Realising governmentality: Pastoral power, governmental discourse and the (re) constitution of subjectivities

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Realising governmentality: pastoral power, governmental discourse and the (re)constitution of subjectivities

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Abstract

Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality has been hugely influential in sociology and other disciplinary fields. However, its application has been criticised by those who suggest it neglects agency, and gives overwhelming power to governmental discourses in constituting subjectivities, determining behaviour, and reproducing social reality. Drawing on posthumously translated lecture transcripts, we suggest that Foucault's nascent concept of pastoral power offers a route to a better conceptualisation of the relationship between discourse, subjectivity and agency, and a means of understanding the (contested, non-determinate, social) process through which governmental discourses are shaped, disseminated, and translated into action. We offer empirical examples from our work in healthcare of how this process takes place, present a model of the key mechanisms through which contemporary pastoral power operates, and suggest future research avenues for refining, developing or contesting this model.

Introduction

New translations of the works of Michel Foucault, most notably his lectures at the Collège de France, have prompted a renewed interest in Foucault's oeuvre, and a reappraisal of the work of scholars who have developed Foucauldian ideas since his death. The lectures offer a glimpse of the direction of Foucault's thinking towards the end of his life, and some elucidation of concepts that were presented only in preliminary form in his previously published work. In this paper, we build on one of these concepts—pastoral power—with a view to addressing a set of

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critiques that have been levelled at both Foucault himself and his followers in the 'Governmentality School' over the last 30 years: their (alleged) inattention to human agency, to the means by which discursive power translates into the formation and self-formation of subjects, and to the role of experts and expertise in this process. We suggest that Foucault's notion of pastoral power offers a promising foundation for beginning to answer such critiques. We present and discuss an elaborated model of the operation of pastoral power previously put forward elsewhere (Waring and Martin 2016), offer an empirical demonstration of the application and analytical advantage of this model with examples from healthcare, and discuss its potential utility in wider contexts.

Foucault outlined his concept of pastoral power in several places, including his lectures on neoliberal governmentality, on confession, and in his essay on 'The subject and power' (Foucault 1982). Pastoral power is presented as distinctive in the role it bestows on certain individuals—pastors—in instructing, caring for, and deriving legitimacy from the communities they serve. Pastoral power is distinctive in the way it attends to the wellbeing and moral propriety of both individuals and communities simultaneously, and thus offers 'a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualization techniques and of totalization procedures' (Foucault 1982: 782). While its roots were in Christian institutions, Foucault argued that the Western state inherited and developed pastoral power, such that 'the multiplication of the aims and agents of pastoral power focused the development of knowledge of man around two roles: one, globalizing and quantitative, concerning the population; the other, analytical, concerning the individual' (Foucault 1982: 784). One can hear echoes of the more widely known concept of governmentality, which Foucault was developing in the same period. Indeed elsewhere, he describes pastoral power as 'a prelude to what I have called governmentality through the constitution of a specific subject, of a subject whose merits are analytically identified, who is subjected in continuous networks of obedience, and who is

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subjectified through the compulsory extraction of truth' (Foucault 2007a: 184–5). The lectures from the late 1970s and early 1980s (Foucault 2007a, 2008) offer a sense of how his various related inquiries of the period might interact and coalesce—and provide, we argue, building blocks for further theoretical development. We pick this point up later in the paper, but first, we outline the theory of governmentality, the way it has been developed by disciples of Foucault, and prominent criticisms of its perceived limitations.

Governmentality and its critics

The contours of the Governmentality School are well known, but it is worth briefly rehearsing some of the key features of neoliberal governmentality that Foucault himself identified, as developed subsequently by others. Foucault identified a crucial break between classical liberalism and neoliberalism in the way that the latter posited the market as *the* model of interaction for *all* social relationships. Whereas classical liberalism sees its task as 'freeing an empty space' (the market) from interference, neoliberalism's project is actively interventionist: it involves 'taking the formal principles of a market economy and referring and relating them to, projecting them on to, a general art of government' (Foucault 2008: 131). The intended outcome is the reorientation of state activity and social relations towards the economic, and correspondingly, the constitution of a new human subject, *homo economicus*, who conceives of herself in terms of economic optimisation and maximisation. As Brown (2015: 65) summarises, paraphrasing and then directly quoting Foucault, 'every subject is rendered as entrepreneurial, no matter how small, impoverished, or without resources, and every aspect of human existence is produced as an entrepreneurial one. "The individual's life itself—with his relationships to private property…with his family, household, insurance, and retirement—must make him into a sort of permanent and multiple enterprise" [Foucault 2008].'

