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# The Governance of the Third World: A Foucauldian Perspective on Power Relations in Development

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The many different meanings assigned to development in the Third World are a source of much discussion. Some of this debate concerns development as a process and some the end or goal of that process. The most important side of development, however, is neither debated nor discussed because it is taken for granted, and thus remains unidentified. Development itself—the state that certain countries find themselves struggling to attain—remains a nebulous (and somewhat elusive) objective. Development theories with teleological orientations have been discredited for quite some time now, but one still finds that at whatever level of development, from individual to international, there is something out there—something other—that is the target.

It is my contention that whatever it is that is out there, this final resting place or Holy Grail called development might ultimately prove to be more of a false idol than a savior. I suspect that there are hidden costs and consequences that render development strategies and goals problematic. The purpose of this paper is to reveal this other side of development.

## Development Difficulties

### *The "Crisis" in Development*

In recent years, a full-blown "crisis" situation has been ushered into development studies by a spate of literature and conferences with such promising titles as "Rethinking Development," "Alternative Development," and my favorite, "Requiem or New Agenda for Third World

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Studies.” (Who is being threatened? Should hungry Sudanese children send in their contributions to the agenda?) Development seems to have become the subject of a social scientific advertising campaign: the world has been offered “new,” “another,” and “alternative” developments featuring much-heralded “new trends,” “new strategies,” and “new directions.” Most of these strategies, which fall into the overextended category of “alternative development,” have resulted not in a rejection of the basic development paradigm but in merely broadening it beyond the parameters of pure economics.

A minority within this broad alternative movement, however, has gone further than the rest—defying the economic essentialism of development thinking and, perhaps most importantly, challenging the preeminence of the development expert. The core of arguments in this vein is that the theoretical models underlying development efforts stray dramatically far from being as value-free as they are presented. Critical of a development based upon Western experience, this sort of alternative program emphasizes self-reliance, local participation, endogenous patterns of development, and satisfying basic needs. These features outline an interesting approach to development, but their most important contribution lies elsewhere—in the establishment of opposition to the venerated external aid/technical transfer approach to problems of underdevelopment. In other words, this alternative program gives birth to a competing paradigm of policy formulation, which in turn weakens the authority of the prevailing paradigm.

Unfortunately, there is very little force behind this competing notion so that the apparent “crisis” notwithstanding, development is doing just fine, even flourishing—not the *process* of development of Third World societies, of course, but the *business* of its promotion. The effectiveness of radical criticism is diminished because even such alternative frameworks of policy formulation fail to penetrate deep enough to confront the most fundamental assumptions embodied in the dominant development paradigm. To put it more bluntly, strategies have been changed, but the foundations of contemporary development ideology are being reinforced. Above the polemics and disagreements over policy, which appear to distinguish the sundry schools of thought in development studies, there exists a profound unity. The locus of this unity is to be found not in the perception of the causes of underdevelopment or the approaches to solving problems therein, but in the definition and identification of these problems of underdevelopment in the first place. Underdevelopment is defined as a lack—a lack that stands out in relief against the backdrop of a “complete” Western society. The existence of “underdeveloped” (or “developing” or “undeveloped” or “less developed”) and “developed” as categories into which human societies are classified is the *sine qua non* of the development paradigm. The mani-

fold critiques of development leave intact the illusion that development comprises a natural category. Although a myriad of strategies for development has appeared and then fallen from grace, development itself still retains its original moral luster. It is this self-evident naturalness and law-like necessity of development that constitute the base of the development paradigm. Development is therein transformed (revalued) into something much more than just a desideratum: as Skolimowski laments, “To be primitive is to be backward, almost half-human; to join the West in its quest for progress is an imperative, an advancement, an almost necessary condition of being human.”<sup>1</sup>

### *Toward Initiating a Crisis*

Criticism of development has arrived at a dead end: the term “development” is riddled with elemental value implications, yet no satisfactory replacement exists. The situation warrants a genealogical investigation (Why was one form of civilization—modern, Western—placed upon a pedestal, thrust aloft as a model to which other civilizations and societies must aspire and in contrast to which they are judged?), but this paper veers toward a complementary objective: the further undermining of the development paradigm (not simply the more superficial technical paradigms of development but their value-rich foundation). Insofar as they are fundamental (to my society) there is a measure of immunity shielding the underlying values of development from direct confrontation. It is therefore more efficacious to attack development from within. In other words, a certain skepticism must be injected into the elemental layers of development discourse in an effort to weaken the pervasive and indisputable appeal of development: people must begin to harbor doubts.

To accomplish this debilitation, I propose to alter the accepted conceptualization of development by selecting one of the irreducible building blocks of the development paradigm and then redefining it, thereby altering the structure of the development of which it is a part. To this end, development will be restructured in the light cast by a Foucauldian conceptualization of power. Two results emerge from following this exercise: (1) Our understanding of the process of development is broadened, uncovering “costs” that have heretofore remained ambiguous or unseen, placing into question the desirability of even those good or successful development activities (from whomever’s standpoint). (2) The primarily discursive process by which the strategies and practices of development are born and promoted is revealed, therein causing the perceived naturalness of the goal of development to pale.

Why Foucault? He sees power in noneconomic terms—not as a commodity, but as a relation. More importantly, he draws a connection between power and knowledge—a link that implicates intellectual

fields such as development studies. This perspective is imperative if one is to transcend typical critiques of development, which focus upon a negative conceptualization of power located in the state or related instruments (e.g., the International Monetary Fund or multinational corporations) in order to probe power relations at the local level.

The paper proceeds with an explanation of Foucault's "analytics" of power, and then to a study of power's ineluctable connection with knowledge (and vice versa). After looking a bit more closely at the workings of power-knowledge, the concept will be introduced into an analysis of development practices and then into the discourses surrounding those practices and the larger process of development. Finally, the resulting picture—"another" development—will be discussed briefly. Before departing on this path, however, it is necessary to render more explicit one of the limits of this investigation: no new (substitute) paradigm is being delineated. One must suppress the urge to seek out allusions to a scientific "proof" or logical "claim" that the conceptualization of development arrived at in this paper is somehow more correct or true than the one currently in use. In any case, such an impossible proposition is not necessary. This paper aims not to inspire the rejection of one conceptualization of development in favor of a second, but, through the revelation of another interpretation of development, to corrupt the self-evidence of development in its masquerade as natural law.

### Foucault's Concept of Power

Foucault's definition of power is one of his most controversial concepts, and perhaps his most difficult to grasp as well. There is a clash between his notion and accepted notions of power, the latter having in common a certain *sensibility*: power that can be seen and felt, examined and seized. In contrast, Foucauldian power appears somewhat esoteric. In spite of greatly different theoretical approaches, power has always been presented as a negative or repressive force. Foucault's analyses of various historical phenomena (e.g., psychiatric treatment or penal technology) led him to believe that "the mechanisms that were brought into operation in these power formations were something quite other, or in any case something much more, than repression."<sup>2</sup> The essence of Foucault's challenge, then, is to remove the blind spots created by a unidimensional notion of power—a task sorely called for in the social sciences.

