

SUBJECTS OF DEVELOPMENT: THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME AS TECHNOLOGY OF NEO-LIBERAL IMPERIALISM

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INTRODUCTION

It was there over 50 years ago:

We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. ...The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our plans...Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge.

Harry S. Truman, inaugural speech, 1949 (cited in Esteva, 1993).

It was there a decade ago:

We live in stirring times. An irresistible wave of human freedom is sweeping across many lands...Unnecessary state interventions are on the wane. These are all reminders of the triumph of the human spirit.

William H. Draper, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (U.N.D.P., 1990, p. 2).

Still, it is there:

Human rights and human development share a common purpose – to secure, for every human being, freedom, well-being and dignity.

United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report (U.N.D.P., 2000, p. 1)

The *'promise of development'* has, continues to and will continue to capture the imagination of the world as a panacea for much that makes our existence insecure and, at times, threatening. Like a last vestige for our faith in technology, science and enlightenment ethics, it continues to impart hope to those who find themselves disillusioned by the fragmentation of the subject, the end of revolution, the death of god and the chaos of hyper-accelerated capital. Through development, the triumph of the Human Spirit can once again announce itself! Formerly impoverished and despairing souls are in the process of being caught up and carried off by an irresistible wave – off to a utopia wherein no one is left without their well-being or their dignity. Spurred on by the twin vanguard of science and technology the change is immanent – it is upon us! The democratic forces of deliverance tremble beneath our very feet...the only thing standing their way is time or unnecessary intervention. The power of development is the power to transform old worlds into new...

This is the image conveyed not only by the extracts presented but also by reams of development-related text, representing a kind of commonsense or 'received wisdom'. To what degree, however, is this received wisdom to be trusted? To what degree is development doing what it promises? More and more, voices are beginning to despair of development, claiming that it has not worked – at least not with the outcomes predicted or the consequences expected (Sachs, 1993, p. 20). Why then, as Crush (1995, p. 4) asks, does development not only persist but appear to be continuously expanding its reach and scope? Could it be that development does in fact work very well? Is it just that what we say it should be doing and what we believe it to be doing is simply not what is happening? If this is so, then perhaps we ought to start asking what it *is* doing, why the language of development is so often so terribly evasive and why so many people seem almost to *need* to believe in it? (Crush, 1995, p. 5).

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Within the contemporary world, a new form of capitalism is gaining influence (Jessop, 2000; Fairclough, 2000; Bourdieu, 1998). This new form might be called 'neo-liberalism': the logic that globalization should be approached with a large-scale retreat of official regulation (Scholte, 2000, p. 35). Characteristic of neo-liberalism is the re-organization (or re-structuring) of social life on the basis of new technologies, new modes of economic coordination and the reduction of social life to the market.

Grillo & Stirrat (1997) indicate that language is an important factor in imposing, extending and legitimizing the neo-liberal order. The new order is partly a language project and change in language is understood as being an important component of the socio-economic changes that are taking place (Fairclough, 1989; Bourdieu, 1998). Said (1983) adds insight into the particular nature of the complicity of discourse by stating that "...the will to exercise dominant control in society and history has discovered a way to clothe, rarefy and wrap itself systematically in the language of truth, discipline, rationality, utilitarian value, and knowledge...[t]his language, in its naturalness, authority, professionalism, assertiveness and antitheoretical directness is...discourse" (p. 216). The movement of the heterogeneous discursive elements of neo-liberalism along a particular trajectory - toward a condition of control – is suggested.

These new perceptions have begun to make themselves felt in the development debate. Indeed, 'development' is beginning to be conceptualized as an order of discourse, as an

interwoven set of languages and practices and as a modernist regime of knowledge and disciplinary power (Crush, 1995, p. xiii). Alongside this, development is being increasingly demystified as a component of the new capitalism with its own logic, internal coherence and effects that work toward a state of control.

In light of these considerations, this paper investigates the phenomenon of ‘human development’ as adopted and reared by the United Nations Development Programme (U.N.D.P.). Its role in global relations of power is suggested, with particular reference to its fraternization in the creation of one of the more recent of our planet’s species - the ‘developing subject’ or *homo incrementus*.

