Post-development, Foucault and the colonisation metaphor

MORGAN BRIGG

ABSTRACT *Post-development, the most recent radical reaction to the problems of postwar development efforts, has been the focus of both strident criticism and restrained defence in* Third World Quarterly. *This article shows that addressing post-development's shortcomings is more useful than dismissing or limiting its potential. By using the work of Foucault, one of post-development's theoretical departure points, a clear distinction is drawn between the operation of power in colonial and development eras. This requires a shift away from repressive views of power, ideas that a singular force directs development, and the colonisation metaphor used by some post-development writers. This article then shows that combining Foucault's notion of* dispositif *with his concept of normalisation is useful for understanding the operation of power in the postwar development project, and for comprehending how power operates through the World Bank. In this way a critical engagement with post-development can improve our understanding and analysis of development.*

In recent times, *Third World Quarterly* has published articles discussing the body of development literature termed 'post-development'[1] (see Nederveen Pieterse, 2000; Schuurman, 2000; Nustad, 2001). Both Jan Nederveen Pieterse and Frans Schuurman argue that post-development is flawed, in part because it does not offer a programme for development practice. In response and contrast, Knut Nustad (2001: 479) introduces the important point that a lack of instrumentality is not a sufficient basis on which to dismiss post-development. This stance is crucial for maintaining a commitment to improving our understanding and analyses, particularly when considering a phenomenon and enterprise as large and complex as development. How, for instance, can one author or focused group of scholars be expected to offer both sophisticated critical insights and to solve the problems of world poverty? However, Nustad unduly limits the contribution of post-development to offering an 'a possible explanation of why 50 years of development interventions have produced so little effect' (Nustad, 2001: 489). In this paper I show that if we begin to address post-development's shortcomings, it is able to contribute more than simply this.

By drawing inspiration from the discursive turn in the social sciences and local and indigenous knowledges, post-development effects a move away from the centring of economic relations which characterise neoliberal, political economy,

Morgan Brigg is in the School of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Queensland, St Lucia, Q 4072, Australia. E-mail: m.brigg@mailbox.uq.edu.au.

regulation school and other variants of development studies. In doing so, it initiates a wider critique of development than has hitherto been possible. This indicates the possibility of criticisms and analyses that promote more ethical and nourishing engagements across cultures and lifestyles that coalesce at the site of development efforts. However, post-development has shortcomings. Commentators such as Stuart Corbridge (1998), David Lehman (1997) and Nederveen Pieterse (2000) are correct to lament the facile oppositional rhetoric of some (often the most visible) post-development writers and a certain lack of scholarship by some contributors. One manifestation of the latter is post-development's limited use of its self-identified theoretical resources, the most prominent of which, at least to date, is Michel Foucault. Lehman (1997) argues that Arturo Escobar's (1995) 'use' of Foucault is limited to 'a particular sort of style and a sprinkling of the name of Michel Foucault and quotations from his work'. Another prominent post-development publication, *The Development Dictionary* (Sachs, 1992a), alludes to Foucault and his well known work on power with the subtitle of 'A guide to knowledge as power' but does not follow this up. The *Dictionary* is characterised more by a decrying of the Eurocentrism and injustice of development than a Foucaultian or other analysis of the operation of power through development. This paper offers a closer engagement with Foucualt's conceptualisation of power as one way of advancing post-development. As Foucault's work has inspired much post-development writing, this is an obvious starting point, albeit one which deserves to be complemented with engagements with indigenous knowledges and other scholarship.

In this article I first show that Foucault's distinction between *sovereign* and *bio-power* suggests a similar distinction between the colonial and development eras. This requires a shift away from a negative or repressive view of the operation of power through development, and from notions, often present in post-development, that a singular or intentional historical force directs power. Instead, I argue for the relevance of Foucault's relational conceptualisation of power and recognition that development is synthetically bound with biopower, which operates by bringing forth and promoting, rather than repressing, the forces and energies of human subjects. Such an approach also entails reconfiguring the oppositional stance taken by many post-development writers. I next suggest combining Foucault's notion of *dispositif*, or apparatus, with a macro-level application of his concept of normalisation, giving indications of the relevance of this approach by discussing the emergence and operation of the postwar development project. This demonstrates how the *dispositif* framework and Foucault's conceptualisation of power help us understand the operation of power through development, including coming to terms with the centrality of organisations such as the World Bank. Throughout I show that both the nuances and profundity of a Foucaultian understanding are sometimes lost in post-development literature, in part through the employment of inappropriate hyperbolic rhetorical devices linking the operation of power through development to notions of colonisation. In place of this I demonstrate that taking the post-development critical impulse seriously requires moving away from the colonisation metaphor to a closer understanding of the operation of power through development, including its productive modality.