#### *Redefining Power*

As Foucault understands it, power-repression in Western society is a sort of anachronism, vestiges of a form of power that used to characterize

the societies of the West but, over the past two hundred years or so, has gradually ceded to more evolved mechanisms of power. Foucault does not deny the existence of negative or repressive relations of power, but he de-emphasizes them, saying that our obsession with power's negativity conceals the real workings of power. This veil allows other, positive relations of power to function in complete autonomy, beyond suspicion.

In its negative or repressive form, power is understood as a force that limits, controls, forbids, masks, withdraws, punishes, excludes, and subjugates. Foucault maintains that power is primarily positive, rather than negative, productive rather than restrictive, exercised rather than possessed, omnipresent rather than localized. He further states that power consists of a set of relations rather than as a commodity and operates from the bottom to the top rather than vice versa.

The hallmark of Foucault's conceptualization of power is the assertion that power is a positive or productive force, with the other aforementioned characteristics more or less following from and supporting this conclusion. The aim of power is to produce "docile bodies" and "normalized subjects." Why is it that people send their children to school? Is it to abide by the rules of the state that impose the schooling of children upon the public? Or is it not because of a set of norms and truths that have been produced, such as "Teachers are better able than parents to educate children" and "It is a parent's moral duty to send his/her child to school"?

Through detailed historical analyses, Foucault demonstrates that power works much differently than is commonly thought. Relations of power do not determine other kinds of relations (economic, sexual, or family relationships) but are "immanent" in these microrelations. At a particular historical juncture some of these microrelations of power fit together or complement one another, a process that builds "strategies" of power—the weave of power relations that is the condition for macrorelations of power and more "general" or "global" forms of domination. The state, or ruling class, then, results from the configurations and consequences of the microrelations of power. In return, these superstructures of domination determine the environment of the microrelations and, hence, modify or influence them to a certain degree. Political and economic utility act as mechanisms by which certain microrelations of power are "colonized," "invested," "involuted," and "displaced."<sup>3</sup> In this way certain relationships become significant in realms far beyond their original content. For example, relations between anthropologists and Third World ethnic groups gained new meaning and greater political import with the advent of the developmentist epoch because they became of use to donor country, host country, and nongovernmental organization (NGO) apparatuses.

One of the most obvious “beneficiaries” of a Foucauldian concept of power would be the state, which can no longer be characterized as the central locus of power and fount of evil in society. Consequently, the state is an inappropriate target of “revolutionary” movements, insofar as it is an effect of and boundary to power relations, not their source. No matter how powerful the state might seem, it is “far from being able to occupy the whole field of power relations [and] can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations.”<sup>4</sup> With statements such as these, Foucault inverts the tenets of many emancipatory strategies. For instance, rather than considering the power relations within the family to be “a simple reflection or extension of the power of the State,” Foucault avers that “for the State to function in the way that it does, there must be, between male and female or adult and child, quite specific relations of domination which have their own configuration and relative autonomy.”<sup>5</sup> Foucault might be an anathema to the revolution, but he is the patron saint of local resistance.

Foucault supports his argument with the example of madness.<sup>6</sup> He shows that the “techniques and procedures” of the exclusion of the mad, rather than that exclusion itself, were of benefit to the bourgeoisie. The same reasoning is relevant to deductions pertaining to the status of development. Given the dominant position of the First World vis-à-vis the Third World, given that the developed/underdeveloped dichotomy creates an opening for legitimized intervention, and given that many of the grand schemes for national development that have passed through this aperture at the recommendation of First World experts (e.g., “cash crops” or “white elephant” industrialization projects) have often benefited First World nations while weakening Third World economies and have led to enormous debt burdens, one could, in a top-down analysis, deduce that these development programs were foisted on the Third World with the expressed intent of fortifying First World hegemony. So it is relatively facile to demonstrate that much of development activity is neocolonialist conspiracy. What is more difficult to address are the genealogical questions—to discover why certain policies and theories proliferated and how such diverse practices as building dams, providing educational grants, and introducing high yield grains were colonized by macrostrategies of power.

### *The Union of Power and Knowledge*

Foucault pursues his idea that power produces (among other things) knowledge, and actually bonds the two concepts together in a single entity: “power-knowledge.” This destroys the typical understanding of the relationship between the two in which either (1) knowledge provides a tool or weapon for those in power or (2) a new form of

knowledge propels into power new groups or institutions capable of exploiting it.

The power-knowledge dyad is welded together by causality in both directions: power and knowledge “directly imply” one another. First, the exercising of power opens new relations of power and creates new objects of understanding or rational inquiry. Second, knowledge immediately “presupposes and constitutes” power relations. Turning to the Third World, it is frightening to consider the prominent role played by knowledge of the beneficiaries in development projects, as shown below. The acquisition of knowledge does not merely justify an intrusion of power, it *is* an intrusion of power.

Parallel to the necessary relationship between power and knowledge there exists a complex reciprocity between power and truth. In producing knowledge, power produces truth. For Foucault, truth refers not to some superficial statement of the way things are, such as three plus two equals five or “apples are fruit,” but denotes an abstract “system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements.”<sup>7</sup> One example of this sort of truth is the scientific method, which is of paramount importance in contemporary Western society. At the discursive level, this “episteme” distinguishes not truths from falsehoods but “what may from what may not be characterized as scientific.”<sup>8</sup> The episteme, in turn, is connected to the power relations that define and maintain it and to the grid of power that it gives rise to and legitimizes, forming a “regime” of truth. Knowledge, then, arrives in consciousness following a filtering: not only must particular statements submit to the regime of truth, but only they, from a multiplicity of possible statements, are constructed by it.

The institutions and community of social scientists are a major culprit in the dissemination of these truth discourses. When these discourses conform with the regime of truth—when the latter validates or approves the former—then certain discourses or bodies of knowledge are admitted into the category of “true knowledge.” In this process, a “whole set of knowledges” is rendered suspect, discredited, excluded, and “disqualified” while another, in the case of development, becomes the basis for policy formation. Hence, “le savoir des gens”—local, popular knowledge—has been assigned to categories in the hierarchization of knowledge “beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity.”<sup>9</sup> One can see that truth, just as knowledge, supports and constitutes power relations, such as those between the development expert and peasant farmer in rural Mali, allowing the discourse of the former to take precedence over the discourse of the latter, even in the realm of the affairs of the latter. Herein lies one of development’s most serious flaws. This devaluation of local knowledge disassociates specific experience (of the problem) from action (the solution), dooming many well-intended development efforts to failure.

*The Exercising of Power: Discipline*

How does the power-knowledge dyad operate in the real world? Foucault concerns himself with a subterranean realm of nondiscursive practices (e.g., techniques of examination, architectures of surveillance) that are supported, justified, and imbued with meaning by discourse; a realm of practices that comprises the sites or points of activity of the microphysical relations of power-knowledge. These practices can be roughly divided into “disciplines” and “regulatory controls,” the former defined as an “anatomo-politics of the human body” and the latter as a “bio-politics of the population.”<sup>10</sup> Together, these two poles of power-knowledge relations compose “bio-power,” a set of strategies of power-knowledge that produce a supply of docile human bodies that may be “subjected, used, transformed, and improved.”<sup>11</sup>

The aim of disciplinary power is to increase, in terms of economic utility, the forces of the body and diminish these same forces in reference to rebellion or nonconformity.<sup>12</sup> Discipline progresses from a direct coercion or control to an indirect, omnipresent form of control, which is able to be colonized by other relations of domination. The key to discipline is normalization, and the keymakers are the members of the various disciplines (pedagogists, penologists, demographers, psychiatrists). In disciplinary power, control exists not in the form of an act of law or a set of legal codes, but in the guise of natural rules or norms, born by the discourse of the social sciences.

