

## Managerialism and Development

Sam Dallyn

**review of:** Sadhvi Dar and Bill Cooke (eds) (2007) *The New Development Management: Critiquing the Dual Modernization*. London: Zed Books. (PB: pp. 245, £17.99, ISBN: 9781842779224)

Does development need management? Or what is the relationship between development and managerialism? These are questions that might immediately occur to one when taking a first glance at Dar and Cooke's rich collection of essays entitled *The New Development Management*. But Hugh Willmott's foreword and Arturo Escobar's afterword (senior thinkers from the critical management studies – CMS – tradition and the critical development studies – CDS – tradition respectively) already begin to address such questions by placing the book in context. Dar and Cooke's first chapter establishes an important link between CMS 'alternative' perspectives, key thinkers of which being Alvesson and Willmott (1996), and post-development thinking and its central thinkers, such as Ferguson (1994) and Escobar (1995). However, this book is characterised by a broad and diverse range of theoretical approaches brought together with insight and critical acumen from post-colonial theory (Kenny), with particularly valuable and insightful ethnographies (Srinivas, Kenny and Dar), theories of elite formation and ideology in terms of managerialism (Murphy, Cooke, de Vries), critiques of the prevalence of audit culture and log frames in development (Kerr, Dar) and critiques of NGOs as complex subjects and purveyors of development and administration management (Lewis).

In many ways the book succeeds in situating critiques of Development and Administration Management (DAM), a subject of Cooke's (2002; 2003; 2004) earlier work, within a wider CDS tradition as having an important and valuable contribution to make, which I will begin by discussing. I want also to draw on some of the strongest aspects of the book when it engages with development actors ethnographically and critically. Finally though I want to bring out some tensions between this broad range of different theoretical approaches and studies of development which in turn raise questions about where critiques of DAM go from here.

In regard to what precisely critiques of DAM are against it is Parker (2002) that seems to set the terrain of the book and is drawn on in several of the contributions. As Parker (2002: 10) famously directs his critique at the market driven ideology of managerialism,

this fits the critiques of DAM since one can associate DAM with a certain aggressive neoliberal ideology that casts itself as technocratic. Through matrixes of development (Cammick, 2002) to log frames and the project cycle which present themselves as sciences of universal applicability (Kerr, p. 97) but are rather political instantiations of a neoliberal ideology.

The book is at its best in the earlier chapters where Lewis (p. 50) makes this kind of intervention in a historical analysis of NGOs and nongovernmentalism which he defines as a “policy ideology of comparative advantage that privileges ideas about efficiency and flexibility of nongovernmental actors”. The discussion around the role of NGOs is neatly situated around broader debates within managerialism and different more complex manifestations of this are brought out on the ground in particular micro contexts by Kenny, Srinivas and Kerr. One of the richest case studies is provided by Srinivas where she draws out the complex interaction between modernisation and tradition and their reconfiguration in the context of a close examination of the autonomous handlooms sector in India. In an insightful examination of the creation of spaces of tradition that represents a strange modern instantiation of tradition (Srinivas, p. 78), she draws on a modern and self-conscious carving out of a traditional space of a model village of craftspeople, Shilparamam. In this nuanced analysis questions of modernisation, managerialism, state government responsibility in protecting exclusive aspects of tradition and commercialism are all read through the narrative of the changing handlooms sector in India.

Similarly in a grounded, post-colonial, reflexive and ethnographic analysis Kenny examines the practices of a small, non-profit United Kingdom NGO, EWH which builds and designs information technology products. Using post-colonial theory she draws attention to the Western NGO’s characterisation of a non-Western Other in need of help (Kenny, p. 61) and as inferior. She also highlights what she characterises as silent discourses, which one might in a Foucauldian sense refer to as the nature and formation of the sayable (see for example: Foucault, 1991: 60; 1990). The two silent discourses refer to the unquestioned idea that EWH can save the Other and that the Other is in need of being saved, the second is the position of the EWH itself which was never seriously debated (Kenny, p. 67-68). Furthermore, she closes by noting the pressing need for an examination of the ‘micro-processes of power’ within contemporary organisations in a development context (Kenny, p. 72). It is this task which the book at its best performs in these two chapters and others through being faithful to the lived experiences of subjects and employing theoretical tools which are sensitive to and draw out some of the disjunctures, the gaps where things don’t fit in terms of policy models, between different levels of discourses and practices.

The significant tension in the book is between different forms of grand theorising (Murphy, Thorne and Kouzmin) and the more rooted ethnographic approach of particular NGOs and projects which draw out complexities and discontinuities on the ground in particular contexts. If there is a weaker part of the book in my view it is in some of the grander theorising that neither does justice to development experiences nor to the positions that are critiqued. While Murphy’s chapter does provide a clearer sense of what the book is against, global managerialism as an elite formation and ideology, there is a rather too easy totalising critique in operation here. Focusing on the World

Bank as the principle purveyor of development managerialism and its ideology he focuses on the interesting example of the Millennium Development Goals and the particular commitment to education for all (EFA) which originally came from UNESCO. He argues in the context of Niger that the EFA goals, at the World Bank's stipulation, led to the reductions in salaries of teachers and the creation of a group of underpaid contract teachers as well as a directing of resources away from secondary towards primary education (Murphy, p. 36-37). This critique of a transnational global managerial elite is nicely aided by the EFA example, however what is missing in this grand characterisation is the potential for disjunctures and differences within this elite ideology, perhaps between a more socially oriented development model and a more purely neoliberal one. These points of tension have often characterised the history of the World Bank's development as an institution (see for example Wade's (2001) account of the issues around the making of the 2000 World Development Report and Kanbar's resignation) but are missed when one paints too homogenous a picture of the ideology and practice of a global managerial elite.