These ideas formed the basis for a large body of work on governmentality in late

modernity that flourished in the 1990s and remains influential today. Central to this body of literature (often referred to as the Governmentality School) is a reading of Foucault that emphasises the decentred nature of power in contemporary societies, and rejects the notion that governmental power can be traced back, even in the final instance, to the state (Jessop 2007). Rather, governmentality is a form of power 'without a centre, or rather with multiple centres, power that [is] productive of meanings, of interventions, of entities, of processes, of objects, of written traces and of lives' (Rose and Miller 2008: 9). This literature draws attention to the way contemporary regimes of power rely less on externally imposed discipline and more on distributed technologies and discourses that act through an individual's own freedom (eg Dean 2003; Rose and Miller 1992). These works make a persuasive case for the power of discourses that constitute subjectivities by ruling through, not over, individual liberty. But they have been met with fierce counter-arguments, particularly from authors who find an anti-humanist or even structuralist logic in the notion that discourse constitutes subjectivity. For presentational purposes we group these interlinked critiques under three headings: the problem of agency; subjectification as a one-way, linear process; and the missing conduits of governmental power. In presenting these below, we seek to summarise critiques of the way that the theory of governmentality has been developed by followers of Foucault following his death, while also indicating how contradictions or lacunae in Foucault's published work have contributed to these perceived weaknesses.

1. The problem of agency

Most fundamentally, several critiques see in the writings of the Governmentality School an obscuring or even a rejection of the role of human agency in the production, reproduction and transformation of social relations. Caldwell (2005: 104) argues that Foucauldian writers 'eliminate or submerge "agency" in discursive practices,' resulting in 'passive "subjects" who

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are the conduits, bearers or sites of discourses of power/knowledge' (Caldwell 2007: 770). For Bevir (2011: 462), governmentality scholars seem 'reluctant' to recognise autonomous agency, preferring instead 'reified and monolithic accounts of modern power, with little sensitivity to diversity, heterogeneity and resistance within and over time.' Subjects are thus marginalised, such that 'any sense of agency lies primarily within discourse, language and calculation' (Newton 1998: 429).

Certainly, some of the issues highlighted by critics of the Governmentality School do relate to silences in Foucault's own work, which he was only beginning to fill at the time of his death. Central to Foucault's mission in his later work was to problematise various received understandings of the subject. He sought both to decentre the grand subject of progressive accounts of human history, such as the proletariat of Marxist historiography, and to destabilise any essentialist notion of an ahistorical, pre-discursive subjectivity that we might, through better self-understanding or by escaping the shackles of modernity, be able to recover. In essence, Foucault was arguing, there is no essence to human subjectivity, and so individual human subjects have a much greater autonomy in authoring themselves than Enlightenment thinking would suggest—if they can only see it. Thus Foucault's self-declared ambition in this intellectual pursuit was to make visible alternative ways of being: 'my role,' he said in a late interview (Martin 1988: 10), 'is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed.'

In seeking to erase the essentialising mark of Enlightenment thinking from the human subject, however, Foucault also obscured the means by which the subject might inscribe for himself something different. Decoupled from an understanding of subjectivity as a product of nature, or of class consciousness, or of some other pre-discursive force, what resources might the individual subject employ in cultivating her own subjectivity? Are subjects genuinely left

'freer than they feel' to exercise their agency in defining themselves, or does the loss of such an anchor leave them adrift, without defence against the tides of discursive power that seek to define their subjectivities for them? Foucault's response here, again intimated in his lectures and late writings, was that the route to self-formation—to alternative ways of being that might slip the shackles of dominant power relations—was to deploy the tools of the Enlightenment to alternative effect (Foucault 2007b). Contemporary human subjectivity may be the product of a historically constituted set of conditions and discourses, but immanent within this subjectivity is the capacity for critique and creativity, and the conception of how we might be other than what we are (Cadman 2010). Thus "new human capacities may come into existence as effects of forms of domination, only then to become bases of resistance to those same forms of domination" (Patton 1998: 71). Foucault's own genealogical method perhaps represents the epitome of such a critical disposition born of existing power relations: the capacity for reason and critique bequeathed to us by Enlightenment thinking deployed to identify the conditions of possibility that gave rise to our present, to identify its contingencies and dependencies, and to conceive of alternative ways of being and thinking (Foucault 2007b; Tamboukou 1999; Thompson 2003).

In this light, a pre-discursive subjectivity (a trans-historical notion of what it is to be human) is not a prerequisite for creative forms of agency that transcend the dominant power relations of the time. Nevertheless, writers in the Governmentality School have often been accused of failing to take this potential for agency seriously, painting instead 'a phantasmatic picture-without-subjects' (Jiménez-Anca 2013: 40) in which the individual subject is a 'tabula rasa' (Benhabib 1992: 217) whose identity and agency are nothing more than 'the prime effects of power' (Foucault 1980, quoted in Bacchi 2005: 200): the product of governmentality.

