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**Participatory Development and Therapeutic Governance:  
An Immanent Critique of the Anticipated Consequences of REFLECT  
Circle Participation on the Development Subject**

**By:**

Louisa Jane Shilton

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Department of Politics

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016**



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## **Abstract**

The thesis draws upon an interest in participation as a development concept in order to explore the extent to which a prevailing Western social-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life has begun to manifest itself within development policy and practice. It draws on critical theory, using the philosophical-hermeneutic method of immanent critique, to scrutinise the existence of subtle ambitions to improve the poor's psychological capital through induced participatory development practice using one specific community-based approach to participatory development known as REFLECT (Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Community Empowerment Techniques) as its illustrative case study. The thesis solely engages with REFLECT as an epistemic body of knowledge and focuses on identified tensions and contradictions within its prevailing knowledge claims to unpick and appraise what it might be trying to achieve when it talks about increasing participants' confidence and self-esteem along with enhancing their political empowerment. More specifically, it draws upon insights from Vanessa Pupavac's work on development's perceived therapeutic turn, together with critical psychological and sociological literatures, to ask whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms. It subsequently uses this overarching research question to make an overall statement about the creeping psychologisation of the development subject and what expectations a growing interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice might bring to bear upon that development subject.





## Introduction

### *Preface*

I don't think much of your modern, hyper-psychologised [...] world<sup>1</sup>

These are the words of an older, male written to a younger, female in a letter bemoaning the state of their friendship in Herman Stark's *A Fierce Little Tragedy*. This statement about the modern, psychologised world – embedded in a fictional novella about the self-transformatory potential of philosophical encounters – all too briefly denotes a severe generational distaste for the 'psychologised culture [that now appears to act] as the dominant guide to everyday subjective life'<sup>2</sup>. In it, the imaginary older male laments the 'self-esteem craze sweeping over spoiled, super sensitive suburban girls'<sup>3</sup> and rallies against 'the contemporary age as an age of misplaced emphases'<sup>4</sup>. In earnest, he bewails the emergence of a superficial world, characterised by an interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life, at the expense of a departing, and yet to him more meaningful, substantive world of 'sacrifice, suffering, courage, loyalty, discipline, follow-through, endurance and grim duty'<sup>5</sup>. Resentful and dismissive, his uneasiness with the changing world around him manifests itself in an obvious dislike for what he sees as the 'vulgarity of modernity'<sup>6</sup> and more particularly, the 'modern claptrap of self-esteem'<sup>7</sup> that his younger female friend appears to relish. In fact, the affirmation that he thinks little of her 'modern, hyper-psychologised, issues-saturated world'<sup>8</sup> represents above all else a snap, sarcastic retort to a world ever more enthral to the emotional and psychological aspects of life.

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Whether, like the dismissive protagonist, you think little of this hyper-psychologised state of affairs or like his enthusiast friend, you relish all that it sweeps in, this statement is certainly illuminating and points to something which intrigues and animates this thesis in equal measure. In short, this thesis is motivated by a sense that we now live in a world characterised by an increasingly dominant socio-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects

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<sup>1</sup> Stark, H. *A Fierce Little Tragedy: Thought, Passion and Self-Formation in the Philosophical Classroom* (Rodopi, Amsterdam & New York, 2003), p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Newman, F., & Holzman, L. *Len Vgotsky: Revolutionary Scientist* (Routledge, London, 2005), p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Stark, H. *A Fierce Little Tragedy: Thought, Passion and Self-Formation in the Philosophical Classroom*, p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vii.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

of life. In fact, the research behind this thesis is directly motivated by the ubiquitous presence of psychological terminology in everyday language and what, Andres Fossas, helpfully terms a growing 'curiosity and investigative attitude [towards] the self and its functioning'<sup>9</sup> within advanced Western liberal democracies. As Fossas himself explains, twenty first century life - most notably through the popular proliferation of a wide range of psychological therapies and emergent narratives of self-improvement and self-actualisation - encourages us to know and understand ourselves more deeply; to turn inward to explore our inner lives and to reflect upon the nature of our selves, both good and bad, light and dark, pleasant and unpleasant.<sup>10</sup> In short, it has unleashed a new sense of self and being, that priorities the psychological life and emotional well-being of the individual, and has in turn fostered a cultural dynamic that plays 'an important part in the way in which people in contemporary western societies now understand themselves'<sup>11</sup>.

Over the course of writing this thesis for example, it has become increasingly apparent to me that as a society we talk ever more openly and ever more frankly about our self-esteem, our confidence, our happiness, our resilience, and so on and so forth. Plenty of commentators have already documented this readiness to define ourselves according to our inner psychological experience but for me, it certainly feels as though our identities are increasingly wrapped up in our descriptions and experiences of psychological phenomena. We seem, in part, to adopt 'psychiatrised, psychologised and psychotherapeutised images of who we are'<sup>12</sup> and talk those identities back to those around us as we deploy 'psychologised accounts of individual and social activity in everyday life'<sup>13</sup>. In a sentence, we seem to use 'psychologised individual experience as a theoretical template'<sup>14</sup> to not only define ourselves to our social world but to also understand, negotiate and perhaps even adapt and adjust ourselves to the very social processes that make up and constitute that world. More than that though, it strikes me that aspirations to improve people's confidence, self-esteem, well-being and resilience are becoming ever more ubiquitous within public policy and are even starting to underpin all manner of social interventions to such an extent that it feels as though the social world is itself beginning to ask ever more of our psychological selves.