Colonialism to development: from a deductive to productive modality of power

In his study of the emergence of a new modality of power in European societies, Foucault draws a heuristic distinction between sovereign power and a new form of power, which he terms 'biopower'. The former, which is associated with the reign of the king or monarch (and in our time with the judiciary and the rule of law), operates by 'deduction', by taking away and appropriation, by 'seizure: of things, time, bodies and ultimately life itself' (1981: 136). This accounts for the destruction of bodies in the name of the sovereign, an example of which is provided in the recounting of a 1757 gruesome torture in the opening pages of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1979: 3–6). The centrality of the figure of the monarch signals the appropriateness of this conceptualisation to the operation of power through colonialism. Colonies were taken in the name of the monarch and colonial rule was characterised by a sense of ownership, sovereignty or *rule over* stemming directly from conquest. Colonial rule included forced labour, the imposition of cash crops, the extraction of taxes and profits, and a range of abuses associated with the position of power and cultural superiority European colonialists felt they held.[2] In this sense colonial power was exercised primarily through deduction, through the right to extract a portion of wealth, labour, goods and services. This culminated in the notion of 'seiz[ing] hold of life in order to suppress it' (Foucault, 1981: 136) because the use or threat of force was central to quelling uprisings and maintaining colonised–coloniser power relations.

In contrast, Foucault shows that biopower, which infiltrates and operates alongside sovereign power as it becomes more dominant in modern Europe, sets itself a very different task. Through a multitude of procedures and mechanisms, it fosters, organises, incites and optimises life; by drawing upon mutually supporting procedures of power and knowledge, it simultaneously redefines and administers life in order to manage it in a calculated way. The rise of modern humanism and the social sciences play an important role here. Biopower does not operate in accordance with the symbol of the sword—the symbol of the sovereign—and the right to '*take* life or *let* live' (Foucault, 1981: 136, original emphasis). Rather, it is 'a way of acting upon an acting subject or subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action' (Foucault, 1982: 220). Moreover, biopower is a 'power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them' (Foucault, 1981: 136). The developmentalist characteristics of biopower, in the sense of bringing out forces, making them grow and so on, are immediately apparent. It is these qualities which facilitate early European development through the disciplining of human subjects in early industry and capitalism (Foucault, 1981: 141).

This contrast between the dominant operation of sovereign power in Europe's colonies and the emerging European operation of biopower meant that the latter productive modality was unable to emerge in a comprehensive sense in the colonies.[3] However, the period of the interwar years saw a major change in the strategic situation of the colonies (later to become the 'Third World'). This change meant that the option of using force or other restrictive measures to quash

unrest could no longer be taken up. Instead, colonial officials, along with anti-colonial nationalist leaders, began to promote the welfare and benefit of the colonies. In this period the possibility emerged for the operation of a different modality of power in relation to the decolonising countries—one which relies not predominantly on force, but on the mobilisation (including self-mobilisation) of human subjects and nation-states through the notion of development. As this possibility was progressively realised (as nation-states formed out of ex-colonies, joined the United Nations, prepared national development plans, and so on) the relevance of oppositional formulations diminished.

However, it is oppositional and colonialist formulations, indicative of a broader oppositional stance, which have recently been recuperated by some post-development writers in order to make a forceful point about what they see as the operation of Western hegemony through development. Majid Rahnema (1992: 124) writes of the colonising of the mind. Arturo Escobar speaks of the 'colonizing mechanisms of development' (1992: 142) and the colonisation of reality (1995: 5). Gustavo Esteva (1992: 11) refers to Latin American dependency theory as 'colonizing anti-colonialism' for its role in naturalising the concepts of 'development' and 'underdevelopment' and Claude Alvares (1992b: 229–230) says that development based on modern science constitutes an 'actively colonizing' power. Such comments form part of a broader position which tends to equate development with the Westernisation of the world (Sachs, 1992b: 4; Latouche, 1996). Both the rhetorical efficacy and the accuracy of these claims is severely undermined because development operates through the mobilisation of interests and aspirations of Third World subjects and nation-states, in contrast to the deductive modality of colonial power. Post-development's use of the colonisation metaphor either tends to ignore or sit awkwardly with this distinction, and with the fact that development represented a liberating possibility in the early postwar period for many Third World nationalists (Cooper, 1997: 64; Cooper & Packard, 1997a: 9).