Foucault shows how disciplinary institutions—schools, hospitals, barracks—were invaded by legions of technical experts and observers who began to produce studies that delineated such norms as the correct posture (the precise placement of each part of the body) to be assumed by a pupil while writing or the correct set of movements to be followed by a soldier in moving his gun from his shoulder to a firing position. Below, it will be made quite clear that in the interest of promoting development the Third World has been subjected to a similar invasion of economists, political scientists, health workers, agricultural experts, and so on.

The appearance of such norms as isolated is merely a reassuring illusion. They instill in the individual a certain malleability or intractability; a certain susceptibility to the discourses of the disciplines that is colonized by other relations of power. Unimportant or peripheral disciplining of individuals was but the beginning; the disciplines (the human sciences) and their practitioners expanded throughout the social body, creating a network of “teacher-judges,” “doctor-judges,” and “‘social-worker’-judges,” to name a few.<sup>13</sup> As Foucault laments, “in the end, we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power.”<sup>14</sup>



What Foucault has in mind is the plethora of observations, registrations, identification cards, census data, medical dossiers, bank files, and so on which lower “the threshold of describable individuality and [make] of this description a means of control and a method of domination.”<sup>15</sup> The effect is to transform diffuse people into transparent individuals who are expected to act in accordance with the norms vulgarized by the various judges. In the end, people monitor their own behavior and become their own guardians.

### *Power Over the Social Body*

The second component of bio-power—bio-politics—finds its origins in the coeval demographic growth (in Europe) and economic growth of the productive apparatus during the eighteenth century. Bio-politics coincides with the “emergence of ‘population’ as an economic and political problem” that forces governments to think of citizens not as subjects but as resources.<sup>16</sup> A new technology of the population—demographic surveys of various traits of the populous and economic analyses of the relationships between wealth, production, and population—is built upon the fact that “the accumulation of men and the accumulation of capital . . . cannot be separated.”<sup>17</sup> In order to maintain production and growth, capitalism needs a sufficient supply of labor, in terms of both numbers and health (actually, a surplus is required in order to preserve low wages). However, men cannot be “accumulated” in the absence of a system that maintains and engages them. In the name of public welfare, then, the entire population was positioned as the object of power relations surrounding and affecting the conditions that largely determine biological processes such as reproduction, nutrition, mortality, and hygiene.

This twofold constitution—on one level, of individuals through disciplines, and on another level, of populations through bio-politics—together engenders bio-power, the power that “brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life.”<sup>18</sup>

### **The Subjection of the Third World**

It might seem that the preceding discussion of power has digressed quite far from development. A close inspection, however, shows that many aspects of Foucault’s conceptualization of power could be used to describe, verbatim at times, certain activities that are part of the process of development. To be more specific, one finds in bio-power a way of understanding the relationship between the superstructure in the

Third World, especially the state apparatuses and laws, and the chief object of the power relations attached to that superstructure, the so-called masses. Particularly in the Third World, these latter are not only presented as human resources, but as resources in need of modification, adaptation, and change—in other words, development. The task at hand, then, is to probe beneath the question posed for us by biopower, “how to improve the track record of development activities,” and discover what it is that these activities do.

Where does such an investigation begin, given that development is an extremely broad process encompassing a wide array of activities? Foucault’s own methodology involves moving away from the center toward the “extremities,” or periphery, away from the grand devices of neocolonization, neoimperialism, and etatization to the relations of power at the “ongoing level of subjugation,” which in effect constitute these grand schemes. This means focusing upon rural villages and urban shanty towns and the marginalized inhabitants of these areas. In what sort of power relations is the peasant or barrio-dweller engaged? From whence does his or her subjugation arise? Certainly many of the power relations at the periphery are old, traditional relations of power. Some of these, such as the inferior status of women, support other relations to form an important node in the grid of modern strategies: they have been incorporated. But at this periphery one also finds new relations of power, which have accompanied and opened the door for new penetrations of power. These new cultural, religious, economic, and political relations of power can all, in various degrees, be linked with the penetration of the process of development. Why? Because development is the process that has as its goal the restructuring of the behavior and practices of individuals and populations (or the introduction of new ones). To what end? Ostensibly, to increase economic productivity, the wealth of the nation, the level of health or education of the people—in short, to increase public welfare. Beneath the surface of activity, however, one can discern the actions of bio-politics and disciplinary power harnessing the energy of the social body and molding individual bodies into subjects.

### *Bio-Politics and Development: The Harnessing of Populations*

In the poorer regions of the Third World one finds existence itself to be a precarious proposition: cynically speaking, an exorbitant quantity of human resources is wasted. Population, therefore, has emerged as an economic and political problem in contemporary Third World societies to an even greater degree than during the period of industrialization in Western Europe. In many developing nations, the harnessing of human resources involves limiting the amount of total energy, whereas in other regions the maintenance of life itself is paramount.

Programs characterized by this bio-political approach, launched by both the state toward its citizenry and by First World nations toward the Third World, fall a priori into the field of development. National development projects geared toward increasing the health of the population, such as immunization campaigns, nutritional education programs, and the establishment of a network of primary health-care centers, all contribute to the “accumulation of men,” the complement to the “accumulation of wealth.”

Given grossly inequitable distribution and the unlikelihood of structural transformation in the nation-state or world-system, it *seems* that there are insufficient resources (food, medicine) in comparison to the population. Hence, the “population crisis” has confronted the exercise of bio-political power with a problem that, according to its own inner logic, could be resolved only by still further regulation of the social body. The perspective that grew out of this problem, that citizens were resources for which there was an optimal level or number, is most manifest in strategies of population control—bio-politics in its “highest” form.

Although it is frequently concealed by more palatable terminology (e.g., “family planning” or “primary health care”), “population control” is a surprisingly frank label. “Population” ostensibly refers to the numbers of people in a particular social body, but the second meaning of the word, referring to the social body itself, conveys more accurately the effects of said policies. Population control is a prominent instance of the workings of bio-politics in modern society. A look at the history of population control provides an example that highlights nicely the process identified by Foucault by which strategies of domination are always shifting in response to technical discoveries, historical events, and the constant circulation of discourses.

To begin the history of *population* control (greatly abbreviated in this space) one inevitably returns to the origins of the *birth* control movement in the United States during the late 1800s. This requires two points of clarification. First, birth control and population control, although sometimes used interchangeably, are actually quite separate. The former refers to efforts of individuals (mostly women) to establish control over reproduction, to gain control over their bodies. The latter refers to policies, particularly institutional policies, to win control of the demographic future of a nation or planet. Laid bare, population control involves the management of populations according to technologies of demography, a contravention to increased individual power.