In other words, it seems to me that our modern, hyper psychologised world is suffused with subtle imperatives to act upon and improve our psychological capital as if the good of society

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<sup>9</sup> Fossas, A., 'The Age of Awareness', 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014, RSA (Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) Blogs, online – available to download at: <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/rsa-blogs/2014/10/the-age-of-awareness/>.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Barrett, M. *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1991), p. 115.

<sup>12</sup> Parker, I. *Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Revolutions in Subjectivity* (Routledge, London & New York, 2011), p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

somehow depended on us living a life that makes a project of our inner emotional and psychological selves. Reflecting upon my own observations of where and how these subtle directives and missives manifest themselves, it certainly feels as though psychological characteristics such as confidence, self-esteem and much more recently, resilience together with the ever nebulous and indeterminate idea of well-being, have been refashioned as actual capabilities - skills or aptitudes even - that we are increasingly encouraged to reflect upon, pursue and cultivate within our everyday personal and professional lives. Again, over the course of writing this thesis, it has repeatedly occurred to me that we are bombarded with all sorts of socio-cultural messages espousing the need to enhance that psychological capital and work towards some ethereal standard of psychologised self-improvement or self-actualisation. This says to me that we now value a very different kind of being in the world; one where that growing 'curiosity and investigative attitude [towards] the self and its functioning'<sup>15</sup> manifests itself in the endorsement of new kinds of habitus which turn our self-esteem, our confidence, our happiness, our well-being, our resilience, and all manner of other psychological characteristics, into matters of endeavour and enterprise.

Towards the end of writing up this thesis for example, it bemused me somewhat that confidence and resilience building training sessions were offered to postgraduate research students to help them build the kind of psychological capital purportedly necessary to negotiate the quirks and insecurities of academic life. It might have taken me a little while to write this thesis but one of the benefits of having taken longer than most is the opportunity that time has presented to witness the candid institutionalisation of interventions like this. Emotional awareness, self-confidence, and inner resilience to name just a few were never competencies that a postgraduate researcher needed to evidence when my postgraduate research studies began; but yet, in a relatively short space of time, researcher development programmes now seem to ask students to make a project of their emotional and psychological selves alongside advancing their far more functional research skills. This is just one relatable example, amongst many, but it is included here to highlight my feeling that the social world appears to be beginning to ask ever more of our psychological selves and through interventions like these, not only claiming a role in the shaping of our psychological capital but bringing new expectations to bear upon how we understand ourselves and how we practice our subjectivity against the backdrop of a dominant socio-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life.

### *Research Rationale*

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<sup>15</sup> Fossas, A., 'The Age of Awareness', online.

As you will discover, many of these observations will recur throughout this thesis and the research behind it is shaped by a personal interest in what is beginning to be asked of the modern psychologised subject. Nonetheless, this thesis is principally concerned with how a prevailing Western social-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life has begun to manifest itself within development policy and practice and more to the point, what expectations this has brought to bear upon the development subject itself. In fact, notwithstanding this personal interest in psychological culture and its prevalence within Western liberal democracies, this thesis will make a contribution to development studies and the literature on both the theory and practice of community-based approaches to international development in particular. In summary, the research behind this thesis draws upon a steadfast academic interest in participation as a development concept and the longstanding belief that participatory approaches to international development can facilitate decisive beneficiary led development action and social change. More specifically, it takes a keen and precise interest in participatory approaches embedded in small localised, community settings and sets out to generate broader, grounded insights into the anticipated impact of these types of community-based approaches to international development on the development subject as well as the normative commitments held by those who conceive and champion them.

To set these aspirations in context, this thesis sees participation as a momentous normative idea that has arguably transformed attitudes and approaches to international development more so than any other idea in recent memory and which to this day, encourages development theorists, policy-makers and practitioners alike to reflect upon how best to relate development projects, programmes and policies to those most affected by them. Its normative resonance and reach as a development concept is staggering and despite arousing equal measures of approbation and critical contestation over the years, it retains significant influence within mainstream development thought and practice.<sup>16</sup> The prominent tyranny/transformation debate for example, which once threatened to subvert participation's popularity as a development concept, appears to have receded a little into history and whilst the contributions of both Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari's *Participation: The New Tyranny*, followed by Samuel Hickey and Giles Mohan's *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation*, still set the tone for most critical reflection on the possibilities and pitfalls of participatory development, it seems to me that participation's standing as a development concept remains as strong as it ever was.<sup>17</sup> In short, the resilience of the idea fascinates me and as a result, the research underpinning this

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<sup>16</sup> Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. *Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?* (The World Bank, Washington DC, 2013), p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> See: Cooke, B., & Kothari, U (Eds). *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (Zed Books, London & New York, 2001) and Hickey, S., & Mohan, G (Eds). *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation?* (Zed Books, London & New York, 2004).

thesis felt encouraged to make a contribution to the literature on community-based approaches to participatory development in light of this observed and interpreted normative fortitude.

Its aspirations go much further though and whilst the resilience of the idea has motivated me to reflect upon the normativity that underpins its popularity as a development concept, the research this thesis documents was stirred and then determined by something a little more specific. Inspiration was found in language and in the early stages of my research, the presence of psychological terminology within the documented aspirations of a rising number of different community-based approaches to participatory development caught my attention. Subtle, fleeting and perhaps barely even noticeable at times, the budding appearance and use of words like confidence and self-esteem catalysed my curiosity and in turn, helped to pinpoint the existence of subtle ambitions to improve the poor's confidence, self-esteem, well-being, resilience and other psychological characteristics through induced participatory development practice. Later on, stronger statements championing the positive impact of one specific approach to community-based participatory development on participants' confidence and self-esteem convinced me that my research should focus on what appeared to be a nascent interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice. A cursory literature review revealed this to be something that has received very little, if any, critical attention in the literature on community-based approaches to participatory development and as such, consolidated this thesis' interest in participatory approaches that in whatever way seek to influence participants' psychological capital.