A closely related problem is the maintenance of the notion that power operates through a singular intentional historical force such as 'the West'. Gustavo Esteva (1992: 6) states that in the early postwar era, the USA 'was the master', that 'Americans wanted something more', and that they 'conceived a political campaign on a global scale that clearly bore their seal'. Such ascription of agency and intention, regardless of its parsimony, is not adequate to understanding the multidimensionality of social and political relations, including the role of contingency, which led to the formation of the development project. The famous Point Four of President Harry Truman's inaugural speech, rendered by Esteva as a carefully chosen point in the extension of US hegemony, is instructive in this regard. In contrast to the intentionality with which Esteva imbues Truman's Point Four, George Rist (1997: 70) shows that it was an afterthought in the scheme of Truman's overall speech. Suggested by a civil servant, the idea was taken up as a public relations exercise, and only after some hesitation. Truman's Point Four is no doubt an important event, but it is spurious to invest this speech with undue intention or centrality. Instead, there is a need to give chance and error their appropriate place in history (see Foucault, 1984: 81).

Post-development writers may argue that Truman's Point Four has sub-

sequently taken on great importance or that, faced with Western hegemony, focusing upon Point Four is a justifiable critical strategy regardless of the details of its genesis. Even if we concede these points, ascribing agency either to an individual such as Truman or to 'the Americans' is problematic because of the way it locates the subjects of development. Foucault has shown that what we most readily recognise as 'power' is the more or less stable (yet continually renegotiated) coagulation or ossification of sets of relations—or lines of force, in Deleuze's (1988, 1992) terminology. Power is, in other words, a complex strategic situation (Foucault, 1981: 93). The rhetorical strategies deployed by Esteva and others ossify force relations in development discourse in ways that have implications for the relative agency of actors within the development project. The most striking instance of this is the ascription of agency to the West by viewing the notion of development as a Western imposition or hegemony (eg Sachs, 1992b: 4–5). This elides the fact that many Third World governments and subjects have actively embraced development, and has negative, albeit unintended, implications for resistance by Third World people. For instance, the intention of statements that 'The mental space in which people dream and act is largely occupied by Western imagery' and 'the "Other" has vanished with development' (Sachs, 1992b: 2) is clearly to critique the hegemony of development. However, one of their effects is to write the 'Others'—Third World people—out of history in a similar way to discourses that are more commonly targeted as Eurocentric. Once again the oppositional and negative conceptualisation of power fails us. Viewing power solely as imposition leaves us, as Foucault states, with 'the insubstantiality of the notion of the master, an empty form haunted only by the various phantoms of the master and his slave, the master and his disciple' (Foucault, 1980b: 139).

Remedying this anachronistic sovereign conceptualisation of power requires a closer engagement with Foucault. In introducing a productive understanding of the operation of power in Europe, Foucault emphasises at least two aspects. The first of these is the emergence of techniques and practices, arising most forcefully in factories, to increase the utility of human subjects by increasing 'aptitudes, speeds, output and therefore profits' (1979: 210). In other terms, a series of techniques emerged to discipline bodies in ways which make them more productive. The second aspect, which is interwoven with the first, refers to the production of souls and regimes of truth; to the role that power has in producing individual identities and systems determining what can count as true or false (1979: 29). This emphasis on productive force is not to suggest that power is never repressive in its effect. In Foucault's schema, repression and domination represent extreme versions and limiting cases of the operation of power—they involve a fixing of power relations in such 'a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical' (Foucault, 1987: 12). Furthermore, sovereign power and biopower are not mutually exclusive, although Foucault's focus was on the latter rather than on the interplay between these two modalities of power.[4]

Foucault introduces these insights primarily to sharpen his (and our) understandings of the operation of contemporary relations of power. Normative judgments about whether or not the operation of power is 'good' or 'bad' are not his concern. Power effects may be judged as negative or positive but these do not

automatically flow from Foucault's understanding. In fact, Foucault shows that a generalised negative judgement through conventional liberal notions of 'power' and 'freedom' actually obscures the operation of power. As long as it remains possible to juxtapose these terms, thereby locating power in certain spheres (the law, the state, and so on), a wide domain of social practice can be imagined to be outside or beyond the operation of power. In contrast, one of Foucault's major insights has been to show that power relations (subjects acting upon themselves and others) are not an aberration but a ubiquity in social life. As the normative effects of the operation of power are not the focus of Foucaultian analysis, this issue needs to be addressed in other ways. One possibility in this regard is evaluating the extent to which development practices close down or open up lifestyles and individual identities.[5]

Nor should the productive analytics of power be confused with—and thereby reduced to—the more specific and widely known Foucaultian insight that, while failing on their own terms, *dispositifs* or apparatuses[6] can have effects which serve other purposes (see Foucault, 1979). James Ferguson (1990: 254–256) draws on this insight by arguing that, while development projects may fail in terms of their stated aims, they are accompanied by a growth in the operation of power. Linking power with the failure of development in this way builds an association between the operation of power and the failure of development (and introduces a conspiratorial tone into Ferguson's analysis). More analytically tenable and critically efficacious is the recognition that, in its very aims, development is bound with the contemporary modality of power that operates by bringing forth and promoting the forces and energies of human subjects.