2. Subjectification as a linear, one-way process

Implicit in the critiques above are challenges to governmentality theorists' assumptions about how governing discourses translate into subjective identity and agency. While Foucault's intention may have been to show people that they are freer than they realise, the focus of writers in the Governmentality School has largely been on how, under conditions of late modernity, governing discourses infiltrate and occupy people's subjectivities and self-conceptions (Rose and Miller 1992). Yet exactly how this infiltration occurs is left implicit. Foucault's earlier work, such as his examination of disciplinary power (Foucault 1979), presents a clear, empirically visible route through which 'normal' conduct is defined and imposed on its subjects. The means by which governmental power translates into subjectivity, however, is not made so clear. For critics, a by-product of governmentality's anti-humanist construction of agency is a failure to put forward an adequate conceptualisation of how powerful discourses come to permeate individual subjectivities. Bevir (2011: 462) notes a strategic silence on such issues, with governmentality theorists deploying 'passive sentences and abstract nouns' to sidestep the question of exactly how subjectification happens.

Again, the translations of the Collège de France lectures throw new light on the process of subjectification under liberal governmentality as Foucault saw it, as a fostering of particular dispositions that include the capacity for critique and questioning. As Cadman (2010: 548) argues, however, much of the governmentality literature sees governmentality as stifling "the critical attitude by absorbing it *a priori* into its own rationality," such that freedom becomes "an effective artefact of government." Thus the impression from this literature is often that the 'policies, practices and techniques of rule [are] completed projects' (Rutherford 2007: 300), with a linear, one-way relationship from discourses of governmental power, through docile subjectivities permeated by those discourses, to social consequences. The enactment of their freedom by the subjects of liberal governmentality is often thus invisible in such accounts.

Prominent governmentality scholars have defended their emphasis, arguing that the proper focus of the Governmentality School is indeed the texts of government rather than the tricky issue of how they translate into conduct: 'if the alternative is thought to be the sociological study of how programs are actually implemented, […] then] governmental analysis does not aspire to be such a sociology' (Rose *et al.* 2006: 100). Yet there is truth in O'Malley *et al.*'s (1997: 510) earlier critique of the Governmentality School's exclusive focus on 'mentalities of rulers, a much more restricted inquiry than the institutions, procedures and practices of government found in Foucault's earlier work.' Real practices of government are found not in dominant discourses alone, but in the way these articulate, in often unpredictable ways, with local practices, subaltern discourses, and the subjective agency of individuals using their faculty for critique and self-formation (Foucault 2007b; Thompson 2003).

3. The missing conduits of governmental power

While proponents such as Rose might see the question of 'implementation' as beyond the remit of governmentality scholarship (Rose *et al.* 2006), they do nevertheless offer some comment on the role of certain intermediary agents who might be critical in the process by which discourses come to permeate subjectivities. In deliberately decentring the role of the state and of sovereign or disciplinary power in ensuring compliant subjects, governmentality scholars inevitably pose the question of how else governmental discourses might be transmitted into individuals' subjectivities, identities and actions. However, the answers they give to these questions are not always satisfactory. Rose and Miller (1992: 180) allude to the critical role of 'the activities and calculations of a proliferation of independent agents' who operate at arm's length from the state in perpetuating governmental discourses: 'philanthropists, doctors, hygienists, managers, planners, parents and social workers,' among others. These agents intervene between 'political strategies' and 'free citizens' in order to 'modulate events,

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decisions and actions in the economy, the family, the private firm, and the conduct of the individual person' (Rose and Miller 1992: 180). Conversely, such intermediaries also help to inform the construction and propagation of governmental discourses themselves: Rose (1999: 189) signals the role of 'experts of community' who 'advise on how communities and citizens might be governed in terms of their values, and how their values shape the ways they govern themselves.'

Yet the governmentality literature offers no more than a sketch of these instrumental conduits in the flow of governmental discourses 'down' into individual and collective subjectivities, and back 'up' into governmental discourses—feedback that might act as a corrective or realignment and thus ensure the continued effectiveness of governmentality as a mode of rule. Again, this may reflect Rose *et al.*'s (2006) declared position that questions of 'implementation' fall outside the Governmentality School's sphere of interest—or alternatively, it may reflect an under-theorisation of the mechanics of governmental rationality, and how power relationships beyond those of domination might operate in practice (Patton 1998). Either way, it seems an important lacuna if we are better to conceptualise the operation of governmentality in contemporary society, including both the processes by which subjectivities are (re)constituted by discourse, and the means by which governmentality self-regulates and remains stable.