Second, it is an illusion tactically important to power that population control policies such as family planning appear to be more advanced descendants of “crude” birth-control policies, thereby obviating the need for the latter. Population control is not the offspring of birth control; the same group of people whose interests were threatened by birth rates

among domestic lower classes came to adopt a more global perspective because technology made such a *perspective* possible: knowledge created a new object of power. *Intervention* was made possible by the theories of Malthus and their kin, which made it rational, approved by science. Emphasizing changes at the level of discourse, I would first like to review the evolution of planning technologies with respect to birth control and then briefly trace the extension of this technology to Third World populations through the linking of population control and development.

Birth control began in the late 1800s as a feminist movement advocating “voluntary motherhood” in the name of reproductive freedom and against “involuntary motherhood.” It was assailed for being anti-family, antichildren, antimotherhood, and, due to prolific birth rates among immigrants, a threat to the white race. As a political attack of sexual repression, which also criticized authority and hierarchy, birth control was at first adopted by socialist movements and placed on the agenda of radical politics. Many factors<sup>19</sup> then led to a major alteration in the objectives and organization of birth control and the parting of birth control and radical social ideology.

The next stage of the movement marked its increasing professionalization and medicalization. Having shifted the discourse of herself and the movement away from radicalism and toward the discourse of a philanthropic mission, Margaret Sanger, the leader of the movement, began recruiting professionals, in particular doctors, to support the cause of birth control. Medicalization brought with it legitimacy at the level of birth-control practices (it also maintained the hegemony of doctors in the field of reproduction). Professionalization brought men into decisionmaking positions, diminishing the feminist impetus of the movement, and changed the movement into an organization linked to managerial and policymaking organs in society.

Professionalization created a new power-knowledge relationship, which carried with it a new conceptualization of the problem (similar changes can be attributed to the expertization of development efforts). First, professionals approached birth control through science and study, thereby reducing or obscuring its ethical and political dimensions. Second, the philanthropic and meritocratic outlook of the professionals contained an elitist undercurrent, a belief that not all members of society (and not all cultures) were equally important. Spurred by a concern for “deteriorating civilization,” then, birth control became a mechanism for selectively reducing the birth rates of “inferior” or “unwanted” groups in society.<sup>20</sup> Birth control, once resisted on grounds that it would lead to race suicide, became supported as a means of protecting that race—same discourse, different environment and strategies.

To gain acceptance among the populations toward which it was intended, the entire discourse of birth control—eugenics (as differing

from birth control–reproductive freedom), although not the orientation, underwent a metamorphosis, becoming the discourse of planned parenthood. The key to the success of this metamorphosis was the insertion of a profamily imperative. Against the “ought not” of religious counterdiscourse and in order to incorporate the profamily US middle class’s planned parenthood ideology, validated by its “scientific” formulation, an “ought” was presented: families ought to have fewer children as a matter of augmenting the welfare of the family.

Planned parenthood grew during the 1940s and 1950s from a concern of private reform institutions to the territory of state apparatuses, meaning that reproductive control became the domain of bureaucratic planners. It is at this stage, due largely to political independence, the Cold War, and threats to US economic interests by unstable (both politically and demographically) populations, that the population of countries in the Third World became a source of anxiety to dominant strategies in the First World, especially in the United States. National anxiety elicits academic interest, which promotes study, which accumulates knowledge, which entails power. The result (in this case) was that neo-Malthusianism was invigorated by its being joined with planned parenthood technology, forming a population-control movement.

A wave of demographic and economic surveys of the Third World legitimized a depiction of “exploding populations” as a source of Communist insurrection and a detriment to the national and even global economic climate. “Objective,” “scientific” data—projections of “teeming” Third World masses gobbling up the world’s resources—convinced the US establishment and people that an urgent situation did indeed exist and obfuscated the political nature of the question of unrest among masses. Bonnie Mass pointed out a second reason for the success of “population control programs and the ideology of ‘overpopulation’”: they “fit neatly within the imperialist scheme of effecting a greater rate of exploitation in industrial development.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, certain techniques were economically profitable, fostering a convergence of strategies.

During the 1960s, population control became explicitly connected to the process of development in two ways. First, at the policy level, US foreign aid to developing countries was tied to the establishment of population-control programs. Second, at the theoretical level, and acting as a justification for this imposition, a very simple neo-Malthusian economic equation was marketed: fewer people equals more resources per capita equals better living. Many of the Third World leaders, particularly from Africa, objected to policies intended to “stabilize” or control their populations and rejected the substitution of population-control policies for programs aimed at development. (Indeed, population-control expenditures were being touted in the First World as a means of

reducing future expenditures on development.) Once again, resistance triggered a response. Just as birth control shifted from anti- to profamily, the discourse of population control was shifted to “family planning,” sidestepping what was objectionable and protecting what was essential. As Mass pointed out, scientific advances in data collection and analysis also prompted this change by making family planning possible on a large scale.<sup>22</sup> Family planning—controlling the number of children—was accepted where population control was not because it integrated population control with development, with a concern for health, especially that of women and children. Karefa-Smart noted that in most African countries “there is a clear trend to emphasize family planning services more for their acknowledged usefulness in improving maternal and child health than as a means of population control.”<sup>23</sup>

It would be an oversimplification to assert that population control was somehow merged into development by shifting to a discourse of family planning. This would imply some sort of headquarters or Ministry of Policy Discourse presiding over a prodigious range of affairs. Nor was it natural progress or the discovery of a true formula that replaced false theories. Rather, population control and development could not have converged had discourses in the field of development, for instance, not been shifting away from industrialization and modernization toward basic needs. Hence, there was a conjuncture of shifts in discourse, along with other contingencies such as historical factors (e.g., new planning technologies, the Cuban revolution, and the war in Viet Nam), which led to the establishment of family-planning programs in the Third World.

As conditions worsened and as economic development in the Third World failed throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, blame was put on the poor, whose numbers had dramatically increased, simultaneously absolving First World experts and Third World leaders from responsibility for their misguided policies. Developing nations found themselves unable to provide services for their people, and resources consumed in this direction were juxtaposed with resources that could have been spent on economic development, a “confirmation” of neo-Malthusian theories. So by the 1984 Arusha Conference, a full two-thirds of the once recalcitrant African leaders expressed “dissatisfaction” with population growth rates and the need for “contraceptive information, education and services.”<sup>24</sup>

Resistance once again surfaced and forced a shift in policy. Due to high infant mortality rates, many pregnancies were needed to guarantee the survival of enough children to satisfy the labor needs of the family. Population control was no longer able to be justified in the name of conserving resources or economic development, but was propagated on behalf of the mother and child; hence the bonding of family planning

with maternal child health (MCH/FP). This shift also undercut or mollified some feminist objections to family planning and fit into the growing awareness (and discourse) of the significance of the role of women in development. Once again, further scientific developments (e.g., new models of data collection, which provided demographers and other analysts with complete family histories) contributed to this change. Most recently, MCH/FP has become an essential component of primary health care (PHC). Population control is now located at the center of Third World government health programs, a perfect union of bio-political objectives in a position practically insulated from oppositional discourse.

The point being made is not, for instance, that the spacing of pregnancies is bad; on the contrary, it most certainly does contribute to the health and well-being of the mother and her children. The points are actually twofold: (1) the poor health of mothers and children is not at all reducible to insufficient spacing of pregnancies, and other (structural) causes of poor health have been eliminated from the dominant discourses guiding national development policies and practices; and (2) the family and family members have been colonized by powers that have deployed certain technologies and practices (e.g., sterilization and contraception). In the end, some women have been liberated from the burdens of caring for too many children but they have been entrapped by other power relations that remain unseen.