Thus, there is a need to address some shortcomings of post-development by doing away with an anachronistic sovereign conceptualisation of power and engaging more closely with Foucault. I have indicated some details of Foucault's productive or positive analytics of power while emphasising that this understanding does not embody a normative judgement about relations of power. Some key points are that power, or acting on one's self and others, is relational and contingent. What we typically recognise as 'power' is the coagulation of sets of relations forming a complex strategic situation. The question of how to make use of such a conceptualisation for understanding the postwar development project finds an answer in combining Foucault's notion of *dispositif* with a macro-level application of his concept of normalisation. I next elaborate these notions giving indications of their relevance by discussing the emergence and operation of the postwar development project. This demonstrates how the *dispositif* framework and Foucault's conceptualisation of power can help us understand the operation of power through development. As I will show in the last section, this includes coming to terms with the centrality of organisations such as the World Bank without lapsing into a sovereign or colonial conceptualisation of power.

The *dispositif* and normalisation

One of Foucault's most useful concepts for coming to terms with the operation of power through development is the *dispositif*, or concrete social apparatus (Deleuze, 1992: 159).[7] The *dispositif* is both a 'thoroughly heterogeneous

ensemble' of discursive and material elements—for example, 'discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions', and so on—*and* the 'system of relations … established between these elements' (Foucault, 1980c: 194). This conceptualisation is appropriate to the development project because from the late 1940s a range of institutions, funding and resource flows, philosophical propositions about the possibilities and desirability of social change modelled on the West, professional development practitioners, scientific efforts (the entire sub-branch of development economics), and government and non-government organisations dedicated to development all begin to emerge. Although elements do not have tight interdependent relations, and while the *dispositif* may generate contradictory effects, it also achieves an overall or dominant strategic function, such as 'the assimilation of a floating population found to be burdensome for an essentially mercantilist economy' in 18th century Europe (1980c: 195). This conceptualisation allows recognition of both the good intentions of agents and a wide range of both positive and negative outcomes generated through development, while still providing a basis to understand an operation of power which has the effect of governing the Third World (Escobar, 1995). That is, it does not aggregate the operation of power or allow default to the oppositional position that development is 'bad'.

The manner in which overall governing effects occur through a *dispositif* can be understood as a macro-level operation of the mechanism of 'normalisation'. This mechanism:

> brings five quite distinct operations into play: it refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule: that the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards which one must move. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the 'nature' of individuals. It introduces, through this value-giving measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal. (Foucault, 1979: 182–183)

The most direct way to mobilise the concept of normalisation for understanding the development project is to transpose 'nation-state' for 'individual' in Foucault's formulation. This expanded application of Foucault's mechanism of normalisation responds to the emergence of the productive modality of power in a very different historical juncture from that which saw its initial emergence in Europe. International institutional and discursive developments in the postwar period allowed the emergence of a *dispositif* on a scale not seen before; a scale which allows the insertion and normalisation of nation-states as component elements of an overall apparatus. While this operation of normalisation diverges somewhat from Foucault's (1979: 177–184) focus on the normalisation of individual subjects, it falls well within the horizon of his understanding of power, because the focus on the normalisation of the nation-state does not preclude *but in fact relies upon* the operation of normalisation at a range of other levels and sites, including that of individual subjects.

This argument draws upon Foucault's analysis of the contemporary modality of government in which the individualising operation of power is integrated with wider operations for the management of populations (Foucault, 1991: 102). While the nation-state can be located as central to the development *dispositif*, it is not possible to regard it as constitutive of power. Although the various instruments and procedures of the development project refer themselves to the state, they cannot be reduced to it. This is because the state is simply not sufficiently omnipresent, omnipotent or efficient to manage the intricacies and differential motivations of institutions and people which emerge at the site of development efforts and constitute the development *dispositif*. This accords with Foucault's (1991: 103) argument that it is the diffuse and micro-techniques of power which support or give rise to the state. This is not to say that the state is unimportant. Rather, it is 'superstructural in relation to a … whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations' which allow the state to secure its existence (Foucault, 1980a: 122). Thus in transposing nation-state for individual, I am not arguing that power is exercised *by* the state but rather *through* the state, which acts as a fulcrum for operations of power in the development *dispositif*. In other words, there is a continuity in both downward and upward directions between the operation of normalisation recognisable at the level of the nation-state and more micro-operations of biopower which permeate development efforts. Local development efforts give rise to the state and have the effect of regulating and producing social action and Third World human subjects. At the same time, nation-states are the units through which power operates at the macro-level of the *dispositif*. Normalisation then, may be congruent with an entire *dispositif*, or with particular operations of power which form part of the broader ensemble.