The specific participatory approach which provoked this interest and focus is known as REFLECT and in view of what it claims, it was adopted as this thesis' illustrative case study. Its descriptive acronym stands for *Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Community Empowerment Techniques* and denotes a community-based approach to participatory development which fuses the political philosophy of Paulo Freire with practical participatory methodologies adapted from participatory rural appraisal techniques. In summary, REFLECT seeks to harness the functional literacy acquisition process to enable participants to identify and overcome development challenges in their everyday lives whilst acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. Like many other community development initiatives, it adopts a capability approach and is underpinned by a belief that induced participatory investments in communities will lead to their political empowerment and confer a sustainable capacity to fashion development in their own terms.<sup>18</sup> As alluded to above, it also struck me that REFLECT talked about increasing participants' confidence and self-esteem in the same way that it talked

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<sup>18</sup> Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. *Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?*, p. 30.

about enhancing their sense of political empowerment. It seemed to conceptualise improvements in participants' psychological capital, be that their confidence or self-esteem, as indicators of the participant empowerment it seeks to realise and this subsequently raised questions in my mind about what REFLECT was actually trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject was expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms.

Almost concurrently, an extended review of the literature brought Vanessa Pupavac's work on the substantive, but non-formal, concept of therapeutic governance sharply into focus.<sup>19</sup> Therapeutic governance, as defined through a discrete body of her research, is a term used to describe the 'promotion of emotional management strategies [by external, international actors] to tackle a whole range of global issues from war to population control [...] to poverty'<sup>20</sup>. To Pupavac, these emotional management strategies are predicated on a belief that 'an individual's emotional state [is] no longer a matter of personal concern, but [...] an aspect of good governance'<sup>21</sup> and her research, tentatively presupposes that 'development [set in motion a therapeutic turn and became] a form of therapeutic governance [when it began to focus] on enhancing people's capacities, motivation and sense of well-being within their existing material circumstances'<sup>22</sup>. It became immediately apparent to me that Pupavac's work was of significant interest and value to this thesis and whilst controversial, it shone an energising critical spotlight on aspirations to enhance individual-level psychological capital that might otherwise have been accepted and welcomed unconditionally. Indeed, a critical appraisal of her research, suggested to me that Pupavac's work on therapeutic governance offered a fresh perspective on aspirations to improve the poor's confidence, self-esteem, well-being, resilience and other psychological characteristics through induced participatory development practice.

On the basis of my (perhaps slightly naive and idealistic) worldview, nobody would necessarily ever begrudge building other people's confidence and self-esteem; but what Pupavac's work helpfully does is to ask some awkward questions about the socio-political conditions under which these kinds aspirations are conceived and championed, and even more importantly, for what ends. At its heart, Pupavac's research argues that 'enhancing people's capacities, motivation and sense of well-being within their existing material circumstances'<sup>23</sup> promotes individual-level psychological accommodation and adjustment to the socio-political

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<sup>19</sup> McFalls, L., & Pandolfi, M., 'The Enemy – Live', in Bachmann, J., Bell, C., & Holmqvist, C (Eds). *War, Police and Assemblages of Intervention* (Routledge, London & New York, 2015), p. 87.

<sup>20</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2004), p. 150.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>22</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', *Conflict, Security & Development*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2005), p. 173.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

status quo. In turn, and particularly where that status quo is characterised by unjust social conditions, she suggests that a focus on people's emotional subjectivity as opposed to the material conditions that so often determine their lives is worryingly misplaced and raises tricky, challenging questions about the ultimate motivations and normative commitments of those aspiring to positively influence people's psychological capital. Pupavac dares to pose these questions and even though her perspective as an international relations specialist might not automatically qualify her to comment so specifically on the minutiae of development practice, her observation that macro-level development policy has rendered an individual's emotional state an acceptable 'aspect of good governance rather than a private matter of personal concern'<sup>24</sup> felt pertinent to my own research in light of the identification of subtle ambitions to improve the poor's psychological character through induced participatory development practice outlined above.

In fact, it struck me that Pupavac's work presented an opportunity to use my own research to test some of the striking conclusions she comes to about the demoralisation of the development project as a whole. Not least her supposition that interventions which talk about building confidence, self-esteem and so on and so forth actually locate the causes of the development subject's political disempowerment in deficits of personal confidence and self-esteem and in turn, seek to bring about a depoliticised vision of empowerment singularly grounded in 'reforming [its emotional] subjectivity'<sup>25</sup>. Pupavac is by no means the only commentator - academic or otherwise - who has identified the prevalence of a distorted and misplaced 'conceptualisation of social justice [that] stresses normative/psychological causations and therapeutic interventions'<sup>26</sup>. However, to me at least, her work coherently takes these kinds of suppositions to their logical conclusion, questioning what such a conceptualisation of social justice might actually legitimise, and in doing so she raises the prospect of 'a [worryingly] misanthropic view of humanity'<sup>27</sup> influencing development policy and practice. The idealist in me would like to hope that this is by no means the case and as my thinking evolved, it struck me that my own research might be able to illuminate what appears to be a nascent interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice a little less pejoratively.

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<sup>24</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) Working Paper Series No. 98, March 2014, online - available to download at: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55c9f249a.pdf>, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Pupavac, M., & Pupavac, V., 'Trauma Advocacy, Veteran Politics and the Croatian Therapeutic State', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2012), p. 203.

<sup>26</sup> Grugel, J., & Piper, N. *Critical Perspectives on Global Governance: Rights and Regulations in Governing Regimes* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2007), p. 107.

