants opted to be interviewed together). Recruitment methods included emailing over 500 cosmetic surgeons via email drawing upon publicly available email addresses found on the Sociedad Colombiana de Cirugía Plástica Estética y Reconstructiva (the Colombian Society of Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery [SCCP]) website. My research assistant and I also recruited participants with the help of personal contacts who extended the contact information and details of the study to cosmetic surgeons applicable to the study.

Inclusion criteria for participants pertained to requirements to be a plastic surgeon in Colombia, as outlined by the SCCP. Out of the 20 interviews, my research assistant and I conducted five interviews in English and the remaining in Spanish. (My research assistant translated both questions and responses during interviews that we conducted in Spanish in addition to translating and transcribing all interviews during and after research trip). All interviews lasted between 20 to 60 minutes, averaging 42 minutes per interview, and took place

in participants' consultation and mixed-use offices within private clinics, hospitals, and administrative buildings. During the two-month research trip, my research assistant and I conducted all interviews in a cumulative 15 days, demonstrating the density of participants' busy surgery and consultation schedules and the necessity to conduct interviews within a moment's notice. Nine interviews took place in Barranquilla, one interview in Cali, and ten in Bogota. We conducted semi-structured interviews to introduce the study focus and research questions to participants, yet to also leaving room for participants to introduce and elaborate themes and topics they found pertinent to discussion.

### **Giving an Account of Global Entrepreneurial Subjects**

The recently unveiled programme for the biennial International Society of Plastic Surgery (ISAPS) Congress, to be held in South Beach Miami on October 31, 2018, is replete with discourses of the outright development of "entrepreneurial" subjects. As the 2018 Congress President, Renato Saltz, announces in the open lines of the promotional video found on the ISAPS website (<https://www.isaps.org/>): "the Congress will include a very comprehensive practice management and marketing curriculum for the new ISAPS Business School." Significantly, the programme for the Congress includes multi-day Master Classes on "How to Maximize Profit in an Aesthetic Practice" and "Strategies for Marketing & Branding Your Aesthetic Practice." In addition, the Congress will hold multiple sessions such as: "Practice Growth Strategies," "Branding and Celebrity Positioning," "Website & Digital Marketing Demystified," and "Social Media Mastery." Within these sessions, various members will discuss "The Entrepreneurial Physician - Uncovering Hidden Revenue Streams In Your Practice," "Case Study: The Dos and Don'ts of Rebranding Your Practice," and "When Your Practice Turns Into a Reality TV Show." As these rather blatant titles suggest, the prevalence of such needed skills and

techniques suggests just how these discourses produce the need for “entrepreneurial cosmetic surgeons” as timely and pressing, globally.

Beyond the upcoming Congress, online resources on the websites of the ISAPS and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (<https://www.plasticsurgery.org/>) provide various resources for surgeons’ ethical practices, such as the ISAPS “Business School,” as mentioned above, found on their online newsletter publications, or the American Society of Plastic Surgeons periodical, the *Journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons*. Moreover, the ISAPS website, for example, provides both blogs and newsletter services that spotlight marketing professionals’ pithy articles on “How to Expand Your Twitter Following as a Plastic Surgeon,” “6 Ways to Successfully Market Your Practice,” “Ten Easy Ways to Get a Better Response from Your Facebook Advertising,” and “7 Tips on Promoting Your Plastic Surgery Practice with Instagram.” As for the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (2018) periodicals, articles like Constantian’s (2003) “The Media and Plastic Surgery: On Being What You Want to Become,” Branford et al.’s (2016) “#PlasticSurgery,” Rohrich’s (2017) “So, Do You Want to Be Facebook Friends? How Social Media Have Changed Plastic Surgery and Medicine Forever,” or Branford & Mallucci’s (2015) “Publicize or Perish! A Guide to Social Media Promotion of Scientific Articles: Featuring the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Author Tool Kit” set a particular tone for not only the need for such ethical practices but their urgency as well.

These discourses pertain to a wide array of social media accounts of surgeons from around the world, in addition to specific websites of cosmetic surgery practices in Colombia that feature advertising videos, such as those on the homepages of Premium Care Plastic Surgery (<http://premiumcareplasticsurgery.com/>) and Elite Cirugía Plástica (<https://elitecirugiaplastica.org/>). These manicured advertising videos demonstrate the need to not only market cosmetic surgery

tourism to an international audience (as both videos are in English, with English subtitles at times, and a myriad of references to their international clientele), but also to highlight the surgeons and their roles as “business visionaries,” “professional innovators,” “one-on-one educators,” “international travelers,” “locals,” and even “travel guides.” These cosmetic surgery “resorts” market “all-inclusive” packages, in which the role of the “surgeon” and the “services” they provide seem to go far beyond the operating room. In addition, I browsed social media accounts and websites of “world famous,” “celebrity” cosmetic surgeons. As I shall discuss below, the role of including aspects of surgeons’ “personal life” in such media predicates these eye-catching and widely followed forms of publicity.

Moreover, both before and during the research trip, I observed the staggering presence of cosmetic surgery advertising and the degree of cosmetic surgeons’ publicity in Colombia. Within large “American-style” malls, billboards and signs of patients, models, and the surgeons themselves littered the walkways. I observed advertisements of surgeons in the in-flight magazines within planes both traveling to Colombia in addition to the plethora of street-side billboards that were present in almost every car-trip within urban areas. In all, these observations not only indicate the prevalence of cosmetic surgeons’ practices of advertising and centering themselves in their marketing media, but the readily available array of “resources” for surgeons to “develop” themselves and their careers.

Interestingly, most of the conference sessions, scholarly publications, and online newsletters that comprise these governmental discourses are presented and created by *cosmetic surgeons themselves*. I have yet to discuss what these entrepreneurial “resources” mean for the participants of this study, yet this finding alone challenges a persistent gap in research within governmentality studies. As research in governmentality studies often leaves subject formation to

a vague “realisation” and “infiltration” (Martin & Waring, 2018), or “operationalization” and “acquiescence” of technologies of power and the self (Häkli, 2009; Prince & Duffy, 2009), as discussed above, research thus presumes a certain “distance” between “programmers’ intentions,” or “theoreticians’ schemas,” of governmental technologies and the self-governing subjects that are produced by such (Barnett et al., 2008; Martin & Waring, 2018). Consequently, existing research presumes “programmers” and “theoreticians” solely produce technologies of power and *not the governable subjects in question*. So, if cosmetic surgeons become both the “producers” and “consumers” of such discourses and regarding entrepreneurial techniques, for instance, governmentality studies not only lack specificity for the processes of subject formation and the role of discourse as an embodied practice, but also the exact “distance” between the governing and the governable as they are “governed from a distance” (Ball, 2016; Barnett, 2005; Barnett et al., 2008; Savransky, 2014).