The five operations of normalisation have not been substantially engaged by post-development.[8] In the main, post-development has tended to draw upon the more evocative aspects of Foucault's work on normalisation such as the definition of the 'abnormal'. A number of post-development observers have argued the President Harry Truman's inaugural speech defined this abnormality by designating the majority of the Earth's population as 'underdeveloped' (e.g. Esteva, 1992: 7). While this production of underdevelopment—which probably occurred more pervasively through postwar social science than through Truman's speech—is significantant for the operation of normalisation, it is not its end-goal; nor should it be read as a variation on the colonial theme of exclusion. Normalisation does not operate by excluding subjects or entities but by assiduously integrating them into the regime of power, by measuring gaps and by the 'art of distributions' (Foucault, 1979: 141). Rather than identifying a limited number of more or less desirable positionings within the whole, normalisation aims to set up a continuous space of differentiation. It measures gaps and determines levels with the aim of *distributing* nation-states and human subjects in order to rank them in relation to the developed norm. Thus the identification of 'underdevelopment' serves primarily to identify the need for development and thereby to *include* Europe's Others in the international developmentalist whole.

In other terms, normalisation establishes a single social field and operates through a framework of formal equality. In fact, these characteristics of normal-

isation also constitute the basis for its operation. A single social field is necessary to enable the relevance of a norm which embodies specific behaviours and characteristics. In the case of the postwar development *dispositif*, this norm is represented by those orientations and practices geared towards producing the sort of material wealth embodied in the USA. This norm is in turn necessary as a standard against which social action can be evaluated and regulated. At the same time the delineated social field must be sufficiently inclusive to obviate the accusation of oppression, to assemble enough human subjects for a 'useful' operation of power, and to allow subjects 'freedom' in relation to the norm such that they take responsibility for regulation of their own actions. While these requirements may be established more easily in a traditional operation of normalisation (for instance, one in which the social sciences study populations within the well established terrain internal to Western nation-states), the post-colonial international context is infused with the legacy of sovereign-style colonial political relations. These relations are frequently cast in terms of binary oppositions such as 'developed–underdeveloped', and they are largely grounded in the logic of exclusion.

However, despite the persistence of various oppositions within the development *dispositif*,[9] the overall transformation to an inclusive framework was effected surprisingly quickly. By 1945 the broad institutional framework for an operation of normalisation had in large part been laid through the emergence of three major international institutions, all of which include development as one of their goals. The formation of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank (initially known as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) saw the emergence of an international developmentalist whole. This created a single social field and, to the extent that the ex-colonies were seen as independent and capable of development, the conferring of formal equality upon Europe's Others. With decolonisation proceeding apace in the early postwar period, freshly independent colonies joined with other nation-states in the UN, which came into existence on 24 October 1945. For the first time an international 'community of nations' was formed. The previous attempt at such an international body, The League of Nations, had always been limited in its membership. Notably, a number of European powers, as well as the USA, were not members or were only members for a short time, and none of the colonies had input (Luard, 1982: 10-11). In contrast, the UN initially had a membership of 51 states, which included all the major Western powers (see United Nations, 1997). These events—the establishment of an inclusive single international social field and of the norm of development—constitute the field of differentiation and basis for a massive operation of power in which entities, from individual subjects to nations-states, are acted upon and act upon themselves in relation to the norm of development.

Although normalisation is a complete mechanism in itself, it rarely operates in isolation from the technology of hierarchical observation and the technique of the examination.[10] Hierarchical observation enables normalisation by linking visibility and surveillance with the induction of the effects of power (Foucault, 1979: 170–171). In elucidating this technology in the context of European penal reform, Foucault discusses the emergence of an architecture whose aim was the

surveillance of its inhabitants. The paradigmatic form, and Foucault's most well known example of this architecture, is Jeremy Bentham's panopticon (1979: 195–228). The panopticon serves to arrange inmates in space in relation to supervisors such that the possibility of them being observed is omnipresent. However, the inmates cannot be sure if they are being observed at any one time because the supervisor is hidden. This illustrates the impulse of the mechanism of hierarchical observation: it acts as a central point which 'would be both the source of light illuminating everything, and a locus of convergence for every-thing that must be known: a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned' (1979: 173). Hierarchical observation and normalising judgement come together in the examination. Here the normalising gaze 'establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them' (1979: 184). It is here that 'truth' is established. Individuals are inserted into systems of knowledge which judge their capacities, and which justify and require both outside intervention and the actions of the individuals on themselves. It is thus in the examination that the super-imposition of power and knowledge relations are at their most visible (1979: 185).