The foregoing synopsis of the emergence and growth of population control was meant to illustrate the way in which interplay between discourses, counterdiscourses, technology, and historical events or trends produces and serves strategies of power. It is easy to understand why at the same time that the "Dependencia" movement was changing the academic notions of causality for the narrow audience of development studies, popular conceptualizations of Third World poverty were being formed by the "population bomb" theory, which better meshed with the regime of truth. More specific relations of or services to power can be discerned by examining the general directional shifts of different strands of discourse taken from the total set of discourses that were central to what appears as a natural, enlightened progression from birth control to primary health care.

The first strand of discourse<sup>25</sup> moves from birth-control advocacy of "voluntary motherhood," a radical feminist questioning of relations of power within the family, to MCH/FP, a reinforcement of family ideology and relations of power (concealing the inequities thereof). Foucault's point that power moves from bottom to top can be illustrated here. Among many other factors, had women not been subjugated by unequal power relations within the family and had most professionals not been men (a situation dependent upon the preceding factor), then

population control might never have emerged. In other words, the subjugation of women cannot be deduced from the exercising of patriarchal state policy such as population control. Rather, an important element of state power—population control—is dependent upon the prior subjugation of women at the micro level. The same circumstances can be discovered for elements of other international or state strategies of power, besides population control, which fall into the rubric of development activities.

A second strand in the shift of discourses concerns the conceptualization of poverty. As has been said, birth control was at one point part of a working-class movement that construed poverty as structural, not accidental (or genetic). By the time of planned parenthood, the birth control movement was controlled by the elite classes of society and therefore reflected their interests and ideologies. As it merged into development strategies, it acted to reinforce the belief that the poor and poor nations themselves are at the root of their own poverty.

The third strand of this discourse shifts ever-increasingly away from negative effects of control (restriction) toward positive ones (welfare or development). This is partly due to the need not just for legitimacy but for acceptance—everything under the broad moral aegis of development being readily accepted. Population control began as a substitute or support for development. It was then promoted in the name of development. Today, it is being practiced disguised as development itself. Population growth rates, fertility rates, and other demographic data are all important components of the formulae for development projects and plans. Development has been redefined in terms of satisfying basic needs *for a certain number of people* (now and in the future); in terms of increasing bio-political power. This change solidifies the seemingly natural polarization between human resources and financial or physical resources, which tends to preclude any discourse of redistribution or transformation.

The fourth strand in the shift of discourses is perhaps the most important in that it consists of shifts at the level of power-knowledge. Whereas the previous changing strands of discourses reflect changes in superstructural power relations, this strand in part constitutes them. Birth control in its pure form was a political and ethical issue. Likewise, population control, before it was dressed in the garb of development, struck Third World leaders as being political, not economic, in nature. Discourse shied away from this volatile bedding to the high ground of scientific neutrality. Birth control and population control became technical problems. Much of Foucault's work traces how political strategies of power neutralize ethical and political problems by reconstructing them in objective scientific discourse. The successful circumventing of oppositional discourses did not result from a simple redefining of birth-



or population-control policy in terms of the interest of the target groups, but in rendering certain policies more scientific and dislocating ethical questions.

In modern society science is the truth setter: we listen when a man in a lab coat explains the workings of a new detergent or acne cream. As birth control “progressed” to population control, the bond with science became increasingly central. During the early stages, an attempt to create an association with science was made. For instance, Gordon cites the following motto of a poster, circa the early 1940s(?), from the Birth Control Federation of America:<sup>26</sup> “Modern Life Is Based on Control and Science. We control the speed of our automobile. We control machines. We endeavor to control disease and death. Let us control the size of our family to insure health and happiness”; this exemplifies perceived legitimation through partnership. Later, validation, along with increased legitimation, was sought. As the movement became more professional, boards or committees were established (e.g., the Population Council in 1952) to oversee the increased funding of scientific research in the population-control field via an appeal to the scientific method and compliance with the “regime of truth.” Finally, science began to make pronouncements (render its verdict). Correct family sizes, “too high” or “too low” growth rates, population targets, and so on were all established by the normalizing power of “objective” science. There is now an “ought” floating around villages and shantytowns that governs the way people think about the family. The strength of this “ought”—its degree of congruence with societal standards for the production of truth statements—formulates the basis for the authority by which state, intergovernmental, or nongovernmental apparatuses are able to plan family and population sizes. It also “justifies” the use of ideological manipulation and, in some instances, coercion to realize these plans.

Normalization in the realm of population control involved the production of new social relations of power. What was once a personal, familial, or social (at the local level) matter became the territory of scientific investigation and, ultimately, normalizing prescriptions. In the guise of providing a service, of reducing “anomalies,” of objective and extensive data collection, families and societies were rendered transparent and traversed by knowledge. Dreyfus and Rabinow wrote that “an essential component of technologies of normalization is that they are themselves an integral part of the systematic creation, classification, and control of anomalies *in the social body*” (emphasis mine);<sup>27</sup> in the workings of bio-political power, one could also say *of the social body*. To classifications of anomalies established earlier, such as the delinquent or pervert, one could now add class or ethnic groups with “too high” a population growth rate, and even families with “too many” children. Once these norms have been produced it remains that the abnormalities must

be isolated and corrected. Rectification is the particular sort of regulation that the apparatuses and welfare institutions of bio-politics do.

It must be mentioned that “anomalies” do not always cooperate with the forces that would expunge them. In the act of distinguishing or drawing a line between what is normal and what is anomalous or perverse, the discourses of normalization “also make possible the formation of a ‘reverse’ discourse.”<sup>28</sup> It is in this reverse discourse that one finds the seeds of resistance. Having been set apart from other groups through quantitative classifications such as “too high fertility rates” or “excessive family size,” these groups seized (identified with) these labels, stripped them of their normative force, and asserted themselves, resisting control. Rural peasants, for instance, asserted that they needed to produce many children—in the first place, to insure a certain number of survivors, and in the second place, in order to increase family farm production. These reverse discourses, supported by health officials, economists, and other “experts,” channeled attention back to the problems of development that population-control discourse had sought to elude or minimize, namely the poor health of rural populations, the lack of health facilities, the low productivity of peasant labor, the unavailability of modern agricultural inputs, and other factors limiting production.

#### *Disciplinary Power: The Subjection of the Third Worlder*

The second of the two poles constituting bio-power is the disciplining of the human body. The matrix of sites analyzed by Foucault—barracks, schools, hospitals, and prisons—were the places where the disciplines developed because they were the first settings in which the discourses of the human sciences played a crucial role in the determination of human behavior. Development activities are a prominent new setting. It would be difficult to remain faithful to a rigid interpretation of Foucault’s techniques of discipline in the context of development practices. Perhaps, as well, it can be said that the art of discipline has matured beyond a functional shaping of the actual movements of the body. The significant part of disciplinary power has assumed a more general form while guarding its original objective (normalization) and subject (the individual). The key to disciplinary power, in contrast to bio-political power, is the manner in which it works at the personal level, where it “makes *calculable* individuals of us all.”<sup>29</sup> The word “calculable” is used because the individual is able to be judged in the technical sense (comparison based upon standards is possible) and because the individual submits to judging in the existential sense (the individual forms part of a relationship with an “other-judge”).