Therefore, below, I go beyond a mere analysis of how governmental practices are “offered” and how subjects are “addressed” and “accounted for” in order to incorporate how such practices are “taken up” and how subjects “address” and “account for” themselves and others (Larner, 2012). I ask: What connections exist between *cosmetic surgeons’* techniques of the self and their ethical practices of self-government? Next, I discuss participants’ accounts of themselves and the related enabling yet constraining practices that inform such entrepreneurial social media use and related online advertising techniques.

### **Techniques and Practices of the Entrepreneurial Surgeon**

Despite the tight schedules my research assistant and I managed to squeeze into, interviews were to the point, efficient, and incredibly rich in detail. As participants were very busy, interviews often began running, in which participants sat us down to large desks in often

“modern” offices with sleek and shiny surfaces and fixtures. While being to-the-point and both quick and excited to elaborate their ideas without much probing, participants were eager to go to the extra lengths of not only illustrating what marketing and advertising practices they saw in Colombia, but also to describe their own practices in great detail. As many participants explained, their interest in the present study relates to how they were just beginning to open social media accounts and spend an increasing amount of time both at work and at home for their own social media use and advertising efforts.

With regards to the exact type of marketing and advertising practices that cosmetic surgeons perform in Colombia, however, participants noted the centrality and ubiquity of social media. However, they also claimed how there is only a small yet growing population of Colombian cosmetic surgeons who are using such “modern” techniques *effectively*. Participants often humbly noted how they use Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, for example, but only at a rudimentary level. Therefore, despite the prolific use and development of social media and online advertisements in Colombia, most participants did not recognize their social media abilities or those of the majority of others as being “fully there.” In fact, to be discussed in more detail below, most of the cosmetic surgeons that participants referenced were not Colombian, in which international and “global” social media “celebrities” were the focus.

To my surprise, when I asked participants what may influence their use of social media and online advertising practices, many participants were not particularly aware of the exceedingly direct “entrepreneurial” resources for cosmetic surgeons’ discussed above. Although many interviewees participated in the ISAPS Congresses before, they did not recognize these resources as particularly important, claiming only a handful of surgeons would attend these sessions. As participants described, *any* resources they encountered, searched for online, or

acquired through dedicated business degrees were rather plain and basic, especially when compared to their detailed medical training. Participants discussed how social media and online advertising practices are important and effective, yet participants did not attribute any related success in using them to a set of specific resources that directly spells-out how to market or use social media as well as advertise online. Being “on their own,” participants often wished they had more formal marketing education, and most participants even called for dedicated marketing classes to be incorporated into medical education programs in the future.

Moreover, even after some participants attempted to employ hired marketing and advertising services, they discussed how they would rather do it “by themselves” in order to not only cut costs but to show how their advertisements and social media accounts *were theirs*. Interestingly, an entrepreneurial “do-it-yourself” attitude proved to be more valuable to participants than being able to demonstrate their success, status, and wealth through having their social media accounts and advertisements outsourced and done for them by marketing agencies. Although some participants wished such agencies and hired help would “get it right for once,” in which they expressed frustration in always having to revise and edit their advertisements, participants pointed to how the goal and purpose for social media and online advertising, overall, relate to making their “personal image” as “approachable” and “not too distant.” As participants discussed, the cosmetic surgeons who use social media and online marketing effectively are those who do so in a particularly “personal” yet globally shared way.

When I asked participants what may inform this particular “global” technique, they often described the main form of social media use and online cosmetic surgery advertising as “American” in style. Having less to do with explicit and direct international “resources” for cosmetic surgeons, like the ones discussed above, one participant identified the origin of such a

type of marketing as beginning in the late 2000s with reality TV series like “Nip/Tuck.” With consistent reference to “Beverly Hills” and “the Kardashians,” this participant, like others, recognized this form of marketing as everywhere and the same, which:

start[ed] out in a small group, all of this is happening inclusively in the US, with the Kardashians, with a group of plastic surgeons from Beverly Hills.... They started to promote their personal activities, their personal life, what they do. That’s expanded, no? And it’s like the same profile. Like the person who shows part of their personal life mixed with their professional life and their family. It’s all, yes, it’s the same profile. There isn’t a difference. When you see people promoting themselves in other places, it’s the same.

As this participant described, the technique of blending one’s “professional life” with one’s “personal life” pertains to the simplicity of this form of promoting oneself that brings viewers closer to the day-to-day lives of cosmetic surgeons. This type of marketing practice exhibits how a focus on the specificity of one’s everyday life attributes to the “openness” and transferability of this form of social media and online advertisement production. Thus, focusing on the “implied and intended” use of social media, as one participant discussed, successful social media pertain to their “everyday” usage, in which cosmetic surgeons use social media in an “everyday way” that best extends their “everyday lives” to viewers.

Participants discussed how social media and online advertisements thus capture and share who they *inherently* are through the reiterative day-to-day production of social media that centers themselves in their everyday lives. Of course, the range of qualities that participants identified with varied drastically; what exactly pertains to their “everyday lives” extends to a variegated range of possible and intersecting subject positions, spaces, and associated representations of what participants specifically related to as “success,” “wealth,” and “integrity,” in addition to what some participants even described as one’s “trueness” as a cosmetic surgeon. However, participants recognized the technique for transmitting such information as being shared and

ubiquitous, mirroring the technologies and methods of the most popular and celebrated “stars” of social media and their followers.

Therefore, to focus on the particular subject positions that many participants referred to—that is, “professional” and “celebrity” cosmetic surgeons—I discuss what participants understood as a spectrum of practices that pertain to the simultaneously mundane and intuitive yet highly calculated and refined use of online advertisements and social media; I focus on what exactly cosmetic surgeons “say and do” in relation to these techniques and rationalities of their marketing and advertising practices—what they do to “keep up” with this “rapidly developing industry.” Below, I highlight how such cosmetic surgeons center themselves—by themselves—in such “global” and shared practices that some participants described to incorporate and occupy “an increasing portion” of their own lives.