Theorising the operation of governmentality: the promise of pastoral power

As noted above, Foucault's (1982) writing on pastoral power outlines, but does not describe in detail, a connection with governmentality. Other authors have deployed the concept of pastoral power within a governmentality framework, but have used it relatively descriptively, to connote expert power, without examining the constitution, position and identities of these 'pastors', and their relationships to their 'flocks' (eg Bejerot and Hasselbladh 2011; Bell and

Taylor 2003; Howley and Hartnett 1992; Wilson 2001). The publication of the Collège de France lectures, in which Foucault provided a more thorough scoping of pastoral power, permits a reappraisal of the concept, and the opportunity to address some of the limitations of the empirical application of governmentality theory as set out above.

In his 1977-78 lectures, Foucault (2007a) explicitly positions pastoral power in relation to the framework of governmentality. He portrays the pastoral power of the Church as a kind of proto-governmental regime which foreshadows the simultaneous focus on individual and population characteristic of neoliberal governmentality. Foucault (2007a: 169–71) fleshes out the role of the pastor, outlining four principles for the pastor's conduct: 'analytical responsibility' (the pastor must account for the behaviour of all of the 'flock', especially 'stray sheep'); 'exhaustive and instantaneous transfer' (the moral behaviour of the flock is the pastor's responsibility); 'sacrificial reversal' (pastors must be willing to sacrifice themselves for their flock); and 'alternate correspondence' (pastors' standing with the Church is enhanced most where they forge appropriate behaviours among the most sinful communities). Finally, pastoral power combines the disciplinary and subjectifying forms of power that Foucault examined in his earlier and later works respectively. On the one hand, the pastor is a 'relay' of surveillance and discipline; on the other, the pastor promotes self-reflexive, self-governing subjects.

Combining the content of his lectures with that of his written work, we can begin to plot the contours of pastoral power as not just a precursor to, but also a technology of, governmentality. Foucault (1982: 784) states that, in its contemporary form, pastoral power extends beyond the Church to encompass a whole range of actors, supported by 'a multitude of institutions,' with the objective of worldly achievements such as health, wealth and wellbeing, rather than posthumous salvation. The lectures point towards a form of power that is intrinsically social, built on an interdependent relationship between pastor and congregation. In essence, pastoral power might be one means whereby the connection between governmental

discourses and the constitution of subjects is effected—through the embodied, empirically visible agency of pastoral actors in concrete relationships of power with one another, not through some neglected, invisible, yet apparently all-encompassing discursive power. This understanding diverges significantly from the way in which the concept has been applied in the existing literature. Broadly, pastoral power has been equated with expertise (eg Wilson 2001) or surveillance (eg Howley and Hartnett 1992), without accounting for the integral connection between pastor and flock that is central to the descriptions given in Foucault's (2007a) lectures.

We have previously proposed a model of the operation of contemporary pastoral power (Waring and Martin 2016). Briefly, this model suggests that the work of pastors encompasses four principal activities: 'constructive practices', whereby pastors draw on textual and other sources of information that embody governmental discourses and—crucially—work to translate them for their own communities; 'inscription practices', whereby pastors engage in dialogue with their communities to articulate, legitimise and normalise a regime of truth and ensure its adoption; 'collective practices', whereby pastors seek to act as an integral part of their communities to embed and reproduce the new values and behaviours vaunted in governmental discourse and ostracise, then reintegrate, individuals who deviate; and 'inspection practices', whereby pastors adopt a more disciplinary approach to advancing the adoption of appropriate subjectivities in both their communities and themselves.

We developed this model through secondary analysis of empirical studies of the work of clinical and non-clinical leaders in healthcare, and the professional communities within which they operate (Waring and Martin 2016). Healthcare offers a rich area in which to develop such analyses. As an organisational field it typifies the array of actors and relationships that Rose and Miller (1992) describe in their genealogy of contemporary welfare and social government, with experts (doctors and other professionals) acting at arm's length from the state, in roles that are increasingly constructed in terms of advice and counsel to autonomous subjects, rather than

the more paternalistic, disciplinary relationship that once characterised medical care (Foucault 1973). Doctors' interactions with one another, too, are characterised less by relations of command and authority than by the professional 'collegium': an 'economy of regard' (Offer 1997) in which persuasion, peer regard, and informal sanction are the principal currencies (Martin *et al.* 2015). The distinguishing characteristics of healthcare, then, make it a potentially telling setting in which to undertake such analyses, particularly in terms of the increasingly complex relationships among a diversity of actors endowed with autonomy by contemporary governmentality, and thus the need for a framework that can account for the importance of social relationships in the production and reproduction of subjectivities and actions.

In the remainder of this paper, we suggest that the model of pastoral power might offer such a promising conceptual framework that begins to counter the critiques of governmentality summarised above, not just in healthcare but in other fields too. It offers, we argue, a basis for understanding how governmental discourses come to infuse the identities and activities of individuals and communities, how the multiple and sometimes competing discourses that characterise late modernity are prioritised and reconciled, and how governmentality itself is maintained, reproduced and adapted through time.