<sup>27</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Hamlet's Crisis of Meaning, Mental Wellbeing and Meaningless in the War on Terror', Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice Working Paper 13, online - available to download at: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cssgj/documents/working-papers/wp013.pdf>.

With that in mind, the research documented in this thesis sets out to critically interrogate some of Pupavac's more controversial suppositions by asking whether and to what extent REFLECT - as one example of a community-based approach to participatory development that aspires to nurture participants' psychological capital alongside their political empowerment - might itself represent a form of therapeutic governance. This is this thesis' overriding research question and as mentioned earlier, it utilises REFLECT as an illustrative case study to capture a better sense of the normative commitments that might conceivably lie beneath aspirations to improve the poor's psychological capital through induced participatory development practice and in doing so, gauge the relevance and applicability of Pupavac's suppositions.<sup>28</sup> It is however acutely aware of its own limitations and without apology, it is important to note that this thesis takes no interest in pursuing a deep ethnographic study of REFLECT participation in practice and as such, it should not be read as anything other than a theoretical critique of REFLECT's normative epistemic foundations. Indeed, the claims this thesis makes are grounded in a philosophical-hermeneutic engagement with REFLECT as an episteme and derive their validity from a methodology that utilises immanent critique, rather than extensive field-based research, to scrutinise what REFLECT is actually trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject appears to be expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms.

Indeed, the thesis you are about to read utilises the philosophical-hermeneutic method of immanent critique to expose and scrutinise the twofold expectancy that REFLECT circle participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being *alongside* political empowerment. It does so by engaging with REFLECT as an epistemic body of knowledge claims but perhaps more significantly, by also reaching out and engaging with the epistemic community of non-governmental organisation actors who first conceived and then subsequently championed REFLECT as a community-based approach to international development.<sup>29</sup> A later chapter will outline this thesis' methodology and methods in far greater detail; but suffice to say, you will soon discover that this thesis has utilised a small number of qualitative research interviews with some of REFLECT's chief architects and early proponents to generate richer, grounded insights into their normative commitments and to complement the critical resources already available for immanent critique. They were chiefly undertaken to ask questions of the epistemic community of actors that brought REFLECT into being; but given that many of these actors were also keyed into sector-wide debates about the

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<sup>28</sup> Levy, JS., 'Case Studies: Types, Design and Logics of Inference', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 25 (2008), p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Haas, PM., 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (1992), p. 3.



growing prioritisation of 'psychological empowerment as an orientation and targeted outcome for community development efforts'<sup>30</sup>, they were also approached to participate in the research in the hope that their involvement might yield further insight into the expectations this has brought to bear upon the development subject itself.

All things considered, this little preamble has touched on both methodology and method to influence your expectations of the research this thesis will now go on to document. To press the point a little more firmly, my research stops short of utilising REFLECT as full blown theory confirming or theory informing case study and instead draws upon it as an illustrative, plausibility probing, case study to demonstrate the empirical relevance of the proposition that a prevailing Western social-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life has begun to manifest itself within development policy and practice.<sup>31</sup> Yes, it will ask whether and to what extent, REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance, in order to gauge the relevance and applicability of some of Pupavac's more striking suppositions about the demoralisation of the development project as a whole; but it will do so to help give you, or any other reader for that matter, a better feel for the proposition that development policy and practice is beginning to ask ever more of the development subject and bringing new expectations to bear upon how that subject practices its subjectivity. In short, it sets out to scrutinise aspirations to improve the poor's psychological capital through induced community-based participatory development practice and determine their implications in relation to future conceptualisations of an increasingly psychologised development subject.

#### *Outline Chapter Structure*

The thesis' chapter structure generally reflects the development of my research and in light of earlier observations about participation's emphatic resilience and seemingly unassailable popularity as a development concept; it begins in Chapter One with a decisive comment on participation's standing as a momentous normative idea that has arguably transformed attitudes and approaches to international development more so than any other in recent memory. In doing so, it acknowledges that participation is a multiple meaning concept which not only harbours a multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings but which has also influenced the creation and implementation of a huge variety of participatory approaches at varying spatial scales. In this regard, the chapter recognises that this multiplicity directly affects the claims the entire thesis can make about its contribution to the literature on community-based approaches to participatory development and in recognition of that, it

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<sup>30</sup> Christens, BJ., 'Targeting Empowerment in Community Development: A Community Psychology Approach to Enhancing Local Power and Well-Being', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2012), p. 538.

<sup>31</sup> Levy, JS., 'Case Studies: Types, Design and Logics of Inference', pp. 6-7.

makes an effort to articulate an honest and humble assessment of that contribution's limitations as well as its potential. In summary, it champions an approach to thinking about *multiplicity* theoretically that allows the thesis to openly concede that its conclusions cannot necessarily be generalised across the multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings that participation's normativity harbours but which still allows it to openly and honestly claim that its contribution to literature on community-based approaches to participatory development may be transferable and translatable, rather than generalisable, across that complexity.

Chapter Two moves on to squarely introduce REFLECT as this thesis' single illustrative case study. The chapter serves a functional purpose in that it provides a summary outline of what REFLECT is and what it aspires to achieve; but in doing so, it also establishes it as the conduit through which this thesis will generate broader, grounded insights into the aspirations of community-based participatory development itself. It will then become more argumentative in nature as it initially turns to locate and contextualise REFLECT in relation to participation's conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary *development* before shifting again to write into being a summary interpretation of REFLECT's underlying value framework that honours the preceding chapter's call to think about *multiplicity* theoretically. By consequence, the second half of the chapter will reveal that documentary testimonies of REFLECT's anticipated impact upon the development subject feature a series of modest assertions that appear to imagine increased personal confidence and self-esteem as indicators of the participant empowerment it seeks to realise. It will press that REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject, expressed in a mixture of political *and* psychological terms, is scantily theorised and in light of Pupavac's prior work, it will ask - defining this thesis' primary research question in the process - whether and to what extent REFLECT might itself represent a form of therapeutic governance.