### **Global Practices, Global Subjects: Venturing to Become “Celebrity Surgeons”**

Often focusing on the “personal image” of cosmetic surgeons, participants described that many aspire to maintain a highly “professional persona,” in which many participants referenced their own photos for advertising and social media purposes as being “modern” and “trusting.” Participants discussed how their advertising images thus center surgeons in their “everyday lives,” often pictured from a patient-eye-view in surgical scrubs or from a professional distance, in which they wear white coats, posing confidently behind a desk with their staff. As mirrored in my observations of the advertisements online and in Colombia, participants noted that it is crucial for their “modern” offices, operating rooms, and broader medical complexes and buildings to take precedence in such media. Thus, participants claimed cosmetic surgeons need to represent such spaces as clean, replete with technologically advanced surgical instruments, and decorated with sleek and shiny furnishings. Cosmetic surgeons do so to not only assure the

safety of patients, in terms of minimized operating risks and the absence of crime but to show how their operating rooms, in particular, achieve a “modern standard” through such globally recognizable referents.

However, as cosmetic surgeons’ representations of their “everyday lives” also pertain to “selfies” that go beyond their offices and operating rooms, some participants described a small but increasing number of cosmetic surgeons’ as promoting their “concierge” services for patients. These increasingly “social roles” for cosmetic surgeons incorporate taking patients out to dinner, helping them find hotel accommodation, suggesting possible tourism activities, and, of course, taking photos with them in the process. Such practices share with those participants found in the social media accounts of “famous” cosmetic surgeons, in which participants recognized the technique of blending one’s “personal” and “professional” lives and respective social media accounts in order to build a trusting, approachable, and “real” personal image for patients.

Although many participants do not engage in these activities, which they described as a growing ethical issue for cosmetic surgery worldwide, participants nonetheless recognized the prevalence of blending “professional” and “personal” lives on social media and, thus, the extent to which cosmetic surgeon share their “everyday lives” online. These participants even expressed their fears of being unable to “keep up” with “do-it-all” surgeons or being unable to afford to outsource such services even for their more humble “professional” social media accounts and advertising. Consequently, those who do not blend their “personal” and “professional” accounts admitted the need of being active on social media or at least up-to-date on what happens there.

Other techniques that participants referred to pertain to “technological skills,” such as basic social media know-how, general marketing knowledge, and even specific skills for

software like Photoshop and 3D animation technologies for graphic design and the development of animated models for projected treatment results. Participants acknowledged these skill sets as pertinent to cosmetic surgeons in general, in which many travel abroad to acquire related training. However, again, participants' respective valuations on the need and place for these skill sets within the industry varied, demonstrating what participants recognized as the hotly debated role of social media use and the type of advertising with which surgeons should engage. Consequently, participants often referred to an "ideal world" where they could be publicly known for their skill and craft without engaging in constant publicity and marketing. Many participants claimed they would rather engage in "professional" activities to forward their careers, such as developing surgical techniques, publishing scholarly papers, going to international conferences, and broadening their patient base through word-of-mouth only. However, the very same participants also claimed towards the end of their interviews that they wished to improve their social media and advertising skills "professionally" or "as professionals."

Participants thus illustrated how "being known" and representing one's "success" and "skill" online predicates cosmetic surgeons' "careers," referring to not only upward social, cultural, and financial mobility, but also their ability to sustain their practices at a minimum. Yet, what is more, a few participants forecasted the "inevitable" turn to marketing and advertising that necessitates social media use, in which "showing success," "being fit," and demonstrating their abilities to confidently manage increasingly blending "personal" and "professional" social media accounts are paramount for "business." As one participant succinctly posited at the outset of an interview: "more [social media] followers equals more success." Thus, when "vanity," or "being vain," is the norm, some participants explained how the more popular cosmetic surgeons

direct their efforts to attract “desirable” international patients through such practices that center themselves online.

As participants described, conceptions of such “desired patients” range from those who are simply not excessively overweight, and therefore not needing a complex series of procedures that would exceed the duration of a typical tourist’s stay, to those of the right age (youthful) and the right body (fit)—those who are often featured on “celebrity” surgeons’ accounts. This form of “desired patient” is one that will come out of the operating room matching the esthetic and “personal life” of “world-famous” cosmetic surgeons—namely, being ready for selfies with their surgeons on their yachts, or at least looking like the “models” with whom they would go out to dinner.

The types of surgeries and treatments that these cosmetic surgeons seek to “invest in” not only relate to “easy” procedures with “easy” results, reflecting better on the surgeon, but also enhancing the speed and rate of procedures with low pre- and post-operation preparation and recuperation times. Consequently, participants noted how this “certain type” of “celebrity” cosmetic surgeon will try to attract these types of “desirable patients” as they better align with the scope of tourism packages and are more able to travel abroad. However, participants noted that some cosmetic surgeons may even travel to such patients if they live where cosmetic surgeons are permitted to perform surgeries abroad.

Thus, as a few participants discussed, the great lengths to which such cosmetic surgeons go in building these connections, capitalizing on these “desirable” patients, and ensuring these photo-ops, include visiting the places where prospective patients live in order to just even “have dinner and wine with them.” While expanding their prolific social media accounts both in terms of the geographic extent of their followers and the range of places they visit, participants

discussed how such international ventures of cosmetic surgeons worldwide illustrate the degree to which both patients and cosmetic surgeons will travel. Therefore, participants recognized how mixing elements of one's personal life into social media helps develop one's "personal image" as "trusting," "relatable," and "close," in general, and, in terms of the (aspiring) "celebrity" surgeon, "trendy," "worldly," "attractive," and "rich."

Although participants referred to these "stars" nationalities or cities in which they practice, citing "celebrity" surgeons like "the Italian one" or "the one from Miami," they did not recognize the need to market "Colombian" cosmetic surgery or themselves as "Colombian surgeons." However, the role of a cosmetic surgeon's "personal image," in addition to one's "modern" equipment, offices and operating rooms, and surgical techniques, are paramount for advertisements and one's photos on social media. Participants unanimously recognized the need to look or be "modern," in which knowledge of "contemporary" esthetic tastes and "fitness trends" lends to the prevalence of both "professional" and "celebrity" cosmetic surgeons "investing" in newer offices, European cars, American clothing, and even cosmetic surgeries. A few participants pointed out their treatment areas, reiterating the normalcy of this phenomenon.