Rethinking governmentality through pastoral power

Our understanding of pastoral power begins to answer the critiques above by providing a conceptualisation of the relationship between subjectivity formation, at the individual and collective level, and discursive power; and also of the role of pastors as conduits and key agents in this relationship. It thus offers an alternative lens on the processes covered by the Governmentality School, focusing on the active work of pastors and other agents rather than taking the supremacy of governmental discourses for granted. It responds directly to critics such as Bevir (2013: 42) who perceive in governmentality scholarship an explanatory reliance

on the ill-articulated, 'mysterious, even occult, impact of an overarching "individualizing power",' and call instead for 'examples of particular agents applying norms in creative ways that transform power relations' (Bevir 2013: 38). Pastoral power shifts attention to the question of *how* discourses translate into subjectivity, action and material consequence—and to the active role of agents (pastors and others) in this process. We offer three examples from the governmentality literature to highlight its limitations in this regard, and to suggest how a focus on pastors and pastoral power might assist in reasserting the role of agency and specific agents in translating discourses into subjectivities and practices.

First, Donzelot's (1991) offers a historical account of the discourse of 'pleasure in work' (the notion that productivity, labour relations, and worker satisfaction might be improved through more humanistic, less confrontational organisational practices). He covers the rise of this discourse, from its origins in the work of scholars in the traditions of human relations and organisation development, to its co-optation into French labour policy. He presents a confluence of interests among employers, government and trades unions that give rise to dominant current discourses about the importance of workplace wellbeing, rehabilitation of those unable to work, and an alliance between management and workforce in the interests of productivity and progress. This is a quintessential Governmentality School account, which shows how social policy has moved towards 'thinking in terms of target groups, classifying populations according to the modes of care specifically appropriate for them, thus enabling these modes of care to be more rationally distributed so as to forestall the most expensive consequences [to economy and society] in subsequent individual treatment of illness' (Donzelot 1991: 277). This shift reflects a wider governmentality in which 'prevention clearly comes to assume the highest priority, turning the national territory into a field for planned policies of vaccination, regulation and control, and making society into the site of mobilization of each individual for the management of his own health and promotion of community

responsiveness to health problems' (Donzelot 1991: 278).

It is a compelling, well researched and convincing genealogy of this discourse; despite its age and its exclusive focus on French social history, it offers an insightful analytical framework for contemporary social policy developments in different contexts, such as welfare-to-work schemes, social-inclusion policies that see paid employment as the route to ensuring the integration of 'problem' groups such as single mothers, and citizen 'activation' (Clarke 2005). What it does not address (and does not seek to address) is the contestation of the genealogical emergence of these discourses at any level, from the construction of policy, through its implementation by professional and managerial intermediaries, to the response of the 'target groups' on the receiving end, those to be supported and reintegrated into productive roles in the workforce. This means that the account falls short of the claim that Donzelot makes for it: that it demonstrates 'a mobilization (in every sense of the word), rather than a reinforcement, of the psychological subject: the crucial factor is not so much a shifting of the frontiers between the normal and the pathological, as the making of these frontiers into items negotiable within society in terms of a pervasive reality-principle' (Donzelot 1991: 280). Donzelot claims, then, to have evidenced a remaking of the individual subject, but because his account focuses on the 'conditions of emergence' (the genealogy) of these discourses, to the neglect of their realisation in actual social relations, actions and identities, it can do no such thing. The focus on the rise of the discourse alone, and its establishment as a governing principle for a coalition of actors that spans government, employers and unions, results in the misrepresentation of *discursive* dominance as *material* impact on the agency of the actors it seeks to enrol. Exemplifying the points made by the Governmentality School's critics, the study conflates neoliberal consensus with pervasive impact on subjectivities. It assumes that such a discursive shift translates automatically into the subjectivity, identity, will and behaviour of individuals. In contrast, an approach informed by pastoral power might seek to account for

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both the presence and *potential* power of discourses of this kind and the interpretive work of pastors and others in translating it into action (or not): in this case, the role of workplace managers, family doctors, social workers, benefits officers and others in mediating policy and potentially giving rise to material consequences that are quite different from what might be suggested by a historically informed focus on governmental discourse alone.

A similar critique might be made of Knights and Collinson's (1987) comparative analysis of the impact of the discourses of managerial psychology and financial accounting on male, blue-collar workers in a manufacturing firm. Intriguingly, they suggest that the first discourse (managerial psychology) fails to resonate with those on the shop floor, whereas the second (financial accounting) is accepted unproblematically and comes to align with their subjectivities. Thus we have an unusual example in the Foucauldian literature of a powerful discourse that fails to land with the subjects targeted. Knights and Collinson's explanation for this disparity is that managerial psychology was out of line with the wider, societal discourses permeating these workers' sense of self: it was 'incompatible with [workers'] "machoism" and "down to earth" practical sense of reality' (Knights and Collinson 1987: 459). In contrast, the power of the discourse of financial discipline—which resulted in a surprising absence of resistance to a proposed redundancy programme—derived from its 'compatibility with the dominant unambiguously, materialistic and gender differentiated values of male manual workers on the shopfloor' (Knights and Collinson 1987: 472), and the individualistic, self-dependent identities to which they aspired. In essence, Knights and Collinson (1987: 474) argue, the key determinant of the relative success of the two discourses was their alignment with governmental discourses of the enterprising, self-actualising individual: 'largely as a result of a continuous engagement in the illusion of freedom that is promised in the potential achievement of financial independence, the modern labourer is constituted much like the bourgeoisie as a materially self-interested subject.'

