

# Power: Interpersonal, Organizational, and Global Dimensions

Monday, 07 November 2005

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**TOPIC:** How is power institutionalized and exercised?

review of Foucault's methodological constructions thus far:

examine power at its **extremities**

power not as conscious intention of actors but the point at which intention has disappeared and we have **institutionalized** it in habits and practices

power is something that **circulates**, never localized – individuals are not nucleus of power, we are simultaneously the producers and the objects

today, we have the fourth methodological construction...

p. 99, #4 of Foucault packet

**ascending analysis of power** – start with the everyday, micro-transactions of everyday life (e.g. between friends, consumer/shop owner, student/teacher) and work our way up and see how these relationships are embedded in larger institutional structures

start from the bottom rather than the top

point: you can't prove anything by looking at the top

In other excerpts, Foucault talks about truth/power again. In *The History of Sexuality*, he argues that the obsession with sexuality is created by our efforts to understand it and possibly prohibit it. Our prohibitions about sex do not limit it, but excites it, invites constant preoccupation with it. Sex becomes the central topic of our preoccupation. *Even when we claim to be prohibiting something, we are bringing it to our attention.*

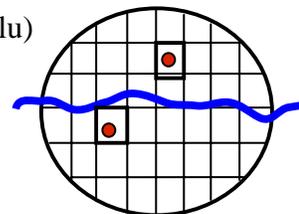
How does power operate in the modern world?

Foucault is often referred to as the “cartographer of power.” He located the spaces where power has operated and discussed the transformations from the medieval to the modern forms of power – (a) **from control of bodies to control of minds**; (b) **from control of bodies to control of spaces**.

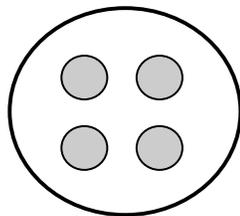
**sites of power = bodies, minds**

**kinds of power = exclusion, discipline, governmentality**

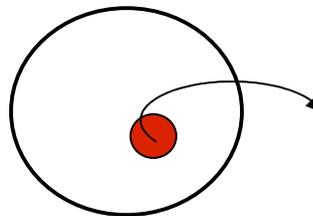
- ◆ **exclusion** – separation and casting out of people (e.g. lepers, lunatics from 18<sup>th</sup> century until present), **strict boundaries of in and out**
  - community is made pure
  - purity protected by getting rid of contaminated members
- ◆ **discipline** – e.g. London under the plague where city was divided up and quarantined, *see diagram* (Bush recently invoked this for avian flu)
  - control plague by controlling movement of people
  - this was a form of separation/boundaries but also the beginning of discipline because it was based on the principle of



- organization and ordering, **arranging bodies within space**
- organized like military into regiments, areas – the community regarded as organized, disciplined machinery, regimentation in factories, schools,
- disciplining also through categorization, knowledge and normalization creating categories for organization.
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- **◆governmentality** – operates with the notion of free mobility rather than regimented control, the “liberal citizen” who cannot be regimented
- *not* purity (exclusionary) or ordered (disciplinary) but instead based on the notion of a freedom that cannot be governed by imposed constraints
- the dream of a **free but governable subject** – the paradox of liberal power
- like Marx: we are “free” citizens forced to sell our labor; free citizens who need moral regulation (e.g. as global capitalism spreads, so too does the discourse or moral self regulation)
- Foucault: we are free mobile subjects but there is danger everywhere – what we do is create **zones of privacy/ trust/ contained risk** with rules of participation (e.g. in the mall; in the laboratory)



governmentality  
(zones of privacy)



exclusionary  
(cast off deviant)

Example: In the early 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century with modern science developing, **science was a private activity** done in people’s homes.

Tycho Brahe – laboratory was a castle especially built for him

- science was not done in any public way
- no mechanism to show to the world the results of their research
- how did people come to trust what the scientists said?
- people could come to observe the experiments (viewing area surrounded the lab) but you had to be invited, and you were invited only if you were known
- **very private performance, regulated access to the space**

Robert Boyle – invited other nobles to his house to see what he discovered

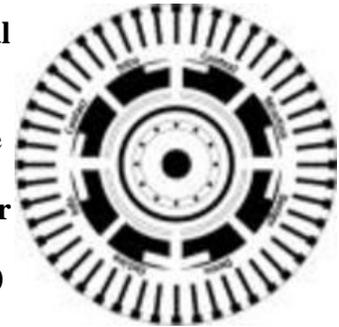
- private grounds in which science was done
- those who observed and reported it to world were those who were invited

19<sup>th</sup> century – the laboratory becomes a place for **professionals**

- start to be places in universities and institutes
- modern labs, unlike the private ones, exemplify both the "**discipline**" **pattern of regulation of space** (e.g. architectural layout modules that get reproduced in one lab after

another – it is just a version of the grid in a highly regimented space) and the **governmentality** pattern (within the lab there are rules, you do not have to enter, but if you do, there are rules of participation)

Foucault described this disciplining of space in terms of the **panopticon** (*see diagram*), the regulation of space where there is **total control**. Even in labs, everything has been **organized for a purpose**. This is the kind of regulation of space that is exemplified in the factory. The grid that organized London during the plague is the same principle of discipline that organizes the factory – the **regulation of bodies in space**. We are still in a form of discipline that **regulates our capacity to move in space**. Factories are designed to control human behavior. Even in a 1929 typing office or the Fiat laboratories in 1960 or modern science labs or school desks in a row – all are in the same category of bodily/space control.



pubs and bars – beginning of the movement from discipline to **governmentality** (M. Valverde, *Diseases of the Will*).