As one participant described:

The doctors have surgery to sell their image because social media attract patients from all over. I just had a patient leave, a man from Valencia, [another] from Barcelona. Now there's one coming from Dubai. So, [by] marketing [through] magazines or newspapers, I wouldn't have had these [international patients] because it's completely local. So, the result of the patients along with your presence, that sells. The infrastructure sells, the clinic, the office, everything. And I send everything. I take a picture of the office and I send it.

Rather than marketing specific beaches, hotels, local amenities, and common sightseeing hotspots that participants see in "typical" tourism advertisements, participants like this one discussed how

cosmetic surgeons focus on their personal image, their far-reaching *presence* on social media, and the immediate yet modern-cum-global spaces in which they practice.

Similarly, in order to keep up with such “modern” advertising media, many participants described how maintaining social media accounts often includes adding images from their children’s graduations, family vacations, or their dinner parties with patients and friends. These photos that blend their “personal” and “professional” lives focus on where they are and who they are with throughout their daily routines and activities. A few participants also noted how taking photos of themselves traveling outside of the country is important, in which traveling for international conferences, European wine tours, or North American hiking trips also bolster their online presence. The importance of this range of photos lies in cosmetic surgeons’ ability to show followers that “they are always doing things,” in which their persistent presence online is predicated by the inclusion of their immediate, “everyday” surroundings.

To reiterate, participating frequently online means to include one’s everyday life, in which participants discussed how one’s everyday activities within the cosmetic surgery industry extend from their international vacations and family reunions to their bodies and operating rooms; cosmetic surgeons must look relatable, presentable, and desirable to prospective patients and their broader base of followers. As one participant described:

Everyone has to be thin, or try to be thin. To have a presence, to post a picture of yourself that sells an image. To be a plastic surgeon you can’t be fat or badly dressed because you won’t sell. So, the great majority of those who I have seen ... there [are] lots who have even had surgery to sell their image. I do a lot of liposuction on plastic surgeons. And you know, we are more self-aware of that because we have to have a status as doctors. We have to look good, we have to look young, we have to look wealthy which is crazy. It can sound very superficial, but if you go, let’s say you’re going to have surgery and you see your surgeon in a Ferrari versus coming in a Fiat, you know, which surgeon would you choose? Because the thing is, if the doctor has a good watch and he looks wealthy, it means that he is good. The doctor also has to have an image. But you know, the thing is, okay, we need to look

better, we need to look more sophisticated, you know, so it's also important for us. We are humans after all. We want to look good for us, for ourselves, but also to transmit that to the patients.

This participant discussed just how much needs to go into one's personal image and oneself, in which being "self-aware" and looking good, young, and wealthy become requisites to have a presence online and thus to "sell." Significantly, this participant described the necessity of such reiterative practices as pertaining to not only looking good and being successful for themselves but also being able to transmit such to patients. Transmitting this information, then, takes place through social media as it serves as a set of practices for acquiring "desired patients" and maintaining such a "lifestyle" that one must constantly re-present.

Participants unanimously discussed the reasons for their marketing and advertising as being directly related to securing more patients and more profit, in which the basic techniques of being able to communicate with (international) patients online serves as a means to be recognized, to varying degrees. As seen with the "world famous, celebrity surgeons," in particular, to go abroad in order to visit and operate on patients, develop cultural and social knowledges of their patients' countries, or seek out "technological skills" for their online accounts and advertisements, also speaks to the need to be recognized on this elevated "global stage" through *being able* to participate in such a capacity. Therefore, whether striving to be more "professional" in their social media accounts, or to be a "celebrity," participants revealed that a shared technique in this range of social media use and online advertising pertains to how one needs to *demonstrate* these skills and knowledges, in addition to providing evidence that they, themselves, have had cosmetic surgeries; how one must participate in this "global sphere" is largely a factor of being present online and openly recognizable to an international audience

through “keeping up” with the rate and quality of Kardashianesque social media. As one participant succinctly posited: “If you do not use social media, you will be an isolated person.”

### **Performing Global, Everyday, and Entrepreneurial Subjects and Spaces**

In review, participants identified that cosmetic surgeons’ social media and advertising practices include: representing their “modern” offices and operating rooms online; developing computer-based skills and proficiencies; representing their everyday lives, which range from reserved and conservative to luxurious and extravagant; and even embodying the “contemporary look” and esthetic trends of “being fit” through often times having surgery on themselves. I focus here on how the performative dimensions of these practices shed light on how “global,” “entrepreneurial,” and “everyday” subjects and spaces are not merely represented in social media, but come to be precisely *through* the practices of using social media

In particular, the increasing use and reliance on social media and online advertising highlight the degree to which being an “entrepreneurial” or “global” cosmetic surgeon does not necessarily precede the practices of representing the lifestyles and images that social media supposedly re-present. As cosmetic surgeons’ must constantly share their sometimes blending personal and professional lives online in “global” and increasingly economized ways, social media become both the means and method for not just representing such lives, but, again, actively *demonstrating* them.

From sharing photos of new professional office spaces to surgically enhanced Facebook and Instagram “selfies” and Snapchat “snaps,” such practices produce the “global sphere” and “entrepreneurial, everyday practices” via performing such *as* “global, “everyday,” and inherent to “business.” In other words, the technologies and rationalities of such practices pertain to

actively representing and transforming themselves and the spaces in which they practice *for* social media and online advertisements—even though the selves and spaces to which they refer must come prior to their occurrence on social media. Thus, it is *in the process* of engaging in these reiterative and citational practices—*through using* social media and creating online advertisements—that such supposedly inherent “global,” “entrepreneurial,” and “everyday” subjects and spaces become possible.

To illustrate this point further, participants described the main use of social media as informed by their “implied” and “intended,” or “inherent,” techniques. Therefore, participants described the use of these forms of “everyday” social media as inherent to how the vast amount of users of social media partake in such practices and, in particular, how the “professional” and “celebrity” cosmetic surgeons do so in a ubiquitous yet highly personalized way. When I asked participants how this type of social media use might affect their day-to-day activities as cosmetic surgeons, many claimed that social media are simply transparent and convey who they are, naturally. As one participant described:

[on social media] we try to be very natural because that gives the patient a clear image of you. So, [social media] only show what you do day-to-day and that you do it in a natural way. [This] makes the patient feel that you are not far away but closer to them in a more natural way. Not a robotic image. Something fresh. It's only about showing one's day-to-day, and that's why we haven't modified our behaviour.... [Social media] are enough to show our day-to-day activities.