METHOD

A critical discourse analytic (hereafter ‘CDA’) approach was used to investigate the research problem. Wood and Kroger (2000) indicate that “...the emphasis [of CDA] is ... on the understanding of discourse in relation to social problems; to social structural variables such as race, gender and class; and above all to power” (p. 21). As such, CDA is particularly well situated to addressing the relation between language and power and asserts the role of discourse analysis in social and cultural critique (ibid., p. 30).

An interpretive framework is used in order to enhance rigor in the way findings were related back to the theoretical context. Foucault’s (1991) notion of ‘governmentality’ was felt to be ideally suited to the role of interpretative framework. Foucault offers various definitions of governmentality, including “...the contact between technologies of domination of others and those of the self” (Foucault, 1988, p. 19) and “...the ethical relation of self to self [and] strategies for the direction of conduct of free individuals” (Foucault, 1991, pp. 19-29). As

such, the objective of governmentality is the understanding of how the subject is tied into macro-political issues. It is, therefore, well suited to the understanding of how macro-processes of neo-liberalism impact on the production and constitution of the subject – especially in the realm of development, where issues of conduct and governance are explicitly broached.

An important concept within the analysis is that of ‘subject positions’ or the positioning of subjects within discourses (see Althusser, 1971; Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001). Hall (1988) indicates that subjects always stand in relation to the available discourses and are as such ‘positioned’ by discourse. Within discursive practice, then, the reproduction and transformation of the existing order of discourse and through that of existing social relations and subject positions, can be glimpsed.

The analytical procedure was based on the three components of *description*, *interpretation* and *explanation*. Textual properties were described; the relationship between the productive and interpretative processes of discursive practice and the text interpreted (using the analytical framework); and the relationship between the discursive and social practice explained. (Fairclough 1995a).

The United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Reports (U.N.D.P. 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000) formed the corpus of text used in the analysis. These were considered suitable in that they offer a thorough representation of the orders of discourse that have a bearing on the research problem. The heterogeneity of discourses within these orders is, in a sense, conveniently gathered in these documents.

ANALYSIS

The implementation of human development began in 1987 when a special working group was convened under the guidance of internationally recognized development authorities (Griffin and Knight, 1990, p. 1). The findings of this group formed the basis for the United Nations' development strategy for the 1990's:

The process of economic development can be seen as the process of expanding the capabilities of people. The ultimate focus of economic development is human development. That is, we [development experts] are ultimately concerned with what people are capable of doing or being (ibid., p. 9).

The focus of United Nations development turned from economic issues (as advocated in economic development texts) toward what *people are capable of doing and being* – hence *human* development. The economic ceased to be constructed as an independent realm existing beyond the subject; rather, its priority and independence was challenged and subsumed as part of the social ('we...are ultimately concerned with what people are capable of doing or being'). A new subject positioning came into being, in which the subject was no longer positioned by economic discourses exclusively but also by those pertaining to what people can do or be. It is this realignment that may be taken as sufficient reason to consider human development as being a *unique and specific strategy*.

That discourse is intimately connected to the operation of power (Foucault, 1979; Fairclough, 1989; Bourdieu, 1998) indicates that this new interest of discourse represented a new intensified focus of power on the subject. The capable and creative *homo incrementus* – or developing subject - was born.

Many old concepts must now be radically revised...Development must be woven around people, not people around development – and it should empower individuals and groups rather than disempower them. And development cooperation should focus directly on people, not just on nation states (U.N.D.P., 1993, p. 1).

By specifying that ‘development should be woven around people, [and] not people around development’, the subject is transported from its old location around or outside development, to a location within development. In this new location, ‘development...should empower [people] rather than disempower them and development cooperation should focus directly on people’. In other words, the empowerment and cooperation of the subject becomes of primary relevance, reaffirming the claim that along with the shift from economic to human development came an intensified focusing of power on people.

Human development is development *of* the people, *for* the people *by* the people (U.N.D.P., 1997, p.3).

The extract is illustrative of the problematization of the relations between people and between people and development. Not only would development have the opportunity to focus *more directly* on the subject within its new intimate positioning but also the subject, through cooperation, would be more able to focus on development. This new positioning of the subject is of extreme significance, since it represents a crucial condition for a process central to a western mode of control as governance – that of ‘political subjectification’.

Political subjectification refers to the means by which the “...self governing individual is produced through an ensemble of governmental practices as a subject with particular capacities and orientations” (Dean, 1994, p. 153). Political subjectification is, therefore, that process whereby the capacities and orientations of subjects are shaped so as to produce individuals that are ‘self-governing’ or which conduct themselves in line with the objectives of governance.