Later in the book Thorne and Kouzmin (p. 134) equate postmodernism with a certain neoliberal agenda and then rather carelessly equate postmodernism with Foucault, which seems all the more pressing since in de Vries's following chapter care is taken to distinguish postmodernism from poststructuralism. This disavowal of the postmodern tends to seem at times like pulling apart a straw man since one is often not sure who or what is being referred to. Furthermore equating postmodernism with neoliberalism and globalisation raises the question of whether one is referring to a particular constellation of thinkers, or to a sociological condition, as can be found in Jameson and often Baudrillard. However, there is a lack of clarity in the argument here, if postmodernism tells us something about neoliberalism and globalisation, and I'm not clear what it is or whether it does, then it is at least sociologically valuable in that it reveals something significant about the way capitalism operates in the present world. Alternatively they might be using postmodernism to refer to a particular group of thinkers that might be associated with certain 'postmodern' developments in management theory, in which case what these developments are needs to be clearly established in relation to particular thinkers who reflect this, but the chapter does not provide any detail or evidence of this. Thus the critique of postmodernism in Thorne and Kouzmin's chapter seems beset with a confusing ambiguity because of a lack of definitional clarity.

De Vries's following chapter is theoretically intriguing and makes a radical almost disjunctive gesture where he calls for the 'promise of development' drawing on his experiences of Andean villagers and their unfulfilled desires for concrete improvements in areas such as infrastructure (de Vries, p. 172). De Vries misses the mark however with a pretty unreasonable characterisation of David Mosse's work. The de Vries critique runs that Mosse argues that analysis of development should be ethnographic and that the complexities of practice as it interacts with policy formation should be more closely examined. De Vries (p. 162) plays fast and loose here declaring that this is ultimately a legitimisation of the workings of global managerial elites. What Mosse (2004) I think is calling for here and throughout his work rather is much more grounded theory and complexifying the processes of policy legitimisation and the disjunctures between policy and practice in development. Indeed, I think this sort of critique is vital

for CDS and is most evident in his co-edited book with David Lewis *The Aid Effect* (2005). It is precisely this kind of critique that *The New Development Management* at its best achieves. As Dar and Cooke (p. 17) acknowledge at the start in reference to Dar's contribution, the task is to examine the "dispersed and ambiguous discursive field that is malleable, reconstructing and continually being real-ized by development workers in different ways and with very different effects in the field".

It is here too in the margins of practices and its consequences on given populations at the micro level of the field, that alternatives might emerge. These can only be engaged with I think through applying a grounded theory that is sensitive to subject actors and populations. Indeed while the book does not profess to have the intention of addressing alternatives (Dar and Cooke, p. 17) and rather focuses on bringing to light the problems with development managerialism at the end of certain chapters there are instances of disjuncture of how the managerial development script is not quite played out in practice. Kerr (p. 109) for example closes his analysis of log frames with a notion of the carnivalesque and humour as development workers mocked instrumental log frames in development through creating songs. While he also acknowledges the limitations of this kind of resistance casting it as anti and not counter hegemonic he points to it as an illustration that "what is represented by the powerful is not the final word on representation" (Kerr, p. 110). Indeed, it is potentially in the marginalised and disjunctive (Van den Berg and Van Ufford, 2005) practices of development in resistances on the ground in particular contexts to managerialism that the most damaging critiques of DAM as well as the beginnings of alternatives might emerge. Furthermore it is precisely this kind of theoretically grounded, ethnographically situated micro analysis and its complex interaction with bigger discursive pictures in development that I would argue is the most promising line of critique and methodology against DAM. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004), Harvie (2006) and Martin (1998), contributes to the growing leftist critique of corporatized Higher Education in advanced capitalist countries.

## references

- Alvesson, M. and H. Willmott (1996) *Making Sense of Management*. London: Sage.
- Cammick, P. (2002) 'The Mother of all Governments: The World Bank's Matrix for Global Governance', in R. Wilkinson and S. Hughes (eds) *Global Governance: Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Cooke, B. (2002) *Managing the Neoliberalization of the Third World: The case of Development and Administration Management*. Manchester: Institute of Development Policy.
- Cooke, B. (2003) 'A New Continuity with Colonial Administration: Participation in Development and Administration Management', *Third World Quarterly*, 24(1): 47-61.
- Cooke, B. (2004) 'The Managing of the (Third) World', *Organization*, 11(4): 589-615.
- Dar, S. and Cooke, B. (eds) (2008) *The New Development Management*. London: Zed Books.
- Escobar, A. (1995) *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Chichester: Princeton University Press.
- Ferguson, J. (1994) *The Anti-Politics Machine*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Foucault, M. (1990) *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1991) 'Politics and the Study of Discourse', in G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (eds) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mosse, D. (2004) 'Is Good Policy Unimplementable? Reflections on the Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice', *Development and Change*, 35(4): 639-71.
- Mosse, D. and D. Lewis (eds) (2005) *The Aid Effect*. London: Pluto Press.

Parker, M. (2002) *Against Management*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Van den Berg, R. and P. Q. Van Ufford (2005) 'Disjuncture and Marginality – Towards a New Approach to Development Practice', in D. Mosse and D. Lewis (eds) *The Aid Effect*. London: Pluto Press.

Wade, R. (2001) 'Making the World Development Report 2000: Attacking Poverty', *World Development*, 29(8): 1435-1441.

**the author**

Sam Dallyn is a PhD student in completion in Ideology and Discourse Analysis at the Department of Government, University of Essex.  
E-mail: sehdal@essex.ac.uk