As this participant explained, cosmetic surgeons do not attempt to modify their behavior for their social media—even if their social media practices consist of modifying their bodies with the help of cosmetic surgery precisely *because* social media attract patients. This paradoxical situation illustrates how one must nonetheless *try* to be natural and provide a “fresh” image of themselves,

in which what makes such images “natural” and “fresh” is their constant reproduction as demonstrations of cosmetic surgeons’ presence and therefore proximity to patients. How one is to use—or *be* within—social media rather pertains to the imminent practices that inform the very “global,” “economic,” and “everyday” spheres to which they relate.

### **Complicating Social Media Use**

Although participants highlighted the general need for cosmetic surgeons to present themselves in advertisements and participate online, the uneven degree to which participants partake in such ventures illustrates the complexity of the compartments of self-government. From participants outright denouncing the “changing face” of the industry to attempting to take selfies with my research assistant and me after interviews, the range of such ethical practices is wide. For example, despite recognizing their need to engage in social media and online advertising in a more “professional” way, many participants cited health risks for patients dangerously exposing treatment areas to the sun both pre- and post-surgery or boarding planes after week-long trips—well before they should. Thus, while critiquing cosmetic surgery tourism in general, these participants demonstrated how the rationalities that inhere to marketing and advertising practice go beyond purely economic logics. In fact, unless participants have family connections to stay with during their surgeries, many participants expressed how they did not want international patients at all, claiming they would even turn them away for the sake of their safety.

Importantly, these participants discussed that such “celebrity” surgeons who market themselves so exuberantly most likely do so because either they do not have much business in the first place or because they must attract more revenue to compensate for lost profits brought about by complications caused by expedited surgeries for tourist patients. Although the lines

participants drew between cosmetic surgeons were at time stark, many of the participants that condemned such practices sometimes recalled just how difficult it was “starting out” their careers, in which only a few recognized the appeal of the more exuberant social media and advertising practices. In all, what exactly compels such marketing and advertising practices exceeds just one rationality or technique—ethical practices of marketing and advertising, in which one must take oneself as both the subject and object of refinement, intertwine, resonate, and create friction with others as they unfold throughout one’s “career.”

One participant’s discussion captured these tensions, in which he explained how “the social media bubble will pop” after highlighting the importance for him to wear a nice watch and expand his social media avenues beyond Facebook. This participant actively demonstrated and reiterated the need for identifications of status, wealth, and recognition, that which is driven by the pressing need for social media, yet also recognized how an inflated focus of social media will be short-lived and will crumble due to its “inherent contradictions.”

Such “inherent contradictions” pertain to what other participants’ likewise acknowledged as the concern of illegal procedures conducted by unqualified and unlicensed surgeons in unregulated spaces. As many participants described, the necessity of such consistent social media use opens up the door for “just anyone” to pose as a cosmetic surgeon, in which the blending of “personal” and “professional” social media accounts more broadly will provide a window for fraudulent “surgeons” to market themselves without the need to show their “credentials.” Similarly, due to the need to produce a constant stream of advertising media, participants highlighted how such prolific arrays of images and advertisements might distract viewers and potential patients from those who have them. Hence, participants discussed how the photos of cosmetic surgeons’ immediate spaces of work, incorporating their clean, sanitary, modern, and

thus legitimate operating rooms and consultation offices will help maintain the “integrity” of their industry. This reveals yet another intersecting rationality of such practices, one that at once compels social media use as it cautions against it, simultaneously uniting qualified and “professional” cosmetic surgeons as they compete with one another for “views” and “followers” online.

### **Conclusion: Expanding the “Contact Point” of Government**

In this chapter, I discussed how the formations of “entrepreneurial” and “global” subjects and spaces do not pertain to a mere “downloading” of governmental rationalities through technologies of power and the self—as the bulk of existing governmentality literature might attest. The pertinence of governmental discourses does not necessarily lie in the more explicit and direct “resources” for their entrepreneurial development, as developed by so-called “programmers” and “theoreticians” of government. Therefore, the performative practices that permeate governmental discourses, techniques, and rationalities work within and throughout the very media that cosmetic surgeons refer to *as* “entrepreneurial” subjects and in reference to “global” spaces. Consequently, research needs to analyze the productive technologies and rationalities that enable such discourses with reference to the productive ethical practices that are performed *by* certain subjects and in reference to certain spaces that have both yet to fully form.

These uneven techniques of “entrepreneurial” subjects at times intertwine yet diverge, in which cosmetic surgeons’ production of social media and online advertisements lends to their ability to navigate and “keep up” with such a rate of “production.” In this sense, participants discussed how cosmetic surgeons figure as both “producers” and “consumers” of governmental discourses, especially when the direct and explicit “resources” for their “entrepreneurial” activities are rather peripheral to their practices. As these practices are uneven yet shared, in

which the techniques and rationalities that animate them are not uniform, the complexity of the unfolding “contact point” of government requires more attention. Again, as the “driving factors” for subjects’ entrepreneurial activities cannot be reduced to coherent and ambitious programmes that directly spell out and induce specific comportments, behaviours, and norms (Barnett et al., 2008), more research needs to attend to the unfolding and embodied ethical practices that “entrepreneurial” subjects provide in the face—or, *for the face*, if you will—of the “global economy.”

Thus, to ask how embodied and practiced knowledge production of globalization and neoliberalism “shapes their realization through informing the rationalized deployment of existing and reinvented technologies and programmes of government” (Prince & Duffy, 2009, p. 1744), studies of governmentality must incorporate how subjects perform such “rationalized deployment” *through their own formation*. After all, if “[t]he individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is an effect, it is the element of its articulation” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98), research must account for how subjects reproduce the spatializations, or “the field of possibilities,” “in which the behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself” (Foucault, 2000b, p. 341).

To conclude, this chapter illustrates how an analysis of the “contact point” of government must incorporate an analysis of unfolding ethical practices of the self in relation to ever-forming technologies of power and the self. As a processual and ever-forming figure marks subject formation, the “contact point” of government needs to be thought of as not only productive of formative technologies and rationalities, but imminent to the practices of subjects in which they name and inhere. By looking to how subjects give accounts of themselves and their ethical practices as they happen in their “everyday” and “global” contexts, geographies of

governmentality can better grapple with the multiplicity of intersecting, compounding, and countervailing discourses of globalization and neoliberalism that enable yet constrain the subjects and spaces of such entrepreneurial government.