Chapter Three will outline the thesis' methodology and methods. It will explain why immanent critique informs its methodological framework and outline how this thesis understands and orients itself to immanent critique as a research method. In summary, the chapter will present immanent critique as a methodologically unique form of philosophical-hermeneutic interpretation which, by virtue of its ability to foreground tensions and/or contradictions within authoritative forms of knowledge, will enable the thesis to scrutinise the twofold expectancy that REFLECT circle participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being *alongside* political empowerment. In other words, it will attest that immanent critique is expedient precisely because it can improve understandings of 'the significance of [...] particular kinds of [conceptual]

contradiction present within<sup>32</sup> an object of study and moreover 'what these contradictions [can reveal] about the social [environment] out of which [that object of study]'<sup>33</sup> emerged. As such, the chapter will claim that immanent critique presents the best possible methodological means to critically appraise the 'concealed or insufficiently thematised contradictions'<sup>34</sup> at the heart of REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject picked up in the previous chapter. The chapter will then conclude by specifying how immanent critique has shaped this thesis' research methods and influenced the design of a project of inquiry that supplements a theoretical critique of REFLECT's normative foundations with a small, exploratory empirical study utilising qualitative methods.

Chapter Four turns to critical psychological and sociological literatures to explain how a cultural benchmark of psychologised personhood, which prioritises the 'personal life of the individual as locus of both problem and responsibility for change'<sup>35</sup>, has taken hold alongside the 'widespread acceptance and adoption of a therapeutic consciousness'<sup>36</sup> within modern Western society. It marks a noticeable point of departure for a thesis that wants to make a contribution to development studies; but it is included at this point in the chapter structure to preface a critical review of Vanessa Pupavac's work, together with other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance in Chapter Five. The chapter thus serves a useful bridging function and introduces the critical psychological concept of *psychologisation* to explain how an 'ever expanding tendency to manage non-psychological issues in psychological [ways]'<sup>37</sup>, has noticeably influenced the ways in the modern psychologised subject is now thought about and acted upon. It supplements this with a short synopsis of recent Western socio-cultural change to affirm that a cultural benchmark of psychologised personhood, which asks the subject to '[psychologise its] relationship to the world'<sup>38</sup> and practice its subjectivity through 'endless immersion in the depths of [its] psychological self'<sup>39</sup>, now underpins the imagination of the modern psychologised subject and might even stand as a reliable measure of the creeping *psychologisation* of the development subject itself.

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<sup>32</sup> Jarvis, S., *Adorno: A Critical Introduction* (Polity Press, United Kingdom, 1998), p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>35</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy* (Sage Publications Ltd, London, 1998), p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable Object', *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, Vol. 8 (2010), p. 63.

<sup>37</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, Vol. 8 (2010), p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, Vol. 8 (2010), p. 197.

<sup>39</sup> Álvarez-Uría, F., Varela, J., & Gordo, Á., & Parra, P., 'Psychologised Life and Thought Styles', *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, Vol. 8 (2010), p. 11.

Chapter Five presents a critical review of Vanessa Pupavac's work, together with other derivative literature, on *therapeutic governance*. In doing so, it will outline how the *securitisation of development* and the increasing 'trauma talk, or *traumatology*'<sup>40</sup> of humanitarian discourses have, to Pupavac at least, precipitated a therapeutic turn within recent macro-level development policy and rendered an individual's emotional state an acceptable aspect of good governance rather than a private matter of personal concern.<sup>41</sup> It will go on to attest that the *pathologisation of the personal*, together with the *responsibilisation of the self*, prevail as the defining hallmarks of Pupavac's highly securitised notion of therapeutic governance; but that more generally, Pupavac's work spotlights how certain development interventions appear to call upon the development subject to take responsibility for his or her own personal development in a way that then politically connects their sense of self to the welfare and security of their environment. It will argue that changing expectations of the development subject are discernable within the latter; but that in order to determine whether and to what extent REFLECT might itself represent an equivalent form of therapeutic governance, the remainder of the thesis needs to look for signs of both the *pathologisation of the personal*, together with the *responsibilisation of the self*, within REFLECT's epistemic and normative frameworks as it expands its critique in the chapters to follow.

Chapter Six does just that and will draw together insights from both of the preceding two chapters to argue that the more general responsabilisation dynamic – labelled in chapter five's conclusion as the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* - which calls upon the development subject to take responsibility for his or her own personal development in a way that then politically connects their sense of self to the welfare and security of their environment is manifest within and arguably even ratified by REFLECT. In the first instance, the chapter will assert that REFLECT draws upon eudaimonic understandings of well-being, together with a vision of socially transformative empowerment that imagines personal self-transformation as the conduit of broader social change, to articulate and validate its potential. In doing so, it will argue that psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities of the kind described in the previous two chapters are noticeable within the conceptual tensions and contradictions that define them as development concepts and that by virtue of their assimilation within REFLECT's epistemic and normative frameworks, it naturally follows that REFLECT psychologises the development subject and expects it to practice something akin to the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* detailed above. It does however stop short of labelling

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<sup>40</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2012), p. 189.

<sup>41</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 152.

REFLECT as a form of therapeutic governance and instead, suggests that its conclusions should stand as an initial, but incomplete, assessment of what REFLECT might represent.