- long complicated debates in many governments on how to regulate the saloon
- in England, they regulated *access* to the saloon (restricted hours). Laws said what had to happen in that space (offer food, place to sit down) – this is how they tried to control the drinking instead of a direct act like U.S. 1919 prohibition. It was regulation so that **when you entered the physical space, your behavior was constrained and regulated**.
- governing impulse was *targeted on the establishment* and *incidentally* on the drinkers who would inhabit it
- move from the body to the mind and back to the space (and incidentally the body or the mind when it is in that space so that *space becomes the governing rubric*)

modern science buildings – vision of freedom, a sense of welcome  
beyond the welcomed area, the regulation begins, e.g. the “no access” sign  
regulated space vs. public space

**Foucault’s point:** *you don’t start with an analysis of where is or who has power, you start by looking at the signs around you, the organization of space and you ask what is happening here? what part of human behavior is being accessed or controlled?*

Foucault argues that discipline organized space but also organized minds by creating **theories of the normal**. How we move from bodies to minds to space is through the process of **normalization**.

Regulation is achieved by a variety of non-political **experts** and **authorities**, e.g. medical experts, professors, media. They give us information about what is the good/normal/beautiful/productive person. This information Foucault called **disciplining** because it comes from the academic disciplines – they give us a view of what is normal and this gets accumulated to produce places where these ideas are distributed (the disciplines) and then get worked into the fabric of life (spaces, activities, professions).

**Normalization through disciplinary knowledge** begins when we move from bodies to minds but then (historically) it becomes allocated spatially -- *the space is regimented not only by the physical layout but by the rules that govern the space and the behavior in it.* Once you enter that space, you are subject to the rules of that space. There need not be, but there can be, direct person-to-person appeals – **behavior is regulated by the organization of the space**, e.g. (1) you can enter or not, but *if* you enter, *x* is what will happen to you, and/or (2) this is what is expected of you.

Exclusionary and disciplinary methods have not disappeared, there are **cumulative effects**. Discipline and governmentality can work simultaneously. When you enter a space, your body will be organized and channeled in one way or another, but you as an actor in this society will come to **govern yourself** in light of the “expert” information of what is good. That is what we mean, ultimately, by governmentality. **Subjects that govern/discipline themselves** to be normal, as expected (by make-up, lab practices, professional codes).

- ◆ **discipline** – space is the *means* to achieve the disciplining of bodies
- ◆ **governmentality** – space is the *object* – you have the freedom to come and go, to be disciplined or not; but techniques abound for governing oneself.

Space is something that can be organized so that behavior/selves become differently understood. We’ve transformed the old notion that space is empty, like a void according to Bacon or Descartes. With Foucault, **space is something which we produce through our regulation and construction of it** (also Lefevre). Space is a materialization of certain interests, certain designs, condensation of certain social relations (like Marx: embodiment of social relations of production). *Space is constructed with certain practices/purposes and certain persons in mind.* (Consider the Stata Center and the new Brain & Cognitive Sciences building – each is made of different materials and in a different layout, conveying ideas about what is to be done in the space and for whom it is being built.)

With a **uniform**, a person is constrained and at same time enabled.

- given an identity, taken out from masses
- that identity gives you a role, you must fulfill certain obligations lest you lose the identity/role
- though you have responsibilities, you have the freedom to do things you could not do before
- you are **both empowered and constrained**

example of NBA coach’s regulation of players’ wardrobe (mandate to wear suits)

- possibly takes away the icon of the jewelry and fashionable clothes but undermines (perhaps) the power of advertising to colonize
- business suit is the counter-culture because the “bling bling” clothing has become mainstream

Issue of uniforms in elementary and high school (Class discussion)

- what students think:
- equalizes the socioeconomic differences
- kids don’t even want to come to school already, and yet another imposition of rule
- but you can subtly introduce status
- changing symptom doesn’t change root cause
- uniforms cut out distraction
- uniforms as identity – help conform to role and expectations (e.g. student because in a uniform, or in a school building)

- freedom to associate with others – form groups based on styles
- Professor Silbey comments on the overarching theme of the discussion: we are **unique individuals with desires/tastes**, we are sponges, learning different roles – but we must ask, *where do we get these "unique" desires?* Why do people suggest this policy? What are they trying to do? Why? The argument that a moral code is imposed – suggests that there is no moral code imposed without the uniform? What is fashion?

There is an issue of **freedom** with this uniform debate...

- according to Foucault, where does power lie here? with this uniform discussion we find that **codes are deeply sedimented** (perhaps fashion is just a superficial sign, clothes as a performance mechanism)
- summarizing observation: strong attachment of what we purchase as **signs of what groups we belong to** – but it is what we *purchase*? Youth is shopping to achieve their identity.
- Foucault would ask us *why?* Why do we think we are immune to these forces that are telling us what is beautiful and good? We think it is each of us as an individual who is expressing an innate, authentic desire and so we fight for the right to express it – Foucault and Marx would tell us.
- The Foucauldian and Marian question is *why are we all shopping?*