## Chapter 4 Conclusion: Continuing an Account of My Research and Myself

### Introduction

When I first started my Master's program, many people warned me not to “go overboard” with my coursework, research project, and thesis more broadly. However, as I learned throughout the development of this project, not “going overboard” pertains to both moderating one's workload, but also doing so in a “reasonable” way. What becomes “reasonable” in an increasingly “competitive” academy, however, requires one to not only know their limits but to test and keep them in view. Therefore, moderating one's workload in a “reasonable” way may pertain to various techniques whereby one must know oneself and take care of oneself accordingly. In this sense, it is not surprising that academic self-help discourses posit techniques for jockeying “work-life balance” through constantly managing and adapting to the contingencies of one's work and personal life (Hawkings, Manzi, & Ojeda, 2014). It seems not “going overboard,” then, lends to the perpetual task of calibrating, measuring, and balancing oneself and one's limits, in which the techniques for doing so each depend upon the “deeds,” the “doers,” and a “régime of truth” that is never fully formed.

Upon writing this chapter and reflecting on the warnings and fears for partaking in what seems to be an ever-sedimenting neoliberal academy, in which one may surely “go overboard,” it is not surprising that I directed my studies to the very powers that are said to threaten them. Of course, with help from Foucault and Butler, I questioned how my studies are not just threatened and constrained by neoliberal compartments and entrepreneurial norms, but how they are enabled and animated by them—how they are *produced*. Therefore, throughout the development of this research project, I asked how one is positioned—or, how one in part positions oneself—

near the railings of S.S. Neoliberalism, if you will, and how its slippery deck, the tumultuous sea below, and the very ship itself are performatively produced through ethical practices that require yet do not guarantee such a scene.

When thinking about the practices surrounding “going overboard” in an increasingly durable “neoliberal” university, however, I am reminded of renewed efforts for slow scholarship and alternative economies within and outside of the academy (Gibson-Graham, 2008; Morrissey, 2015; Mountz et al., 2015). Such efforts turn to strategies which not only outline “new” practices and subjectivities, but perform them in iterative ways. These ways of *doing* things differently lend to a reappraisal of the “extent” of neoliberalism while promoting the need to analyze the relational, discursive practices that (re)produce it. This is not an easy bid for “post-neoliberalism,” or to imagine a “neoliberal era” without end, for that matter (Springer, 2015). However, by recognizing the degree to which certain “fixing” practices not only maintain “neoliberalism,” but complicate it, efforts to recognize one’s liminal role within or “outside” the “frontier” of governmental discourses can work to trouble such limits (Dardot & Laval, 2014; Butler, 2015a; Butler & Athanasiou, 2013). As Foucault (1985, 1988, 2000b) outlines, producing new “economies” of power relations predicates one’s ethical practices and an “arts of existence.” This calls for a critical research project that is “more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and which implies more relations between theory and practice” (Foucault, 2000b, p. 328).

Through this thesis, therefore, I explored how the discourses that go into *becoming* an “entrepreneurial” subject pertain to entangled practices and spaces that enable and produce such a subject and the broader “spheres” in which one may act. In all, whether one is trying to avoid the ship’s edge or venture towards it, becoming an “entrepreneurial” subject in such unfolding

“global” spaces calls for study of how they both form unfinished and practiced “sites” (Butler, 1997b, p. 11)—relational matrices of governmental norms, techniques, and rationalities.

### *My Limited and Partial Account*

Through contributing to literature that examines neoliberalism and globalization as governmental discourses, those which predicate an “entrepreneurial self” and a shared “global sphere,” I asked what type of “truth games” the “I” is entangled in—whether that be myself or others. Moreover, I asked how the techniques and rationalities for playing such games lend to the study of how they are practiced by the subjects they name and require. By conducting my research and taking on these reflexive problematizations, I have thus been wary of “attacking” “‘such and such’ ... institution or power, or group, or elite, or class” and to rather focus on the “technique, a form of power” (Foucault, 2000b, p. 331), of such practices as they are performed. By expanding the scope of governmentality analysis, this study contributes to research that fleshes out how governmental discourses as well as technologies of power and the self are *performatively produced* through ethical practices of the self.

Reflecting on how I performed ethical practices of the self throughout and through this research project, however, I cannot help but trouble my (over)ambitious study of the “spheres” of globalization and neoliberalism that I embarked on through my own research project and by my own devices in a “foreign” and “exotic” country—both within a past and present frontier of neoliberalism (Perreault & Martin, 2005). My thesis, in itself, signals just how much I share with the participants who are compelled to travel abroad on their own budgets and by their own devices to expand the limits of their enterprise. Without a doubt, the practices that are constitutive of this project ripple and affect the very “context” of study. For example, even if many participants did not consume the “resources” provided in the ISAPS biennial congresses or

website, as discussed in Chapter 3, how have my questions incited the need for participants to reconsider them? How has conducting interviews regarding cosmetic surgeons' marketing and advertising practices added to the perceived need to do them?

Moreover, after discussing ethical practices of the self with participants, I have asked myself: how far am I willing to travel for a Ph.D. program? Although I aim to publish this research in open source journals, will I pass up the "opportunity" to publish in those that are more well-known and owned by increasingly growing and amalgamating corporations? Should I wear a tie in my Academia.edu, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Mendeley, and Zotero profile photos or will a humbler look "sell"? Will "investing" in "growth areas" of research, in the hope of garnering a tally of citations for my "career," help me in "hedging my bets" and shielding myself from undone "risk" in the "job markets" to come? Will finishing this thesis in two years "expedite" my career?

Surely, some of these questions seem rather ridiculous, in which I must admit that I feel quite silly reiterating them here. Yet, while reflecting on these questions, reiterating them, and considering how this study fits into a broader "historical ontology of the present," as introduced in Chapter 1, I am reminded that asking and sharing these questions opens room for not *determining* what exists, but *questioning* what exists (Joronen & Häkli, 2017). Although questioning one's roles, practices, and limits may very well work as a means for "neoliberalism" to unfold, these constraining yet enabling questions demonstrate the degree of openness and reflexivity that governmental discourses require yet cannot contain. Of course, however, such "openness" is not even nor stable, in which the power relations that enable various subjects and spaces are ever-unfolding, entangling, and shot-through with varying techniques and rationalities that do not necessarily affirm one another.