Foucault says that the “chief function” of disciplinary power is to “train.”<sup>30</sup> One recognizes here a key element of development pro-

grams: training, in a broad sense, not limited to just instruction or schooling but to directing the growth of something, and not applied in just occupational or productive spheres but to a diverse array of activities. The unquestioned prestige of the idea of development opens doors to a combination of activities and discourses that have the effect of reshaping everyday life in ways unintended, unforeseen, and even (especially) unseen. In fact, development efforts are uniquely efficient colonizers on behalf of central strategies of power. They are designed to integrate the most marginalized regions and groups, those that remain relatively untouched by outside forces, and to penetrate local organizations and power structures. It is a peculiar twist, then, that those small development organizations that operate on a grass-roots level, those often considered to be the most effective and certainly the most sensitive to local populations, appear to be potentially the most dangerous if a Foucauldian sense of power is used to examine development anew.

In development, the mechanism that connects the “trainers” and their knowledge to individuals lacking a certain knowledge is the project. These come in a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. Those most germane to this discussion are the ones that operate in a localized fashion, dealing with individuals (as opposed to megaprojects such as the construction of a hospital or the damming of a river). One significant trait of projects is that intervention is made on behalf of a problem—the correction of an “anomaly”—which is identified in and constructed by specific discourses. Perhaps agricultural yields are too low or too much wood is consumed in meal preparation or there is a need for additional income. Of course, there are “beneficiaries”—the population of region X or the inhabitants of village Y—but they receive only secondary focus. The central axis of the project is rectification—the “objective” assessment of a situation in which there is a “need” and the “scientific” prescription of a set of actions intended to remedy said need. (Often, people enter the equation only as a limiting factor, the “level,” capacities, and resources of whom must be evaluated in order to design an appropriate and effective solution.) One might object that this stereotyping of projects is nowadays inaccurate. True, more enlightened projects, which incorporate local participation, eliminate this need-problem-solution connection, but the things that interventions *do* remain essentially unchanged.

The abundant shapes of development activities make it impossible to discuss their effects in detail. Besides, what is of greater importance is an analysis of their effects in kind. First, however, several omissions must be noted because some areas of development work do not directly pertain to a discussion of disciplinary power. Educational programs, for example (particularly formal ones), have as their object the mind, not

the body, of the individual. They compare, select, rank, mold, and judge not action but thought. (And it would be another matter altogether to examine the role of regimes of truth, in addition to colonial heritage, in the formation of the strong Western bias throughout Third World education.) Another interesting discussion could cover efforts aimed at creating new forms of social organization such as cooperatives and women's associations, but these activities do not primarily involve a regulation of bodies. Interestingly enough, though, the restructuring of localities with reference to a developmentist perspective establishes forums where disciplinary training takes place. It can be said, perhaps, that they act to increase the efficacy of the disciplines. They also engender peer pressure and provide another justification—"for the sake of the cooperative"—which facilitates acceptance of modification.

As far as training is concerned, much of the process of development involves a transfer of technologies and techniques from development agent to beneficiary. With new technology, the body must be re-educated; it must enter into new relationships not just with some thing but with new knowledges (how to operate, maintain, and repair that thing) and the power relations attached to those knowledges (dependence upon the possessors of "thing knowledge" or spare parts). Whether it is a tractor able to outwork six horses or a modern loom capable of outweaving traditional models, the body surrenders in order to be shown how to sit, where the feet should be placed, how to move the arms, and so on. However inconsequential these instructions may appear, they are the primal penetration and conditioning in the process of creating docile bodies (a clearer example is that of the military, where obedient minds are produced by training rigidly obedient bodies).

As with new technology, new techniques carry with them new knowledges, and hence new power relations, but they act more upon the physical activities and practices of an individual than upon singular movements. For instance, the agricultural extension agent is linked to the peasant farmer in an effort to produce better yields. The peasant is taught by this "other-judge" how to correctly place a seed in the ground, at what distance the next seed should be placed in the ground, and so forth. Hence, the body's procedure (set of movements) in completing a certain task and the mind's understanding of this task have been altered. Many other trainer-judges also enter the individual's life: "health worker-judges," "home economist-judges," and "forester-judges," to name but a few. With them come the inequitable power relations, which modify in accordance to the dictates of scientific discourse the way the individual defecates or prepares a meal or collects fruit from a tree.

What are the effects of these developmental disciplines? What do they do besides help people to live more healthy or economically productive

lives (in the successful cases). In the first instance—and these are not quite effects—are activities that accompany disciplinary power and are its prerequisites. First, the lives and lifestyles of the beneficiaries must become transparent: appropriate treatment is predicated upon an accurate diagnosis, which requires both comprehension and familiarity. Long before any actual programs are set in motion, a group or village becomes the object of relations of power emanating from the process of development. This object then becomes the object of knowledge. An investigation is made (often, these days, in multidisciplinary teams), which traverses and reveals persons or a people: the forces of knowledge penetrate both public and private realms such as cropping patterns, tool use, marriages, house construction, sexual customs, clothing, religious beliefs, and local government. Second, masses must be separated into units; descending individuality must be induced. When development workers, especially but not exclusively those working for the state, enter a population (e.g., a village), the first task entails an administrative penetration: the periphery must be linked to the center. Names, addresses, family histories, and other general information are recorded as files or dossiers are opened. Next, information is taken relevant to the activity involved, such as field location, past harvest sizes, and type of soil in the case of agricultural extension work. In the end, these dossiers are multiplied by interventions in a number of different areas.

In the second instance, having acquired this knowledge, experts analyze it with reference to knowledge they already possess (established scientific discourse and Western methodologies), and begin prescribing and proscribing through the introduction of “safer,” “more efficient,” “healthier,” “better,” “newer,” and “proven” ways of doing things. After passing judgment on the way a certain population performs X, then, a new norm or standard is established by which each individual’s performance of X can be evaluated. Follow-up visits or examinations can be used to monitor compliance, but often the individual learns to make this evaluation on his or her own. Techniques of individualization and normalization as effects of discipline depict a side to development activity that is not emancipatory in nature, but, to the contrary, resembles Foucault’s conceptualization of a society in which individuals are crisscrossed by power relations and governed by self-monitoring technology.

In the third instance, disciplinary power relations produce effects not specifically intended but of possible benefit to other strategies of power. First, as has been previously discussed, a general malleability or predisposition to power relations accompanies the exercise of specific disciplinary power. For example, marginalized individuals are prepared by local development procedures for mobilization in service of central economic forces of production or national development projects. Second, a certain standard power relation is set that governs future

encounters with social scientists, development workers, or other authority figures: the statements of anybody wearing French shoes and carrying a clipboard (for instance) are imbued with a certain meaning and importance, subordinating the peasant or bidonville dweller.