Human development is the process of enlarging people’s choices, by expanding human functionings and capabilities ...The functionings of a person refer to the valuable things a person can do or be (such as being well nourished, living long and taking part in the community). The capability of a person stands for the different combination of functionings a person can achieve. Capabilities thus reflect the freedom to achieve functionings. In that sense, human development is freedom (U.N.D.P., 2000, p. 17).

The extract is densely formulated but is useful in that it sets out, in a lucid manner, the central parameters of *homo incrementus* and also the central mechanisms of political subjectification. Most significant are the notions of ‘freedom’ and ‘choice’. *Homo incrementus* is constructed as being a choosing subject – indeed the declaration that ‘human development is the process of enlarging people’s choices’ indicates that choice lies at the core of its identity. Not only is choice a core component of *homo incrementus*: it is recognized as, in the final instance, an essential priority for human development. Moreover, choice is understood as being contingent upon a particular kind of freedom:

Human freedom is vital to human development. People must be free to exercise their choices... (U.N.D.P., 1990, p.1).

The subject is constructed as being ideally free and able to exercise choice. These notions are central to the process of political subjectification in that “[liberal and neo-liberal] power assumes a ‘free subject’ - not an individual existing in an essential space of freedom, but one whose subjection is consistent with forms of choice” (Dean, 1994, p. 178). By prescribing forms of choice, restrictions can be placed on the freedom granted to the subject by allowing this freedom to be ‘channeled’ in a certain direction. In a sense, then, choice is secondary to freedom. In this sense, it was possible for Foucault to state, “...power is only ever exercised over free subjects [and that] freedom may well appear as a condition for the exercise of power” (Foucault, 1983, p. 221).

The identification of freedom and choice as necessary ‘preconditions’ for the process of political subjectification directs investigation towards the ways in which these are harnessed and set to work within human development in a manner that is useful for the maintenance of hegemony. At which point or specific locality, in other words, does power exert control over *homo incrementus*? In order to answer this question, it is worth noting that human development is described as “...the process of enlarging people’s choices, by expanding human functionings and capabilities” (U.N.D.P., 2000, p.17). *Homo incrementus* is a choosing subject whose choice (and hence freedom) operates through the twin constructs of ‘functionings’ and ‘capabilities’. Patton (1992, in Dean, 1994) points out that “...power never operates on a passive force: the body that is the target of such power is already replete with forces and capacities” (p. 171). While freedom and choice exist as general preconditions for the direction of conduct, the subject is constructed as possessing certain

forces and capabilities through which restrictions can be enforced. It is within this interplay of freedom, choice, capabilities and functionings that the condition of political subjectification can begin to be rendered visible.

The ‘functionings’ of a person refer to “...the valuable things a person can do or be (such as being well nourished, living long and taking part in the community)” (U.N.D.P., 2000, p.17) indicating a restriction on choice. While choice can be exercised in a variety of ways, only a select few of these ways (such as ‘being well nourished, living long and taking part in the community’) are seen as being of value. Thus, it becomes possible to divide subjects between a *homo incrementus* of value (or those who make valuable choices) and others of no value (who make valueless choices). The crux is that, to be regarded as valuable, subjects should direct their choice towards valuable ends such as ‘being well nourished’, ‘living long’ and ‘taking part in the community’ - the goals set out by human development.

In addition, *homo incrementus* has the ability to achieve ‘different combinations of functionings’, known as ‘capabilities’. Capabilities “...reflect the freedom to achieve functionings” (U.N.D.P., 2000, p. 17) and it is in that sense that “...human development is freedom”. (ibid.). The positive, productive and enabling aspect of power (Foucault, 1991) – by which power is understood as seeking to act on the conduct of the governed rather than via gross or violent forms of corporeal domination (Dean, 1994) - is maintained. This ‘positive’ aspect of power occurs, however, within a rather strange conceptualization of freedom: one restricted to the free choice of combinations of functions - functions that are themselves restricted. Freedom and choice thus operate within a framework of permission and prescription, capturing *homo incrementus* in a tension between liberty and discipline.

While "...capabilities can vary in form and content...the human development approach is ultimately concerned with all the capabilities that people have reason to value" (U.N.D.P., 2000, p.19). These capabilities of 'value' include "...the most elementary capabilities, such as living a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and enjoying a decent standard of living" (ibid.). Foucault (1979) observes that "...the ends of government lie not simply in ruling itself, in increasing the sovereignty of the ruler but in improving the condition of the population, in increasing its wealth, longevity, its health as a whole" (p. 45).