Given the discussion from Chapter 1, these practices, effects, and the “I” that are at once referred to and produced in giving an account of oneself can only be indefinite “productions” of governmental discourses—a series of contingent and imminent “expressions” that cannot be confused as neoliberalism’s “results” (Butler, 1990, p. 35). By asking how the reflexive problematizations of one’s own life can be reflected upon, itself (Dilts, 2011; Campbell, 2010; Hamann, 2009; Lorenzini, 2018), I explored this line of analysis that asks *who* is exactly able to engage in such reflexive practices, *when*, and *where*. Also, following Li (2007), I have asked how reflexivity is differentially afforded, thus signaling the pertinence of ethnographic study; who engages in ethical practices and in what ways calls for detailed analysis at the level of the everyday. Yet, to understand the unevenness of ethical practices that incorporate the “everyday,” or the “global,” in quite different ways, geographical research can therefore critically “map” exactly how subjects are mapped in ever-changing relations of power—and, in particular, how they are largely mapped by themselves in relation to the techniques and spaces that they themselves produce. The pertinence for studies of governmentality in geography, therefore, relates to how “everyday,” “global,” and “entrepreneurial” subjects and spaces are performatively produced through the techniques and practices that they require.

Of course, I did not fully articulate these ideas in the previous chapters. This mirrors the difficulty of giving an account of oneself and the complexity in Butler’s (1997b, p. 4) “paradox of referentiality” that I introduced in Chapter 1: As my project unfolds throughout its reiteration, I must acknowledge that what exactly comes into being at once exceeds yet is reflected in this very account.

Despite the indeterminacy of this process and the ambiguity concerning when this form of research ever “finishes,” below I continue to account for this thesis by speaking to its

limitations and that which I wish to include in it, however belatedly. Therefore, I outline some of the gaps of this study and where I may only partially fill them; I discuss where I have expanded the analysis of the “contact point” of government yet also what I have largely left unaccounted. I conclude with closing remarks on the outcomes of this thesis and its significance for future study.

### **Limitations, Gaps, and Further Discussion**

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to trouble the “fixing effects” of power while paradoxically bringing them into focus. Accordingly, to avoid the futile project of locating the “source” or “result” of power, I explored its ever-unfolding “effects” as that which inaugurates the subject, yet also opens it up through practice. Attempting to broaden the “contact point” of government, in which the indeterminability of ethical practices *leave room* for new iterations and new relations of power, I discussed how the subject is not produced once and for all.

Therefore, this thesis contributes to broader projects that:

no longer attempt to resolve “what” the subject is, as if something like “the subject” could be defined or discovered outside the specific modalities of historical inscription, but rather inquire “how” subjects become: how they are produced into being. (Savransky, 2014, p. 97)

Contrary to metaphysical models that take the subject as essential, inherent, and stable, then, I drew from key works, like those from Butler (1990, 1993, 1997b, 2004, 2005), which argue that the subject takes on its ambivalent appearance of *substantiality* through enacted and embodied practices that exist in relation to a prevailing matrix of ethical norms—or, thinking of Foucault, technologies of power and the self.

However, as Savransky (2014) discusses, an underlying assumption of this line of thinking pertains to how:

the subject is produced as the effect of a specific constellation of power relations, materialised through the creation of institutions, authorities, technologies and techniques that represent and intervene, know and act, rendering subjectivity knowable in certain ways, and acting upon it, governing it, correlatively. (p. 97)

In other words, although I have worked to expand the scope of analysis of the “contact” point of government by asking how subjects engage in their own government, in which their ethical practices complicate the productions and positionings constitutive of government, I have nonetheless reiterated how there are “no subjects nor processes of subjectification outside governmental production” (p. 97). Rendering power everywhere, that which works through everyone and everything, I have reaffirmed how subjects may only engage in practices that inhere to potentially varying constellations of power, each belonging to their respective “régime of subjectification” (Savransky, 2014, p. 97).

Although I do not attempt to “resolve” these issues here, this limitation speaks to how the “effects” of this research project may very well pertain to the “fixing” forces I seek to contest. In other words, any explanation that I give for this limitation may only reiterate and echo what I have said before; I am left to claim that the “effects” of this research, in addition to my partial and limited account, are produced within the very relations that I seek to describe. Despite the room here for reflexive ruminations on performativity and the narrative dimension of subject formation, however, I now turn to limitations regarding this research project more broadly and the lack of “ground” I was able to cover.

### *The Scope of the “Contact Point” of Government*

As I discussed above, this thesis contributes to widening the “contact point” of government in order to account for the ways such technologies of power and technologies of the self that constitute governmental discourses are performatively produced through the ethical

practices of the very subjects of government. By highlighting this dimension of ethical practice, however, I have bracketed the production of technologies of power and the self by the “theoreticians” and “programmers” of government. Although cosmetic surgeons produce the “resources” for entrepreneurial self-development, thus complicating the “distance” from which governmental subjects are governed, as discussed in Chapter 3, this thesis lacks detail of how “broader,” “top-down” discourses are also produced and intertwined with such “micro-level” practices.

Therefore, this project lacks an account of the “grammars” of “theoreticians’ schemas,” policy frameworks, and other “macro-level” technologies and rationalities for the conduct of one’s own conduct and others’ (Brady, 2016; Bröckling, 2016, p. xiii). Moreover, due to the contextual focus on marketing and advertising practices, this project also lacks analysis of cosmetic surgeons’ accounts of their own production of governmental discourses in other intersecting arenas such as their medical training, the production of medical sciences, and other forms of medical tourism. Moreover, the limited scope of this research is particularly evident when considering how national and international regulations for marketing cosmetic surgery—and conducting cosmetic surgeries abroad—may influence cosmetic surgeons’ ethical practices and reproduction of governmental discourses.

### *Colombian and Global (A)esthetics*

An unanswered question for “(a)esthetic” geographies pertains to the specificity of *Colombian* cosmetic surgery. As I discussed in Chapter 3, participants did not market or advertise themselves or their practices as “Colombian cosmetic surgeons” or pertaining to “Colombian cosmetic surgery.” However, participants described how the “voluptuous look” that is “traditionally” associated with cosmetic surgery in Colombia is widely known both within and

outside Colombia as a specific style. Participants thus noted how the esthetic is widely dispersed within Central and South America, in which many cosmetic surgeons in Colombia do not market this esthetic as “Colombian” due to the ubiquity of this trend.