In the fourth instance, although development in relation to a way of performing *a specific* task X might involve the introduction of a better way Y from an outside culture (e.g., sowing millet in lines instead of pell-mell), an accompanying and unspoken hierarchization is produced between the ways, *in general*, of performing tasks in the two cultures as these introductions multiply. The hierarchization of cultures that characterizes the categorization of “developed” and “developing” nations is not imposed from the top down but is the sum (effect) of a multiplicity of localized hierarchizations or judgments regarding economic, political, social, and cultural aspects. Finally, even though many of the norms erected by relations of disciplinary power in the context of development are based not on the discourse of the human sciences but on that of the natural sciences (and therefore “really are true”)—boiling drinking water to kill bacteria, using fertilizer to increase yields, and so on—the effects mentioned above are still produced. Problems occur because these “objective” truths are not necessarily neutral; when these truths are applied to real-world situations they bear and promote a host of assumptions and values about the needs, wants, and aspirations of people (in addition to the aforementioned power relations).

Taken together, the effects of developmental disciplines, such as those discussed with reference to population-control programs, increasingly create a Third World population that is “accumulated.” This situation might seem normal, as the goal of much development work is the accumulation of capital. And capital *is* being accumulated as a complement to the fact that humans are being harnessed. The problem is that this capital accumulation is characterized by a continuous flow of wealth from Third World to First World (and from periphery to center), a process dependent upon microrelations of power and, therefore, partially explained by the developmental disciplines. As has been pointed out, and as Foucault rigorously documents, an administrative penetration (the first aforementioned instance), a social scientific normalization (the second instance), and the hierarchization of power relations vis-à-vis authority figures or experts (the third instance) are all necessary components of an ordered, “docile,” population. Subjects thusly prepared do not cause the flow of wealth to the First World, but neither do they interfere with it. If the majority of development efforts did not fit into and help constitute overarching strategies of world domination, if they disrupted the *net* transfer of capital that underpins the superficial transfer called “aid,” then such activities would be obstructed, and they would find no footing in the weave of strategies.

Whether one speaks in terms of economic dependency, the economic “world system,” or the schism between centers and peripheries, much of the inequitable flow of wealth is blamed on politicoeconomic factors such as declining terms of trade or the lack of technological transfer. One can also maintain that certain facets of the developmental disciplines contribute. Population-control programs, for instance, were promoted as a way of safeguarding the flow of wealth from the “teeming hordes” of the future. More specifically, in response to the discourse of population control, which identified the reduction of demographic pressures as the solution to poverty, development efforts were shifted away from increasing the productivity of Third World nations. Additionally, the hierarchical valuation (the aforementioned fourth instance) of the two worlds, along with processes (to be discussed below) that generate an inferior Third World subject, establish a vibrant market for First World products, even though they are usually more expensive: people would rather buy X from France or the United States than from their homeland.

Before moving on to the next section it should be mentioned that in his fixation upon the positive effects of power, Foucault seems to neglect that production, as in the production of a norm or docile body by disciplinary power, *necessarily* implies destruction as well. In conjunction with the introduction of new power relations, the process of development entails an incomprehensible amount of destruction or, at the least, discrediting and subordination of local techniques, knowledges, practices, and lifestyles (however, not all of this loss is lamentable). This point merits more consideration than it is given, but I will forgo expounding further because the destructive capacity of development is well documented elsewhere, particularly in the spate of recent work concerning culture and development.

What of development work that expressly avoids destructiveness? A few alternative approaches to development seek to borrow or build upon local technology and local knowledge, thereby preserving or reinforcing them. This is true, and destruction is certainly mitigated, but these approaches still involve a judgment or validation of local knowledge according to “scientific” standards. Western experts often support local practices that appear, at first glance, to be backward or unproductive, but local knowledge and ways of performing X are not accepted on their own terms, only when their efficiency or appropriateness or other redeeming characteristic is demonstrated in the terms (regime) of the development process itself. In other words, there is still a subordination. For example, high birth rates in the Third World were reprehended for years until economists validated the practice, revealing it to be a form of social security for the future and a way of increasing family farm production. Guilty until proven innocent—local knowledge and

practices are held suspect until they are championed by the outside using the science or language of experts.

### *Discourse and Subjection*

The specialized discourses that are directly associated with disciplinary power, particularly those of a technical or scientific nature (e.g., the discourse surrounding a change from tilling soil by hand to animal traction), do not circulate and interplay in the same fashion as the more general discourses that were linked to the development of birth or population control. Their veracity, thoroughly produced, is nonetheless not quite so contingent upon a nexus of physical and historical events. However, just as it is with bio-political power relations, where practices such as sterilizations or implantations of intrauterine devices were products of discourses on family planning, the general discourse of development paves the path for the specialized discourses that produce power relations of domination at the level of the individual—the relations manifested in the adoption of behavior and practices that are “more developed.”

Thus far most of the discussion in this paper has been centered around the level of discourse that produces practices, not the level of discourse underlying this secondary level, making it possible. Indeed, the fundamental strategies of discourse that enable development and constitute the parameters in which development activities take place—“the discourse of development”—are beyond the scope of this paper. However, a brief explanation must be given of the deeper relationship between development and discourse.<sup>31</sup>

To begin with, one must understand (and perhaps this has already become apparent) that power-knowledge relationships are transmitted and produced through the medium of discourse: “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together.”<sup>32</sup> Second, the influence of discourse stems from the way in which its subject is both active and acted upon. The ultimate product of power, the sum of its multiple points of contact with the individual and the social body, is the subject itself: “The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces.”<sup>33</sup> Finally, the subject produced is a reflection of the fact that discourses produce power-knowledge relations that are characterized by inequality. As Foucault remarks, “we should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects.”<sup>34</sup>

The systematic discourse coterminous with development is the means by which the “Western developed countries have been able to manage and control and, in many ways, even *create* the Third World politically, economically, sociologically, and culturally” (emphasis mine).<sup>35</sup> In the



Third World, poverty-stricken masses (as they are so often called, even by themselves) form a group that has been created by the negative and positive facets of power, by forces like surplus extraction and the generation of a category that has been molded by discourse and has, in turn, molded the subject of that discourse. Certainly one cannot deny the existence of certain political, economic, and social conditions of existence that threaten life itself, but “underdevelopment,” one interpretation of these conditions, is a construction. One of the consequences of this creation is that the specialized discourses that shape the practices associated with development programs are imbued with meaning and are rendered potent.

The discourse of underdevelopment is both tactically productive and integrated strategically: it meshes quite nicely with the superstructures of power it helps to institute. On the one hand, the First World has been able to retain, if not strengthen, its presence in the Third World. On the other hand, in the name of development cooperation, the elite of the Third World have been able to justify their collusion with various elements (governments, nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations) of the First World, often to their own personal benefit. Additionally, many Third World state services are furnished or buttressed by First World organizations, freeing funds to be spent on the defense of the government.

Third World nations share much more than political instability or a colonial legacy or economic dependency and backwardness—a mode of self-perception, for instance. First, there is the self-perception of the social body, which comprehends itself in terms of the developed-developing dichotomy. This involves swallowing the normative paradigms of development and accepting a manner by which societies are judged. Hence, one can logically assert that the United States is more developed than Mali (in the linguistic system of development, such a statement is actually a tautology), but a reversal of the statement appears unreasonable or nonsensical. And yet one could think of a set of factors to be used in evaluating societies that would make Mali more developed than the United States, such as violent crime rates, suicide rates, levels of drug abuse, treatment of the elderly, and so on.