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Again, Knights and Collinson's (1987) account is theoretically rich and compellingly presented, but again, it offers little by way of an understanding of how the discourses of individual autonomy and financial discipline become so pervasive. In fact, they are able to present lots of empirical examples of the rejection of management psychology discourse by the workers in their study, but no parallel examples of how the discourse of financial discipline is taken up and promulgated by the same group. Again, this is perhaps because this was not Knights and Collinson's primary objective in writing their paper—but again, we would argue that it leaves an important part of the story untold. What were the mechanisms by which these discourses came to permeate subjectivities? Who or what were the critical intermediaries in the passage from discourse to subjectivity? Knights and Collinson highlight that the redundancy programme and the associated discourse of financial discipline did not go completely unresisted on the shop floor, with trade union stewards attempting unsuccessfully to mobilise their colleagues. This raises further questions: why were these stewards, who might also be conceptualised as pastors of sorts, unsuccessful in this endeavour when they had previously successfully agitated for industrial action? Again, further attention to the mechanisms of governmentality, of a kind that might be achieved through the lens of pastoral power, offers potential illumination of these issues, and the prospect of moving beyond analyses in which the dominance of certain powerful discourses is taken for granted.

Our third example is the analysis of risk, governance and the new public health put forward by Petersen (1997; see also Petersen and Lupton 1996). Drawing on wider governmentality scholarship, Petersen (1997) argues that the way in which the new public health invokes multiple 'risk factors' to predict ill health or other negative social outcomes results in a focus on both populations and 'at risk' individuals for whom multiple factors intersect. This gives rise to both a privatisation of risk management, leaving individuals responsible for managing their own risk factors, but also, Petersen (1997: 204) argues, a

reshaping of subjectivity, whereby 'being a "healthy", "responsible", citizen entails new kinds of detailed work on the self and new interpersonal demands and responsibilities.' Abiding by expert advice on how best to maintain one's health, wellbeing and productivity becomes an expectation incumbent on every subject, such that 'individuals whose conduct is deemed contrary to the pursuit of a 'risk-free' existence are likely to be seen, and to see themselves, as lacking self-control, and as therefore not fulfilling their duties as fully autonomous, responsible citizens' (Petersen 1997: 198).

The role of experts themselves is acknowledged in this account, but again, little fleshed out. Petersen (1997: 197) argues that the emergent profession of health promotion is at the centre of 'a multi-levelled and multi-organisational network of surveillance and regulatory practices,' in which health promoters have the task of co-ordinating multiple forms of expert knowledge and marshalling these 'prodigious resources' towards the promotion of public health and the targeting of at risk individuals. But what they do and how they do it is unexamined, leaving the health promoter as little more than a neutral conduit that aggregates and disseminates public health discourse. Similarly, while Petersen (1997: 194) acknowledges 'the agency of subjects' and their ability 'to exercise a regulated autonomy,' this notion is underdeveloped, and we are left again with the impression of a process whereby neoliberal governmentality demands that individuals engage in a highly specified form of self-governance, and subjects unreflexively comply.

Each of the examples presented above is a worthy piece of scholarship, which has advanced our understanding of the logics and ambitions of contemporary rule in imaginative ways. However, each also exemplifies the governmentality literature in its relative neglect of how governmental discourses translate into the subjectivity and agency of contemporary subjects. It may (not unreasonably) be objected that authors in the governmentality tradition can only do so much within the confines of a journal article or book chapter to expand the

scope of their analysis in this direction. To varying degrees, these examples do acknowledge the importance of intermediaries such as experts, and of the subjective agency of the targeted populations—but then pay so little attention to the implications of these claims that the impression they give is of a discursive power whose impact on subjects is overwhelming, direct, and complete. Thus our point here is not that these articles *in particular* have little to say about how discourse influences subjectivities, and on the role of intermediaries and the agency of subjects in this process, but that they typify a wider literature that is silent on this issue—and that this silence is problematic given a desire to understand not just the construction of the texts of government but their (perhaps inconsistent, incomplete) impact on subjects, organisations and communities.