'Improving the wealth, longevity and health of the population' seems strangely familiar after the examination of the fundamental capabilities referred to in the preceding discussion. In addition, this congruence suggests that the *modus operandi* of power in human development is identical to that germane to western, neo-liberal modes of governance. McNay (1994) offers a further insight into the congruence by indicating that "...the powers of the governor stem from their...assumed responsibility to advance and improve the standard, quality and longevity of their subjects' lives" (p. 76).

Obviously, the legitimacy of governance can be achieved through the promise of improved conditions, the need for coercion is thus reduced and governance is made more efficient through a promise of security (Gordon, 1991). The centrality of this legitimation of governance cannot be over-emphasized. Foucault (1991) indicates, "[power's] essential technical means [are] apparatuses of security" (p. 102). How this is achieved should, however, be questioned in the context of human development: how is it possible that responsibility can be assumed – and security assured - by both governor and governed in a global context? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to investigate two political rationalities present in human development.

The first political rationality is Orientalism - defined as a political rationality in that it is a manifestation of power/knowledge (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999) that embodies "...a political vision of reality whose structure promotes the difference between the familiar (the Occident, the West, 'us') and the strange (Orient, the East, 'them')" (Said, 1978, p. 43). Said (ibid.) indicates that the binary opposition between the Occident and the Orient creates a relationship of power weighted heavily in favor of the former (ibid., p. 36), contributing toward the persistence of a condition of imperialism. An essential feature of the discourse of Orientalism is the objectification of both the Orient and the Oriental, through which these are treated as objects that can be rendered knowable, scrutinized and understood (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999, p. 69).

Within the human development constellation, Orientalism contributes to the perpetuation of imperialism in two ways: the problematization of differences and the problematization of crises. Each will be dealt with in turn.

The recent progress in narrowing human development gaps between North and South raises hope...Moreover, while gaps in basic survival have narrowed, the widening gaps in science and technology threaten the South's future development (U.N.D.P., 1990, p. 18).

The extract is illustrative of the operation of Orientalism in the context of human development. In this, the problematization of 'gaps' is evident. These 'gaps' might be conceptualized as disparities or binarisms that are problematized and made relevant to the operation of power. The range of binarisms constructed by Orientalism is staggering –

exemplified by gaps in human development, basic survival, science and technology, urban and rural areas, men and women, rich and poor, *et cetera*.

As such, Orientalism *homo incrementus*' world as an assemblage of gaps, binarisms and differences. The operation of Orientalism is not, however, restricted to the problematization of difference but also the problematization of crises.

Around the world, on average, about one in every three women and girls under 18 are trafficked for prostitution each year. About 100 million children are estimated to be living or working on the street. About 30 000 children were soldiers in the 1990's, and 6 million were injured in armed conflicts (U.N.D.P., 2000, p. 4).

Crises are problematized and become of interest to the operation of power. Examples abound in development-related texts.

Orientalism's two central effects - that of problematizing differences and that of problematizing crises - form an additional basis for the process of political subjectification. Utilitarianism constitutes an additional political rationality that comes to work alongside Orientalism in a reflexive way.

The [human development] idea that social arrangements must be judged by the extent that they promote human good goes back at

least to Aristotle...so act as to treat humanity, whether in their own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal...[economic development] has obscured that powerful perspective, supplanting a focus on ends by an obsession with merely the means. How to relate the ends to the means should once again become the central focus of development...(U.N.D.P., 1990, p. 9).

Orientalism's first effect – the problematization of difference - comes to be invested with the utilitarian preoccupation with ends. The focus is directed towards *differences* or *gaps* in the availability of ends. Ends may, for example, be 'needed' by people or people may be 'deprived' of them. Via the problematization of ends the workings of Orientalism and utilitarianism produce a series of morally imbalanced binarisms: *homo incrementus* is constructed as existing in a particular relation to something external to itself, i.e.; as always in relation to the other pole of its duality. In addition, the investment of *homo incrementus* with a utilitarian ethic has the effect of constructing it as a subject requiring some kind of revision or change in order to escape its neediness or deprivation. *Homo incrementus* is in this sense a relativized but motivated subject.