The global space of the development *dispositif* clearly requires different operations of hierarchical observation and examination to those Foucault articulates in relation to the prison. Nevertheless, an overall continuity emerges in the role played by the social sciences. In the development setting, the seemingly innocuous collection of data about the Third World, structured by develop-mentalist social science and pursued by nearly every agency engaged in develop-ment efforts, from local government research operations to country-level studies commissioned by the UN, IMF and World Bank, performs a similar function. This proliferation of writing and statistics renders the nation-states and human subjects of the Third World sufficiently visible that they may be distributed and evaluated against the norm of development. A wide range of disciplines and foci are relevant here, but the per capita GNP measure, with its capacity at once to totalise the field through the compilation of tables, thereby rendering nation-states and subjects visible while simultaneously finely differentiating them, is perhaps most exemplary of developmentalist power–knowledge.[11] How though, through such a conceptualisation of power, can we understand the position of an organisation such as the World Bank, one target of much recent and ongoing criticism in relation to its 'power' and influence?

The World Bank in the development *dispositif*

There is no doubt that the World Bank is a lead development institution. It is the largest single lender to the Third World and it designs and oversees the projects that it funds. It also exerts a high level of influence over national economic and development policies and plans, as well as over other development lenders and agencies. In this situation, Kevin Danaher (1994: 2) writes that the Bank has 'steadily gained power' in a way that for 'many in the Third World … harkens back to colonial times'. Escobar states that the World Bank 'should be seen as an agent of economic and cultural imperialism at the service of a global elite' (1995:

167). Here an unsympathetic reading of Escobar would see him as arguing that some form of oppressive and imperialistic power is being masterminded through the World Bank on behalf of a semi-conscious global elite.[12] Again, oppositional formulations, the aggregation of the operation of power, and the ascription of intentionality and agency to a singular historical force all emerge. While the colonial analogy (including use of terms such as 'imperialism') is evocative and rhetorically powerful, it misses the way in which power operates through the Bank and within the development *dispositif*.

The operation of power through the Bank can be more appropriately analysed through Foucault's notion of the panopticon (1979: 200–208).[13] Foucault presents the panopticon not only as a localised and specific disciplinary technology which allows the supervision of inmates, but also as a 'generalizable model of functioning' and 'the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form' (p 205). It is 'a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use' (p 205). The distribution of individuals or groups in relation to one another, a focus on the surveillance or visibility of the objects of power, and the hierarchised observation or study of the targets of the operation of power are key elements which recur across a wide range of contexts and settings, including the international development *dispositif*. In the case of the Bank, an operation of power occurs through its role as a leader and trainer, and its influence on other institutions and agencies. Central to the operation of panopticism as a political technology is the control of visibility: the limitation of inward vision alongside the intensification of outward scrutiny. In the case of the Bank the former occurs through a closed rather than a transparent managerial structure. In the early decades of its operation, little was known about the Bank's opinions and activities (Hayter, 1971: 21). Even the executive directors (EDs) of the Board of the Bank were not particularly well informed of its operations. They were denied access to all documents classified 'internal', and while this situation has changed more recently, EDs are sometimes required to sign confidentiality agreements before being provided with documents (Caufield, 1996: 237–238). As a former US director says, 'The overriding principle is that the management is in charge of the Bank and they should only provide the directors with the information they feel the directors need' (Patrick Coady quoted in Caufield, 1996: 238).

This limitation of inward visibility may be partly attributed to the political environment which saw the emergence of the Bank, its Articles of Agreement, a dominance of economism and managerialism, and so on. However, the resulting operation of power cannot be attributed to design, as the Bank did not spring up ready-formed as a 'powerful' institution. Rather, the operation of power partly emerges through a mixture of chance and the negotiations of a range of forces and actors. Following the Bretton Woods meeting of 1944, where Articles of Agreement were drafted for the Bank and IMF, support for the new organisations was not widespread. It was only after a substantial public relations campaign in the USA that they formally come into being on 27 December 1945 (Caufield, 1996: 43–45). The Bank also had difficulty attracting presidents to head the organisation and there was a widespread perception that it would be unsuccessful (1996: 49–50). Following an initial period of turmoil and the resignation of the

Bank's first president after only six months in the position, the situation stabilised with the appointment of John McCloy as president in 1947 (1996: 52). Key to McCloy's appointment and the future operation of the Bank was the negotiation of the terms of his acceptance of the position. McCloy managed to negotiate a high level of autonomy from the Board, which saw the Bank become a management-driven institution rather than one accountable to the executive directors who reported to member countries (Rich, 1994: 67; Caufield, 1996: 52).