Building on this admission, the final chapter will present and discuss the findings of the thesis' supplementary empirical research. To do this, it will present its analysis of a series of semi-structured qualitative interviews with members of the epistemic community of non-governmental organisation actors who first conceived and then subsequently championed REFLECT as a community-based approach to participatory development. In summary, it will infer from the findings of this analysis that REFLECT represents a qualitatively different form of therapeutic governance to the highly securitised notion associated with Vanessa Pupavac and her work on the securitisation of development and humanitarian discourses. All the same, the chapter will argue that whilst REFLECT's normative foundations do not appear to harbour pessimistic expectations of the development subject; the normative commitments of those responsible for bringing it into being would appear to want to responsabilise the development subject to become both an agent of social change and an agent of its own protection. The chapter will suggest that this illuminates a nascent interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice a little less pejoratively; but that nevertheless, striving to establish REFLECT circle participants as agents of transformative social change on the one hand and ever more resilient agents of their own protection on the other raises all too familiar questions about the ambitions of the development project itself.

The thesis' overall conclusion will draw all of this together to assess the nature of its contribution to development studies and the literature on both the theory and practice of community-based approaches to international development. It will summarise the thesis' findings and outline how they address its overriding research question; taking care to relate its conclusions back to debates about participation's normativity as a development concept and the longstanding belief that participatory approaches to international development can facilitate decisive beneficiary led development action and social change. It will then make a statement about the thesis' overall perception of the creeping psychologisation of the development subject and whether this has brought new expectations to bear upon how that subject might be expected to practice its subjectivity as development policy and practice - as this thesis claims it is starting to do - embraces a Western socio-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life and begins to claim an ever greater and potentially even more intrusive and interventionist role in the shaping of that subject's psychological capital. The conclusion will then offer some reflections on the validity and limitations of the thesis' overall contribution to the literature on participation as a development concept as well

as the theory and practice of community-based approaches to international development before making some tentative recommendations for future related research.

## Participation as a Development Concept: A Note on Meaning and Multiplicity

### *Introduction*

This chapter will establish that the thesis as a whole intends to make a contribution to the literature on community-based approaches to participatory development. To do that, it needs to set out this thesis' understanding of participation as a development concept and will do so in full acknowledgment of the spatial ontology of participation's influence on the idea and practice of development. Or in other words, considering that 'the human world is open and changing and the precise relationship between [ideas] and the spatial fields that [adopt and harbour] them is dynamic'<sup>42</sup>, it will set out this thesis' understanding of participation as a development concept and openly acknowledge the daunting complexity this thesis faces in relation to the coexistence of different conceptualisations of participation as a development concept at varying spatial scales. In short, this chapter will acknowledge that participation is a momentous normative idea that has transformed attitudes and approaches to development more so than any other idea in recent memory. More than that though, it will acknowledge that it presents an almost irreproachable, taken for granted, façade of virtue and meaning which firstly, presents this chapter with something of a definitional challenge, and which secondly, directly affects the claims the entire thesis can make about its contribution to the literature on community-based approaches to participatory development.

To address both of these challenges, this chapter will outline its understanding of participation as a development concept in order to firmly set out the nature and boundaries of the contribution to knowledge this thesis intends to make. These two objectives define this chapter's contribution to the thesis as a whole and its comments on meaning and multiplicity are crucial in this respect; made to honestly and intelligently engage with a *development fuzzword* that harbours a 'multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings'<sup>43</sup> behind a '[taken for granted] form that everyone can [normatively] agree with'<sup>44</sup>. In fact, beyond establishing that participation is a multiple meaning concept that has influenced the creation and implementation of a huge variety of participatory development initiatives at varying spatial scales, this chapter sets out to contrive a way for this thesis to focus on the meaning of participation within community-based approaches to participatory development

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<sup>42</sup> Agnew, J., & Corbridge, S. *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy* (Routledge, London, 1995), p. 14.

<sup>43</sup> Cornwall, A., & Brock, K., 'Beyond Buzzwords: Poverty Reduction, Participation and Empowerment in Development Policies', United Nations Research Institute for Social Development Overarching Concerns Programme Paper No. 10, November 2005, online - available to download at [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/F25D3D6D27E2A1ACC12570CB002FFA9A/\\$file/cornwall.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/F25D3D6D27E2A1ACC12570CB002FFA9A/$file/cornwall.pdf), p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. iii.

without having to deny the coexistence of a whole range of subtle, slightly different, conceptualisations of participation as a development concept in other spaces. It is integral to this thesis and will introduce and champion an approach to thinking about *multiplicity* theoretically that will allow the remainder of the thesis to openly concede that its insights and conclusions cannot necessarily be generalised across the multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings that participation's normativity harbours.

All in all, this chapter is designed to preface the introduction of this thesis' single illustrative case study in the chapter to follow. That case study - identified in this thesis' introduction as a community-based approach to participatory development called REFLECT - has been chosen to generate broader, grounded insights into the aspirations of community-based participatory development itself. REFLECT however is premised on a specific contingent, situational and relational construction of participation as an idea and practice which if presented or analysed in isolation - or in other words, in the absence of this chapter's comments on meaning and multiplicity - would belie the fact that participation is a multiple meaning concept that lends intelligibility and communicability to a diverse range of participatory initiatives at different spatial scales. This thesis may not be able to make claims that can be generalised across the multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings that participation's normativity harbours but they might just sensitise the reader to new ways of thinking about the meaning of participation within community-based approaches to participatory development. As will be explained in due course, this chapter's focus on participation as a development concept is included to help this thesis anchor its interest in REFLECT as one manifestation of participation in practice and perhaps more importantly, begin to lay out a distinctive space for this thesis to walk through.