Removing the immense backlog of human deprivation remains the challenge for the 1990's. There are still...nearly 900 million adults unable to read and write, 1.75 billion without safe drinking water, around 100 million completely homeless, some 800 million who go hungry every day, 150 million children under five (one in

three) who are malnourished and 14 million children who die each year before their fifth birthday (U.N.D.P., 1990, p. iii).

Crises are constructed in terms of the unavailability of quantifiable ends – the inability to read and write, the unavailability of safe drinking water; lack of access to homes and the unavailability of food, *et cetera*. This effect is important in that it suggests the necessity of *means* whereby these differences and crises of ends can be alleviated. *Homo incrementus* must avail itself to a process whereby its condition can be improved and its inferior position rectified. *Homo incrementus* finds itself motivated toward change.

...human development represents a process as well as an end
(U.N.D.P., 1990, p.5).

And,

Human development is the process of enlarging people's
choices... (U.N.D.P., 1990, p. 1).

In constructing itself as a *process*, human development offers itself as salvation to the unstable and insecure *homo incrementus* – as a form of security for an insecure existence. Development becomes the means whereby the alleviation of the problematic arrangement of ends can be guaranteed.

Never before have so many people seen such a significant
improvement in their lives. But this progress should not generate
complacency (U.N.D.P., 1990, p. 22).

And,

There has also been great progress in eliminating discrimination by race, religion and gender – and in advancing the right to schooling and basic health care (U.N.D.P., 2000, p.1).

The principle that enables this guarantee of salvation to be made is that of ‘progress’: the overarching virtue whereby *homo incrementus*’ problematic ends can be ‘improved’ and ‘eliminated’. Differences and crises are collectively subsumed under the category of ‘deprivation’, while movements away from deprivation are collectively subsumed under the category of ‘progress’. The world of difference and crisis is set up as dependent on the idea of progress and human development as the guardian of progress. This catchall property of progress, in which a wide range of positive effects is represented, is indicative of its status as *the* reality principle around which development forms (REF).

Gordon (1991) relates progress as the condition in which “...the past ceases to illuminate the future, the mind moves forward in darkness [in a] spirit of unease and uncertainty” (p.31). By adopting progress, *homo incrementus*’ temporal and spatial positioning is framed as linear and advancing. This, in addition to the adoption of progress as overarching virtue, means that obstacles to its realization must be done away with.

An irresistible wave of human freedom is sweeping across many lands. Not only political systems but economic structures are beginning to change...unnecessary state interventions are on the wane. These are all reminders of the triumph of the human spirit (U.N.D.P., 1990, p. iii).

Tradition is constructed as having been repressive of the ‘human spirit’ by standing in the way of its linear, progressive, advance. *Homo incrementus* is located as an individual with a spirit that must triumph over these traditional and physical constraints by invoking change. In addition, interventions by the state are considered to be unnecessary and undesirable. Both of these measures – the neutralization of tradition and the withdrawal of the state – fulfill the neo-liberal requirement of “...the formation of an individual freed from physical or traditional constraints...” (Dean, 1994, p. 165).

In 2000, human rights were introduced into the human development field. That this convergence would “...bring new strength to the struggle for human freedom” (U.N.D.P., 2000, p. iv) once again indicated the curious blend of freedom and obligation inherent to *homo incrementus*.

Any society committed to improving the live of its people must also be committed to full and equal rights for all (U.N.D.P., 2000, p. i).

If *homo incrementus* intends to maintain the security promised by human development (the improvement of lives), it is obliged to accept the human rights agenda – an agenda that is summarized as follows:

To have a particular right is to have a claim on other people or institutions that they should help or collaborate in ensuring access to some freedom...[Human rights] links the idea that others have

duties to facilitate and enhance human development (U.N.D.P., 2000, p. 23).

By the introduction of human rights, *homo incrementus* is required to promote its own individual rights and hold others accountable in the realization of these rights. The operation of power moves beyond focusing merely on ‘social progress of the valued kind’ towards implanting of a *duty* to see that the social value is realized. *Homo incrementus* is imbued with the responsibility of assuring the realization of ‘valued’ social progress. A matrix of individualization, a “...form of power [that] applies itself to everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his individuality, attaches to him his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others must recognize in him” (Foucault, 1983, p. 212), is created.