Pastoral power's potential

In contrast, the framework of pastoral power focuses attention on exactly this silence, but in a way that remains informed by an understanding of governmental rationality deriving from Foucault and the Governmentality School. We offer two examples from our own work with a view to articulating how such a view might extend the analytical scope of governmentality, and in the process begin to answer the criticisms that scholars such as Caldwell (2005, 2007), Newton (1998) and Bevir (2011). Our principal ambition here is to re-state our previously presented model (Waring and Martin 2016), demonstrate its operation through these worked empirical examples, and show how it starts to take seriously the process whereby governmentality is realised and reproduced socially, through the power relationships of an array of actors on the ground.

The first example (Martin *et al.* 2013) examines the role of senior hospital clinicians in translating powerful discourses around the need for improvement in the quality of care into routine practice among their peers. Healthcare quality is a major theme of current policy in

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healthcare systems worldwide, and a number of analyses previously have used Foucauldian approaches to examine how such discourses act on clinical subjectivities so that doctors 'accept a responsibility to seek ways of transforming their position themselves' (Flynn 2002: 163) or embrace 'an entrepreneurial, energetic, quality orientated and value led […] style' (Ferlie *et al.* 2012: 346). Where our approach differs is on its focus on key intermediaries in the process, belying any simple understanding of 'discursive constitution' of subjectivities. Rather, these intermediaries—'pastors'—are active in the process of translation of discourse into practice, interrogating prescribed policies, finding their strengths and weaknesses, and using their knowledge of their peers and of the systems at their disposal to reflexively develop approaches to realise policy and influence their colleagues' dispositions. This involved a combination of strategies that sought to establish the legitimacy of care quality as a priority and impress upon colleagues their own (personal and collective) responsibility to change behaviour to improve it. In line with governmentality theory, this combined attention to the population (in terms of the statistical performance of the clinical workforce as a whole) and the individual (in terms of a focus on those whose performance appeared to fall short of expectations). Importantly, however, it was about more than simply providing data or seeking to incentivise improvement: it involved active efforts to align a new discourse of quality with prior, professionally held notions of what it was to be a good clinician. Thus it was 'not a simple matter of power acting on the individual subject. Rather, it was about the creation of spaces in which clinicians could interact and express their professionalism, and thereby envisage and enact new roles and relationships' (Martin *et al.* 2013: 85). In other words, it was through the translational work of senior clinicians (the pastor's 'inscriptive practices'), along with the social interactions among peers (the flock's 'collective practices'), that governmental discourses came to inhabit clinical subjectivities, not through any direct, irresistible influence of the discourse itself. And this implies that the power of the discourse itself resides not in its abstract, 'textual' state, but in its

reconstitution through the actions and interactions of the professional community. It follows that governmental power, such as it is, thus rests on its ongoing reconstruction through the inter-subjective work of those it seeks to affect.

Our second example (Waring *et al.* 2016; Waring and Latif in press) examines the ways community pharmacists are increasingly required to act as pastors in promoting adherent patient subjectivities with regards the use of prescribed medicines. Research suggests that patients often fail to take newly prescribed medicines as instructed by their health professionals, leading to poor health, wasted resources, and additional treatment costs. As in other areas of healthcare, policy discourses construct patients as having greater responsibility for their health-related behaviours, in this case for taking their medicines as prescribed. As an example of Foucault's governmentality, Waring et al. (2016) examine how these more adherent patient subjectivities are formed through the pastoral power of the community pharmacist. This shows that pharmacists are increasingly held responsible not only for dispensing prescribed medicines, but also providing patient education at the point of dispensing to promote patient adherence. Through the introduction of 'advanced services' in recent policy, new spaces or situations have been created in which patients and pharmacists interact to instruct and inspect patient behaviours in relation to their medicines. Waring et al. (2016) describe these encounters as having confessional-like qualities, where pharmacists compel patients to reflect upon their medicines-related behaviours and to account for inappropriate behaviour. By providing personalised education and instructions, they guide patients to take their medicines as expected, but more importantly, to better regulate their future conduct. This study brings to light the 'inscriptive practices' of community pharmacists as they encourage patients to internalise and normalise new expectations for their health-related behaviour, and also the 'inspection practices' of community pharmacists in monitoring and overseeing continued adherence. As such, the study suggests that pastoral power operates at the nexus of discipline and

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subjectification, with pastors shaping desirable, self-governing subjectivities, and remaining active in the surveillance and monitoring of subject behaviours on an ongoing basis. Waring and Latif (in press) extend this analysis by highlighting the presence of multiple pastors and pastorates (for example, general practitioners and community pharmacists), whose regimes and relationships with their flocks sometimes align and sometimes conflict. This study highlights the agency of interconnected pastors, and also that of their subjects. Significantly, the tensions between pastors allows 'patients to recognise and use the underlying competition between pastors and the plurality of the discursive field to justify counter-conduct. That is, subjects can invoke the guidance of one pastor, or alternate social discourses, to explain their counter-conduct to the other' (Waring and Latif in press: 14). This points to the existence of multiple discourses that seek to influence conduct that are not always compatible (as also seen in the example of Knights and Collinson 1987, above). It also points to the contingency of relationships of pastoral power, again highlighting that there is nothing predetermined or final about the influence of powerful governmental discourses on the constitution of subjectivities and the behaviour of subjects.