The intensification of outward visibility occurs through attempts to know and manage the countries, economies, projects and programmes that the Bank becomes involved with, and through the control of the flow of information obtained in these processes. The Bank renders Third World nation-states visible though processes of surveillance, evaluation and judgement carried out by personnel and consultants during Bank missions and consultancies. Such analyses are typically focused upon either evaluating specific project proposals or determining a country's general creditworthiness by considering the regulatory and economic environment provided by government (Hayter, 1971: 51, 65). These are exercises in examination which mobilise the relations of power and knowledge of developmentalist social science to observe hierarchically and judge against the developmentalist norm embodied by the Bank. The results of such examinations, in the form of Bank reports on particular projects or countries, are typically restricted to the government of the country concerned, the Board of the Bank and a few select individuals (Hayter, 1971:21; Caufield, 1996: 29). Jonathan Cahn (1993) outlines the tight control of these and other documents produced by the Bank. Some highly classified documents, including those generated in the lending cycle, do not circulate within (or outside) the Bank. Documents arising out of final review and approval stages of a loan are made available to the Bank president, to EDs and hence member countries. US corporations and citizens are able to access these documents through a reading room once the loan is approved, and they may be provided to non-governmental organisations at the Bank's discretion. However, at no point do Third World country citizens have access to the documents. In short, the Third World is rendered visible and the Bank maintains control over information flows while remaining protected from scrutiny.[14]

Through this process of inward limitation and outward intensification of visibility, the Bank emerges as an intensely dense node of force relations in the development *dispositif*. This density enables, and is mutually reinforced by, a range of other activities such as education and training through the Economic Development Institute, and the initiation and leadership of consortia and consultative groups of other lenders, donors and agencies. However, this does not amount to the Bank 'holding' power over Third World nations and subjects but rather is premised on the circulation and promotion of the desire for development throughout the development *dispositif*. The central position of the Bank cannot be isolated from nation-states, with which it liaises directly, or from national development planning and programmes, which in turn gain their justification in individual projects and programmes. The World Bank is only able to exercise power *within* the context of the development *dispositif*, and only because lines of force flow through it at a high level of density. As Foucault argues, while the

pyramidal organisation of relations of power gives a *dispositif* a 'head', 'it is the apparatus as a whole that produces "power"' (Foucault, 1979: 177). Without the continual reproduction of the desire for development within human subjects on a widespread scale in the *dispositif*, this power could not function. Although it seems permanent, such power rests upon accumulating chains of force relations which flow through the development *dispositif* not only from top to bottom, but also from the bottom up and throughout the apparatus.

Accusations that the Bank is 'imperialist' mute this dimension and undermine the analysis of the operation of power. They also invite the Bank to respond by stating that it does not have the power to force its members to adopt particular policies or follow particular courses of action (see Driscoll, 1998; World Bank, 1999). As I have shown, however, the absence of overt 'force' does not mean that an operation of power is not occurring. Rather, the type of power which operates through development cannot be readily elucidated through the sovereign conceptualisation, as this is more appropriate to the colonial era. The case of the World Bank is one particular instance in which Foucault's productive and relational understanding of the operation of power, framed through the notions of *dispositif* and normalisation, strengthens the analytical and critical purchase we can bring to bear on development. It achieves this by not falling into facile aggregation of the operation of power or attributing agency to a singular historical force. Beyond an analytical function, this understanding would allow criticism to focus, for instance, on the role the Bank plays in circulating and promoting developmentalism, thereby taking on important normative questions about what constitutes a good or valuable life.

Conclusion

Addressing post-development's shortcomings without dismissing its sensibility is productive for improving our understanding and analysis of development. Using Foucault's heuristic distinction between sovereign power and biopower to understand differences in the operation of power between colonial and development eras highlights a number of problems in the post-development approach. The reliance on the colonial metaphor and a sovereign conceptualisation of power leads some post-development writers to overly aggregate the operation of power, to ascribe intentionality to a singular historical force such as 'the Americans', and to take an untenable oppositional stance. The engagement with Foucault shows that the generation of overall effects through development need not be reduced to such simplistic terms. Instead, Foucault's notions of the *dispositif* and normalisation allow us to understand how development can have the effect of directing people's lives in a particular way without totalising the force relations involved. Moreover, the recognition of the productive quality of relations of power which operate through development suggests that a more tenable, productive and perhaps more radical line of inquiry than that pursued so far by post-development is to explore the ways development and the operation of power are bound.