This matrix of power works in a specific way; the first ‘element’ of which is revealed in the following extract:

The first step is to appreciate that assessment of human development, if combined with the human rights perspective, can indicate the duties of others in society to enhance human development in one way or another. And with the invoking of duties comes a host of related concerns, such as accountability, culpability and responsibility (U.N.D.P., 2000, p.21).

By indicating the ‘flip-side’ of rights (i.e., duties) a degree of accountability, culpability and responsibility is placed on rights-based subjects. *Homo incrementus* is forced to look within to find solutions to any problems it experiences in the realization of rights.

This focus on locating accountability for failures within a social system can be a powerful tool in seeking remedy. It certainly broadens the outlook beyond the minimal claims of human development, and the analysis of human development can profit from it...it also leads to an analysis of the responsibilities of different actors when rights go unfulfilled (U.N.D.P., 2000, p. 21).

Homo incrementus finds itself in a position in which it should engage in self-scrutiny (what Foucault (REF) might have called an ‘aesthetics of the self’) in order to seek remedy for the crises and differences problematized by Orientalism and utilitarianism. The next extract indicates the final move in the matrix:

In asserting [a] right we are claiming that all are *entitled* to [that right] and that, if some persons lack access to it, there must be some culpability somewhere in the social system
(U.N.D.P., 2000, p. 21).

Any lack of human development is constructed as a deficit and the social system (or collective relations between developing subjects) is required to take responsibility for it. If rights are not guaranteed then *homo incrementus* is forced to adjust its social structure

accordingly. Donzelot's (1991) observation is echoed: that in neo-liberal modes of government, a modified conception of social risk arises in which the emphasis is shifted "...from the principle of collective indemnification of ills and injuries attendant to life in society, towards a greater stress on the individual's civic obligation to moderate the burden of risk which s/he imposes on society" (p. 110). *Homo incrementus* finds itself dutifully bound to accept custody of the security that development promises.

This duty imitates the neo-liberal conception of the "...*social duty* of assistance as *a duty of man in society*, rather than *a duty of society*" (Gordon, 1991, p. 23) and points toward the macro-political processes of neo-liberalism of which *homo incrementus* becomes a part. The major thrust of neo-liberalism, however, occurs around a central and already well documented issue: that of *choice*.

People must be free to exercise their choices in properly
functioning markets... (U.N.D.P., 1990, p. 1).

Choice reemerges here under a different (neo-liberal) guise – that of economics and the market place. Choice is shown to operate a dual mandate. Gordon (1991) states that "...neo-liberalism condenses all the tendencies of liberalism to distinguish it from despotic and statist forms of rule by invoking the single term, *choice*, a term that helps economists sidestep every determination of human existence revealed by the social sciences" (p. 45).

Though choice, *homo incrementus* is elevated beyond previous social scientific concerns toward the realm of economics. Consider the following extracts:

...growth in national production (G.D.P.) is absolutely necessary to meet all essential human objectives (U.N.D.P., 1990, p. iii).

And,

[Development] is about more than GNP growth, more than income and wealth and more than producing commodities and accumulating capital. A person's income may be one of the choices, but it is not the sum total of human endeavor (U.N.D.P., 1993, p. 1).

The first extract indicates the necessary (albeit insufficient) centrality of economic concerns to human development. The second extract, however, reveals a specific conception of the economic being emphasized. Income, wealth and commodities are constructed as the sum total of capital (if not human endeavor). Through this rather limited conception of capital, human development's celebration of the measurement of progress "...not by the yardstick of income alone but by a much more comprehensive index...reflecting life expectancy, literacy and command over the resources to enjoy a decent standard of living" (U.N.D.P., 1990, p. 1) becomes possible.

On closer inspection, however, the pledge of human development – to move beyond the perception of the economic as the sum total of human endeavor – is misleading. The three variables utilized in the measurement of human development (education, longevity and G.D.P.) reflect the three 'essential' capabilities of *homo incrementus*. As discussed, capabilities represent the different combinations of functionings *homo incrementus* can achieve, while functionings represent, in turn, the valuable things people can do or be

(U.N.D.P., 2000). The ability to be or do things of value relies on the availability of predisposing aptitudes that can be utilized to this end.

Skilled, healthy and well-educated people are in a better position than others to take their lives into their own hands....They are more valuable to society and better able to help themselves (U.N.D.P., 1991, p. 26).

And,

Development *of* the people means investing in human capabilities, whether in education or health or skills, so that they can work productively and creatively (U.N.D.P., 1993, p. 3).