Conclusion

We argue that drawing on and developing Foucault's notion of pastoral power presents an opportunity for refocusing and extending the governmentality perspective in ways that answer some of the criticisms made of the approach, and perhaps makes it more useful as a means of analysing governmental rationality in action, not just in the abstract. Our reading of the Governmentality School highlights, first, insufficient empirical or theoretical attention to agency; second, the tendency to see governmentality as a linear process of subjectification; and third, lack of analysis of the critical intermediaries of governmentality. By returning to Foucault's wider work on governmentality and drawing, in particular, on his concept of

pastoral power, we seek to remedy these three analytical lacunae by showing the situated work of pastor-like actors in shaping the subjectivities of subjects through recursive forms of social interaction.

Most basically, but most fundamentally, this model of pastoral power provides a means of conceptualising agency in governmentality that builds on the insights of Foucault in his lectures and other late writings that have not previously been fully apprehended in much of the governmentality literature (Cadman 2010; Foucault 2007b, 2008; Thompson 2003). In particular, it sees transmission of governmental ideas as taking place through pastoral actors with meaningful agency, and focuses on the activity that goes on within their communities to translate, adapt and embed governmental discourses in individual subjectivities and collective routines. As such, it offers a more socialised understanding of the operation of governmental rationality. It builds on Judith Butler's (1997) proposition that discourse activates the subject and forms the basis for an ongoing process of inter-subjective constitution, proposing the communities of pastors and their flocks as a setting in which this takes place. It suggests one potential arena for the constitution and reconstitution of subjectivities through 'the self-conscious practices of subjects, even if those subjects come into being through the condition of subjection' (Youdell 2006: 518).

Second, pastoral power allows much more adequately for the possibility, and range of potential consequences, of resistance and contestation. In elaborating his theory of governmentality, Foucault put forward the notion of 'counter conduct', and the possibility of innovation and creativity in response to governmental power, but as Bevir (2011) notes, it is difficult to discern how this might arise given the totalising regime implied by much of the writing of the Governmentality School. Those taking inspiration from Foucault's lectures and late writings have suggested that the Governmentality School's conceptualisation of the 'freedom' of the neoliberal subject is unnecessarily pessimistic: that a subject born of its time

has the capacity to conceive of alternative relationships of rule (Cadman 2010; Foucault 2007b; Patton 1998). Pastoral power's focus on translation, dialogue and adaptation recentres the dialectical, local and contingent process through which subjectification operates, and through which subjects in their power relationships with one another can appropriate, adapt and alter the modes of rule to which they are subject. It thus provides a conceptual lens through which to study ruptures in governmentality and their consequences at the micro and macro levels.

Third, many studies in governmentality tend to portray a monolithic, or at least co-ordinated, body of governmental discourse that has a singular effect on its subjects. But it is difficult to argue that late modernity is characterised by a single, unified regime of truth; indeed Foucault (2008) himself argued for the coexistence of multiple truth claims, the inconsistencies between which are most visible at the genealogical disjunctures his work identified, but which remain present even at times of apparent accord. Again, the model of pastoral power has the potential to make visible the work involved in reconciling these discourses, or alternatively in selecting one over another, at the level of the community of interdependent actors (cf. Waring and Latif in press).

This model of pastoral power should be deployed with caution. As Dean (2003: 131) argues, 'the political shaping and self-shaping of individuals occur through singular practices of the regulation of conduct from discipline and civility to arts of existence found in and across different and definite locales, the problematisations that are linked with them, the goals they seek, the kinds of subjects they attempt to make or to become, and the diverse instrumentation they deploy.' In other words, we should not expect to uncover a single, uniform technology of translation through which governmentality universally operates. Nevertheless, developed and applied judiciously, in building on the intimations in the breadth of Foucault's later work, the concept of pastoral power might respond to critiques of the application of governmentality, by foregrounding the active, inter-subjective work of intermediaries and communities in adopting,

adapting, contesting and remaking regimes of truth. We suggest further empirical and theoretical work to further understand the dynamics of pastoral power as tentatively outlined our model (Waring and Martin 2016). This might include, for example, research looking more at the competition between pastors and the paradoxes this creates for subjectification; the ways pastors not only relate to communities of subjects, but also to the wider institutions and apparatus of power, including the state; and the ways pastors are themselves constituted and subjectified through parallel and recursive processes.

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