Yet, as some participants described, this “look” originated, or at least became popular, due to the prolific “use” of cosmetic surgery by narcotic-trafficking cartel leaders who were prominent in Colombia. Spurring the industry in Colombia by “investing” cosmetic surgery in their romantic partners, the term “narco-novias” (girlfriends of narcotics traffickers) and the related “narco” esthetic grew due to the elevated social, cultural, and financial status that came along with such surgeries. As one participant discussed, many of the first cosmetic surgeons in Colombia were paid handsomely by these cartel leaders, in which cosmetic surgery formed a representation of wealth, power, and status for both the cartel leaders and the cosmetic surgeons. Although this participant did not discuss what such cosmetic surgery meant for the women who underwent the procedures, I expect that such cosmetic surgery “investments” were both constraining and enabling, enmeshed in highly gendered relations of power.

Forming an area for further research, the intersecting genealogies of “Colombian cosmetic surgery,” “Colombian cosmetic surgeons,” and “Colombian esthetic(s)” with broader developments in cosmetic surgery generally speaking needs much attention. This geopolitical dimension may also widen the analysis of a “global fitness esthetic”—what participants discussed as guiding their own practices of self-refinement and transformation. As the Colombian “narco” look makes way for such “global” trends, another avenue for further research pertains to the broadened assemblages of technologies of power and the self that come along with such a widened esthetic scope.

## Concluding Remarks

Governmentality studies provide fruitful avenues for research on how the subject-information may very well take itself and its place—as it gives an account of itself—as bounded and fixed, or likewise unbounded and “free,” in certain relations of power. Here, power may both bound and unbound, enable and disable, illuminate and obscure. Following understandings of Foucauldian analytics of power and Judith Butler’s theory of performativity, the *productive* practices that illuminate, obscure, enable, disable, and animate subjects, and their relation to space and place, must look to how subjects are at once *accounted for* as they *give accounts of themselves* in unfolding spatializations of power. I add to a growing ethnographic analytic for governmentality studies that explores how programmes of rule “unfold by seeking to secure synergies between their objectives and the motivations and identification of individuals,” yet in ways in which such programmes may not be “master-planned” and dependent on “fully-formed” neoliberal subjects (Barnett et al., 2008, pp. 625-626; see also Ahrens & Mollona, 2007; Brady & Lippert, 2016; Brady, 2014, 2016; Larner, 2012).

Therefore, by studying globalization and neoliberalism as governmental discourses, I analyzed the instability of embodied, performative practices, the indeterminacy of the “contact point” of government, and the ambivalence of subject formation, in which there are no essential “global” or “neoliberal” subjects and spaces. Rather, there are only *positionings* of subjects and spaces that depend upon certain ethical practices that are relationally enmeshed with others. Asking how one gives an account for oneself, and how one then positions oneself in relation to certain spaces, demonstrates the uneasy processes of government and the multiplicity of rationalities and techniques at play that unfold through practices for the conduct of one’s conduct. In particular, this thesis explored how cosmetic surgeons’ “everyday” and

“entrepreneurial” social media practices in part performatively produce the “global” and “economic” sphere in which they are able to inscribe themselves. By analyzing the techniques and rationalities of government *in the terms* of subjects’ own accounts of themselves and the practices that they understand to be integral to their entrepreneurial selves, this thesis also points to how governmental discourses reiteratively unfold *through* subjects’ active engagement with them.

In all, *being* and *becoming* a subject-in-information serves as a useful starting point for studies of governmentality in geography and beyond that seek to understand the “openness” of “global spaces,” whereby subjects’ ethical practices at once mark the specificity yet permeability of intersecting governmental discourses. By also focusing on the performative “spheres” of “the economy” (Lemke, 2012; Prince & Duffy, 2009), this thesis points to how space is produced as a “performative articulation of power” whereby subjects “take place” as an unfolding matrix of such reiterative practices (Gregson & Rose, 2014, p. 8).

**Appendix**  
**Appendix A: Participant Information**

Participant	Location of Interview	Date of Interview	Approximate Age	Gender
Participant 1	Barranquilla	July 6th, 2017	Late 40's / Early 50's	Dr.
Participant 2	Barranquilla	July 7th, 2017	Mid-70's	Dr.
Participant 3	Barranquilla	July 10th, 2017	Late 30's / Early 40's	Dra.
Participant 4	Barranquilla	July 10th, 2017	Late 20's / Early 30's	Dra.
Participant 5	Barranquilla	July 12th, 2017	Mid- 50's	Dr.
Participant 6	Barranquilla	July 12th, 2017	Late 40's / Early 50's	Dr.
Participant 7	Barranquilla	July 12th, 2017	Mid 40's	Dr.
Participant 8	Barranquilla	July 13th, 2017	Late 40's / Early 50's	Dr.
Participant 9	Barranquilla	July 18th, 2017	Mid-40's	Dra.
Participant 10	Cali	August 8th, 2017	Late 40's / Early 50's	Dr.
Participant 11	Bogotá	August 23rd, 2017	Mid-30's	Dr.
Participant 12	Bogotá	August 23rd, 2017	Mid-40's	Dra.
Participant 13	Bogotá	August 24th, 2017	Mid-30's	Dr.
Participant 14	Bogotá	August 24th, 2017	Mid-40's	Dr.
Participant 15	Bogotá	August 24th, 2017	Late 40's / Early 50's	Dra.
Participant 16	Bogotá	August 25th, 2017	Mid-60's	Dr.
Participant 17	Bogotá	August 28th, 2017	Mid-40's	Dr.
Participant 18	Bogotá	August 28th, 2017	Late 40's / Early 50's	Dr.
Participant 19	Bogotá	August 29th, 2017	Late 40's / Early 50's	Dra.
Participant 20	Bogotá	August 29th, 2017	Late 30's / Early 40's	Dr.
Participant 21	Bogotá	August 31st, 2017	Mid-40's	Dr.

Participant information including location of interview by city; date of interview; approximate age of participant; gender of participant. Gender identified by participants' given prefixes: *Doctor* (Dr.) Man, He/Him; *Doctora* (Dra.) Woman, She/Her.

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