#### *Participation as a Development Concept*

This thesis understands participation as a concept which very, very loosely denotes the 'exercise of popular agency in relation to development'<sup>45</sup>. More than that though, it sees participation as a momentous normative idea that has arguably transformed attitudes and approaches to international development more so than any other idea in recent memory and which to this day, encourages development theorists, policy-makers and practitioners alike to reflect upon how to best relate development projects, programmes and policies to those most affected by them. In this respect, it has directly influenced the exponential expansion and evolution of a huge variety of participatory development initiatives at varying spatial scales

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<sup>45</sup> Hickey, S., & Mohan, G., 'Towards Participation as Transformation: Critical Themes and Challenges', in Hickey, S., & Mohan, G (Eds). *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation?* (Zed Books, London & New York, 2004), p. 3.



which in one way or another attempt to connect the intended beneficiaries of development projects, programmes and policies to all, or at least some, aspects of development practice. Further still, it typically encourages those same theorists and practitioners to also reflect upon how to more meaningfully involve and relate the most vulnerable, excluded, or marginalised to their own development. In this respect, participation is a normative concept which invokes a more complex relationship with ideas and values about democratic involvement and participation in decision making and which furthermore sets out a benchmark of *the good* or *how things ought to be* in relation to the active involvement of those latter groups in all, or at least some, aspects of development practice.

This normativity thus serves to evoke a 'world where everyone gets a chance to take part in making the decisions that affect their lives'<sup>46</sup> and lends participation a 'sense of purposefulness and [...] a decisive ring of optimism'<sup>47</sup>. Yet as Andrea Cornwall and Karen Brock lament it is sometimes far too easy to get caught up in 'seductive [...] and fulsomely positive'<sup>48</sup> concepts like participation because they appear to 'promise an entirely different way of doing business'<sup>49</sup> and 'speak to an [enticing] agenda of transformation that combines no-nonsense pragmatism with almost unimpeachable moral authority'<sup>50</sup>. In fact, having sought to '[investigate] the form and function of *development buzzwords* in the statements of intent of development agencies, exploring their performative effects as well as their semantic qualities'<sup>51</sup>; Cornwall and Brock highlight how concepts like participation - especially when '[endowed] with considerable normative power'<sup>52</sup>- promise 'a sense of the possible [and] a visionary goal toward which to strive'<sup>53</sup> but in fact 'shelter multiple meanings [and lend] the possibility of common meaning to extremely disparate [activities]'<sup>54</sup>. These development buzzwords they suggest might appeal to normative preoccupations, hopes and values, particularly in relation to enabling and empowering the vulnerable, excluded or marginalised to exercise voice and agency in relation to development practice, but in doing so they present an almost irreproachable, taken for granted, façade of virtue and meaning.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Cornwall, A., & Brock, K., 'Beyond Buzzwords: Poverty Reduction, Participation and Empowerment in Development Policies', p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

This is why Emmanuel de Kadt referred to participation's popularity as a development concept as a 'popularity without clarity'<sup>56</sup>. Its normative democratic appeal may be 'warmly persuasive'<sup>57</sup> and enabled it to '[gain] considerable purchase [...] in the language of mainstream development'<sup>58</sup>; but as Cornwall and Brock contend, participation is equally a *development fuzzword* that harbours a 'multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings'<sup>59</sup> behind a '[taken for granted] form that everyone can [normatively] agree with'<sup>60</sup>. Instead its meaning is largely dependent upon the context of use and as Cornwall and Brock rightly conclude, a little more circumspection is needed to look beyond the normativity that underpins its popularity as a development concept and to recognise the multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings they speak of.<sup>61</sup>This is a critical observation which presents this chapter with something of a definitional challenge given this thesis' general interest in community based approaches to participatory development which invariably hang on a specific contingent, situational and relational construction of participation.<sup>62</sup> More than that though, the multiplicity of meanings that Cornwall and Brock speak of directly affects the claims this entire thesis can make about its contribution to understandings of participation as a development concept; not least because its conclusions cannot necessarily be generalised across the multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings that participation's normativity harbours.

These and forthcoming comments on the multiplicity of participation's meaning are thus made to honestly and intelligently address the daunting complexity this thesis faces in relation to the coexistence of different conceptualisations of participation as a development concept. In the first instance, this thesis cannot possibly provide a comprehensive inventory of this multiplicity of meaning but at the same time would prefer to write non-reductively and honour inclusivity without succumbing to the pressure to meticulously document, detail and review every instance and space in which the meaning of participation might mean or allude to something subtly or significantly different. This may not satisfy those who might hope to see a more exhaustive review of this multiplicity of meaning. However, in order to preface the introduction of this thesis' single illustrative case study in the chapter to follow, this chapter needs to contrive a way for this thesis to ultimately focus on the meaning of participation

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<sup>56</sup> De Kadt, E., 'Community Participation for Health: The Case of Latin America', *World Development*, Vol. 10, No. 7 (1982), p. 574.

<sup>57</sup> Williams, R. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1983), p. 76.

<sup>58</sup> Cornwall, A., & Brock, K., 'Beyond Buzzwords: Poverty Reduction, Participation and Empowerment in Development Policies', p. 1

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p. iii.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

<sup>62</sup> Green, M., 'Participatory Development and the Appropriation of Agency in Southern Tanzania', *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2000), p. 68.

within community-based approaches to participatory development and to establish that it intends to make a general contribution to academic debates about the specific aspirations of community-based approaches to participatory development. The remainder of this chapter will therefore set out an approach to thinking about multiplicity theoretically which should resolve the definitional challenge mentioned above and simultaneously help this chapter articulate the nature of the contribution to understandings of participation as a development concept this thesis intends to make.