Thus, while in some need of rescuing, post-development should not be dismissed because it lacks a programme for development; nor should it be limited

to helping us understand why many development efforts fail. Drawing more closely on Foucault, something able to be attempted only in a limited way in this paper, is one way in which the post-development sensibility can be taken seriously. Foucault is one of the theoretical departure points for post-development and it is likely that equally or more productive paths can be found elsewhere, particularly in the engagement with indigenous and marginalised knowledges. If such options are to be usefully pursued, it will be necessary to treat post-development's more simplistic and oppositional claims with scepticism. Equally though, we should not prematurely dismiss or unduly limit the potential of post-development.

Notes

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[1]   Contributions to this literature include Claude Alvares (1992a), Apffel-Marglin and Marglin (1990), Jonathan Crush (1995), Fred Dallmayr (1992), Marc DuBois (1991), Arturo Escobar (1984; 1988; 1992; 1995; 1997), Gustavo Esteva (1987) Esteva and Prakesh (1998), James Ferguson (1990), Douglas Lummis (1991), Kate Manzo (1991), Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1991), Serge Latouche (1996), Rahnema and Bawtree (1997), George Rist (1997), and Wolfgang Sachs (1990; 1992a; 1995).

[2]   On the latter, see Edward Said (1995: 31–40) especially his quoting of Lord Balfour on p. 34.

[3]   Somewhat ironically, the predominantly sovereign nature of colonial power has resulted in some critiques of Foucault's conceptualisation of power in colonial studies. For instance, Jenny Sharpe, in her analysis of the 1857 uprisings against the British in India, shows that, in contrast to the modality of power explicated by Foucault, punishment of Indian rebels attempted to '"strike terror" in the rebellious native' in a manner reminiscent of 'Europe's own "barbaric" past' (Sharpe quoted in Loomba, 1998: 53). Similarly, through her analysis of bio-medicine in colonial Africa, Megan Vaughan (quoted in Loomba, 1998: 52) argues that, in the relations between colonisers and colonised, the margin for liberty was very limited. These criticisms are misplaced because Foucault does not suggest that his work on biopower should be generalised beyond the European contexts he considers. However, they nonetheless reinforce my point about the modality of colonial power because what is indicated here is that colonial power is predominantly underpinned by an exercise of force.

[4]   See Michael Dillon (1995) for a discussion of the interdependence of sovereign power and biopower in global politics.

[5]   See Brigg (2001) for a discussion of the microcredit movement in these terms.

[6]   I discuss this term below.

[7]   I discuss and augment existing post-development use of this notion, and cover additional issues regarding its use, in Brigg (2001).

[8]   Arturo Escobar (1995) makes mention of normalisation but does not elaborate how it operates. Marc DuBois (1991) makes reference to the importance of norms but his article, which is a valuable use of Foucault, focuses primarily on the exercise of disciplinary power in relation to individuals and the documenting and ordering of populations. Debra Johnston (1991) outlines a possible genealogy of development in which normalisation features but this needs to be developed further, and it can be improved by locating it within the framework of *dispositif*.

[9]   Development encounters are characterized by a 'dynamic of recognition and disavowal of difference' (Escobar, 1997: 497) in which Third World subjects are recognised as different but, through the processes of development, are incited to become 'Westernised'.

[10] Foucault's shifting use of terms in his analysis of relations of power can be confusing. For this reason I adopt a typology in part drawn from Nikolas Rose (1996: 26). I use *technology* to refer to 'any assembly structured by a practical rationality with a more or less conscious goal (1996: 26), and *technique* to refer to a specific practice, ritual or device within a technology. In addition I use *modality* to refer to the overall characteristics of an operation of power. Each of these terms describes part or all of the functioning of power and hence they can all be used to analyse power as it operates through a given *dispositif*.

[11] I discuss this in more detail elsewhere (Brigg 2000), and there are many part-contributions to this thesis in existing post-development literature. For the relationship of the social sciences to development, see Cooper and Packard (1997b).

[12] At other points Escobar states that development should be 'seen as a "strategy without strategists" in the sense that nobody is explicitly masterminding it' (1995: 232, n26).

[13] The following does not claim to be an analysis of the operation of power through the World Bank but rather aims to indicate the possibilities for an alternative understanding to that currently on offer.

[14] This is obviously the general situation and does not preclude 'shocks' to the Bank's *modus operandi* such as the Morse report on the Narmada river dam in 1992 (see Caufield 1996: 25–28).

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