Skill and competence emerge, alongside aptitudes, as being *valuable* individual resources. This reflects the neo-liberal view of economic activity in which a shift is made from bodily to acquired capital through the acceptance of aptitudes as a quasi-machine for the production of value (Gordon, 1991, p. 44). *Homo incrementus* finds its identity realigned as a consumer durable and in this respect, the entrepreneur of him/ herself. In this sense, *homo incrementus* meets *homo economicus*: that "...abstract, ideal, purely economic point which populates the real density, fullness and complexity of civil society" (Foucault, in Gordon, 1991, p. 23). The 'self-responsible' subject is transmogrified into the 'subject-as-enterprise'.

A congruency with neo-liberalism is exhibited in that, as in neo-liberalism, "...it becomes part of the continuous business of living to make adequate provision for the preservation, reproduction and reconstruction of one's own human capital" (Gordon, 1991, p. 44). A form of economic care of the self is engendered and neo-liberalism's focus on "...the withdrawal

of the state and the implantation of [an] enterprise culture” (Dean, 1994, p. 193) is realized. In this sense, neo-liberalism achieves its ambition “...to implicate the individual citizen, as player and partner, into [the] market game” (Gordon, *ibid.*, p. 36).

The implications of placing people at the center of...change are profound. They challenge traditional concepts of security, old models of development, ideological debates on the role of the market and outmoded forms of international cooperation. They call for nothing less than a revolution in our thinking (U.N.D.P., 1993, p. 8).

Homo incrementus is the subject that actively challenges existing traditions, ideologies and modes of cooperation that stand in the way of human development – a challenge that might be described as ‘nothing less than revolutionary’. *Homo incrementus* is characterized by a care of he self that promotes, at once, a docile as well as an active subject.

People today have an urge – an impatient urge – to participate in the events and processes that shape their lives. And that impatience brings many dangers and opportunities. ...The dangers arise as the irresistible urge for participation clashes with inflexible systems (U.N.D.P., 1997, p.1).

Obstacles to development threaten the security that progress promises and participation emerges as the *modus operandi* for the active subject. If the obligation to participate – and

the defeat of inflexible systems - is not met the guarantee of progress (and hence security) will be lost. Problematic areas should be sought out and eradicated.

Particular instances of 'problematic areas' - areas that sorely require the participation of a *homo economicus* - are in plentiful supply in human development texts:

Although the achievements in human development have been significant during the past three decades, the reality is continuing exclusion. More than a billion of the world's people still languish in absolute poverty, and the poorest fifth find that the richest fifth enjoy more than 150 times their income. Women still earn only half as much as men...Rural people in developing countries still receive less than half the income opportunities and social services available to their urban counterparts. Many ethnic minorities still live like a separate nation within their own countries (U.N.D.P., 1997, p.1).

Various areas are singled out for intervention - areas of costly exclusion that require urgent alleviation. Participation in development should thus be encouraged. In so doing, *homo incrementus* adopts a neo-liberal form of relation in which "...one partner strives to enhance the value of his or her life, while another endeavors to economize on the cost of that life" (Gordon, 1991, p. 45). In other words, costly lives – lives excluded from the process of development – should be economized upon. It is within this care of the self and care of the other that an additional aim of neo-liberalism is achieved:

The new motive must be the war against poverty, based on the recognition that this is an investment not only in the development of poor nations but in the security of rich nations. The real threat in the next few decades is that global poverty will begin to travel, without a passport, in many unpleasant forms: drugs, diseases, terrorism, migration. Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere (U.N.D.P., 1993, p. 8).

Poverty is constructed as a disease of sorts that can travel without a passport, transmogrify into various forms, and threaten prosperity. The ‘war on poverty’ should fight poverty as one might fight drugs, diseases, terrorism, migration or some other epidemiological toxin. Poverty is, however:

More than a lack of what is necessary for material well-being. It can also mean the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development – to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others (U.N.D.P., 1997, p. 20).

Human development’s conception of poverty seems strangely familiar: its essential properties are identical to those of *homo incrementus*. *Homo incrementus* is in turn the subject as human capital – amenable to neo-liberal governmental processes. The war on poverty becomes a war on the lack of human capital – on that which resists the economic – on that that resists human development. In this sense, *homo incrementus* is at war with those aspects

of itself that resist reduction to capital. Also, it is at war with those that stand outside development. An additional facet is added to the care of the self.

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