Second (and herein lies the crux of underdevelopment) is the creation by development discourse of the individual who perceives himself as being poor, lacking, and part of an inferior culture. This self-perception is the difference between people living under a certain set of physical conditions today and people living under those same conditions fifty or one hundred years ago—the “I am poor” syndrome. A century ago it would have been impossible for forces at the “center,” be it at the global or national level, to export development to the “periphery” without resorting to imposition. Today, to the contrary, the insidiousness of

the way development discourse operates is that this control of life in peripheral populations has been invited and welcomed. Furthermore, the danger of such a self-perception is that it proves self-fulfilling. The perception of poverty (the construct) induces poverty (the conditions).

During the colonial era, the First World considered its colonial subjects to be "primitive." This conceptualization supported "the need to be governed." Formal political independence meant that new relations of power came into existence, breaking old relations of domination and necessitating new ones. The discursive shift surrounding development, from "primitive" to "poverty-stricken," helped to install these new relations, characterized by an indirect control through positive mechanisms, which have superseded colonial rule by force. The dependency against which the process of development is supposed to fight but instead induces is in its primary instance neither economic nor political, but existential. It is rooted in the values and assumptions that constitute the perception of a world comprised of developed and developing nations. Increased dependency, therefore, is inherent even in strategies of development that increase economic self-sufficiency and political independence. Dependence begins with the outward gaze.

### **Another Development**

Several commonly used approaches to criticizing development can be identified as starting points for the lines of criticism traced out in this paper. It is a relatively easy affair, given the domination of the Third World by the First World, to situate development at the center of this unequal relationship. Certainly there is some founding to the notion that development is being employed as a neocolonialist tool. What I have tried to demonstrate is that it is much more of a tool than even hard-line neocolonialists would have dreamed. It is not simply misguided policies, resulting in, for example, soaring debts or dependence upon a single export, which liken the process of development to a modified continuation of colonial rule, but the establishment of subtle power relations and profound hierarchizations. A second tack of criticism aims at the (Western) values underlying our conceptualization of development, which are carried into foreign cultures by development activities. I have endeavored to deepen this attack by passing beyond the level of Western strategic goals (e.g., modernization or lowering infant mortality rates) and question the very value of development. Finally, many attacks on development are based on an analysis of what development does. It is with this critical perspective that the bulk of this paper is concerned, adding to it a Foucauldian twist.

Most efforts to understand what development does produce somewhat superficial results. Development activities are criticized for not

accomplishing their objectives (e.g., irrigation projects that do not provide enough water to meet the needs of the area irrigated) or for causing unwanted side effects (e.g., industrialization projects that hasten the rural exodus). In both cases, only the execution or results, not the goals, are questioned. The shortcomings in these criticisms can be attributed to an incomplete conceptualization of power, which precludes seeing the full effects of development. It is through a Foucauldian conceptualization of power that another side of development has been revealed, one much less technical or scientific and much more political and ethical—in fact, one much less desirable. Even the best of development projects, irrespective of their content, engender power relations and help constitute strategies of domination.

The paper really goes no further than offering this second interpretation of development. It does not aim at supplanting more accepted notions of development, but merely jostling their self-evidence a bit. It certainly does not intend to address the issue of political practice, but merely to expose a tool that enables those involved to denaturalize external claims bearing down upon them (and their behavior, truths, and so on) or to understand the workings of power in such a way as to open new avenues of struggle. By revealing and thereby weakening power at the ongoing level of subjugation, one lightens the pressure of “truths” upon the shoulders of the oppressed, allowing their own truths to emerge. This disclosure is a limit of the role of the intellectual. To go further, to prescribe (all too close, both phonetically and functionally, to “proscribe”) or outline a path of resistance would be to contribute to the constant sequence of failure/reform, which reinforces the development paradigm. Playing the role of advisor entails once again substituting (from afar) a “more acceptable” or “more effective” course of action for the present one, precisely what this paper argues against.

Let there be no doubt, however, that this paper favors the notion of local resistance. To the extent that strategies of domination are constructed from the bottom-up, real changes can be achieved only if these strategies are dismantled in that same direction by the people affected, not outsiders. Resistance must begin at the ongoing level of subjugation—the level at which one finds domination of everyday life being practiced. Resistance must target certain unequal relations of power; it must target, among other things, the process of development.

One of the many ways that Foucault characterizes modern society is as a “carceral archipelago.”<sup>36</sup> What he had in mind was an extensive set of islands of power relations—family, school, workplace—which became colonized by dominant forces such as the state, trapping the individual in order to render him/her more docile. Foucault does not imply a program of societal stages, but he does suggest a distinction between modern and traditional societies. In traditional societies, the

exercising of power, conforming largely to negative or restrictive power, is clumsy, inefficient, and overtly repressive. Modern society is characterized by the "circulation of effects of power through progressively finer channels, gaining access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures, and all their daily actions."<sup>37</sup> In other words, there has been a significant increase in domination accompanying what is normally considered progress.

The push to modernity warrants cautious consideration, not enthusiastic participation. Clearly, most Third World nations have not yet been modernized with respect to the prevailing form of power relations. Systemic violence has yet to be rendered obsolete by rule by normalization; docile, self-governing individuals have yet to be produced by power relations. But in their quest for what is out there, in their quest for development, Third World nations are becoming modern. It is in this sense that one may understand the process of development as the increased governance of the Third World.

### Notes

1. Henryk Skolimowski, "Power: Myth and Reality," *Alternatives* 9(1983): 43.
2. Michel Foucault, in Colin Gordon, ed., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 92.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 92–102.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 197 ff.; see also Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock, 1970).
9. Foucault, note 2, p. 82.
10. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 139.
11. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 136.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
14. Foucault, note 2, p. 94.
15. Foucault, note 11, p. 131.
16. Foucault, note 10, p. 25.
17. Foucault, note 11, p. 221.
18. Foucault, note 10, p. 143.
19. These factors are detailed in Linda Gordon, *Women's Body, Women's Right* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976).
20. *Ibid.*
21. Bonnie Mass, *Population Target: The Political Economy of Population Control in Latin America* (Toronto: Latin American Women's Group (LAWG), 1976), p. 36.

22. Ibid.
23. John Karefa-Smart, "Health and Family Planning in Africa," *POPULI* (UNFPA) 13(1986): 22.
24. Ibid.
25. The shift in this discourse is traced more thoroughly in Gordon, note 19.
26. Ibid., p. 345.
27. Herbert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982).
28. Foucault, note 10, p. 101.
29. Jeff Minson, "Strategies for Socialists? Foucault's Conception of Power," in Mike Gane, ed., *Towards a Critique of Foucault* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 113.
30. Foucault, note 11, p. 170.
31. For a more detailed study, conducted in Foucauldian terms, see Arturo Escobar, "Discourse and Power in Development: Michel Foucault and the Relevance of His Work to the Third World," *Alternatives* 10(1985).
32. Foucault, note 10, p. 100.
33. Foucault, note 2, p. 74.
34. Ibid., p. 97.
35. Escobar, note 31, p. 384.
36. Foucault, note 11, p. 297.
37. Foucault, note 2, pp. 151–152.

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