### *The Difficulty of Definition*

As outlined above, the idea and practice of participation has arguably transformed attitudes and approaches to international development more so than any other in recent memory.<sup>63</sup> It remains a persistently popular concept; principally because the common ambition to foster and facilitate the 'exercise of popular agency in relation to development'<sup>64</sup> is overwhelmingly perceived to be a good, and even virtuous, ambition. As John Cohen and Norman Uphoff note, 'one can hardly be against the concept broadly conceived'<sup>65</sup> and it is 'often endorsed unambiguously on normative grounds even if the empirical basis [of that endorsement] is not [always] as clear'<sup>66</sup>. However, as Cohen and Norman acknowledge, anybody interested in the idea or practice of participation for development will quickly find that the 'term itself is very ambiguous'<sup>67</sup>. For Peter Oakley in particular, it actually defies universal definition and its meaning cannot always be properly conveyed under the arc of a single explanatory statement.<sup>68</sup> It, in effect, requires careful definition within the context of its use. Whilst this chapter has stated that participation broadly denotes the 'exercise of popular agency in relation to development'<sup>69</sup> and alluded to the exponential expansion and evolution of a huge variety of participatory development initiatives that attempt to connect the intended beneficiaries of development to development practice itself, it needs to avoid looking for further wide-ranging definitional clarity or cohesion where there is none.

It instead should recognise and accept that participation is a multiple meaning concept that means different things to different people. Indeed, accepting that participation means different things in different contexts, and has furthermore influenced the theory and practice of development in lots of different ways at different times, should hopefully steer this thesis'

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<sup>63</sup> Hickey, S., & Mohan, G., 'Towards Participation as Transformation: Critical Themes and Challenges', p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Cohen, JM., & Uphoff, N., 'Participation's Place in Rural Development: Seeking Clarity through Specificity', *World Development*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1980), p. 213.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Oakley, P., 'The Concept of Participation in Development', *Landscape & Urban Planning*, Vol. 20, Nos. 1-3 (1991), p. 115.

<sup>69</sup> Hickey, S., & Mohan, G., 'Towards Participation as Transformation: Critical Themes and Challenges', p. 3.

away from trying to press on and present an ever more exhaustive and all-encompassing definition here. There is of course something to be said for trying to simplify and package participation's meaning into an easily repeatable phrase or statement that can demonstrate a competent understanding of what it broadly denotes. It would certainly make dealing with and relating to a nebulous concept like participation, whose use and scope as Oakley confirms is so widespread and more often than not surrounded by a cloud of rhetoric, far more manageable.<sup>70</sup> No single definition however can be 'everywhere at once'<sup>71</sup> and will always struggle to 'make room within [itself] for whatever it [...] leaves out, for what is not there, [and for what is] not made explicit'<sup>72</sup>. It will always depend, for its intelligibility, on some form of selectivity and some means of abstraction and these dual processes of reductionism will invariably (a little like the workings of memory for example) push detail into the shade and suppress, contour, partition and section away vitally useful and insightful complexity.<sup>73</sup>

With that in mind, this chapter would like to present another way of dealing with and relating to participation as a multiple meaning concept which can honour this complexity without having to impose a false sense of consensus, coherence or cohesion upon it. What is more, this approach presents an opportunity to honour the comparable complexity of participation's relationship to development, or in other words the fact that it has influenced international development in lots of different ways at different times, without having to squeeze that history into a single, solitary narrative of how that influence has manifested itself. Indeed, through the philosophical influence of various classical and contemporary thinkers, through the perceptible ebb and flow of development paradigms, or through some appreciable historical socio-political moment or sequence of moments, participation's growing influence on the theory and practice of international development since the middle of the late twentieth century is often written in such a way that its 'bewildering [and] layered complexity'<sup>74</sup> is itself suppressed, contoured, partitioned and sectioned away into neat little stories that stand in isolation to one another.<sup>75</sup> These stories, whilst intelligible and easily consumable, actually clip

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<sup>70</sup> Oakley, P., 'The Concept of Participation in Development', p. 115.

<sup>71</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., 'Complexities: An Introduction', in Law, J., & Mol, A (Eds). *Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices* (Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2002), p.6.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Shapiro, MJ. *Reading the Postmodern Polity: Political Theory as Textual Practise* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis & Oxford, 1992), pp. 9, 15, 29, 39-40, & 122.

<sup>74</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., 'Complexities: An Introduction', p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Denis Goulet, for example, preferred to write the history of participation's merit for development through the intellectual legacies of Ivan D. Illich, J.P. Naik and Paulo Freire. Robert Chambers is of course renowned for falling back upon the realm of rural development and activist participatory research, agro-ecosystem analysis, applied anthropology, field research on farming systems, and rapid rural appraisal as a basis for his work on participatory rural appraisal. Jan Nederveen Pieterse sinks into critical genealogies of some of the most popularly, but ambiguously, framed development paradigms as a means to acknowledge participation's hazy standing as a pennant for anything and everything which seeks to attain development *from below*. Others, including Giles Mohan and Kristian Stokke, favour a form of historical socio-political contextualisation which hinges upon 'the neoliberal counter revolution in development theory' and which almost always proceeds to comment upon how throughout

history into fragments and sell back manipulated and reconstructed accounts of the past which bear no resemblance to the messy, complicated and multifaceted reality of participation's influence and impact upon changing attitudes and approaches to international development.<sup>76</sup>

### *Multiplicity and the Value of Thinking and Writing Topographically*

To address this definitional challenge, this chapter would instead like to introduce and champion an approach that respects this complexity and which advocates thinking about *multiplicity* theoretically. Defined by Annemarie Mol and John Law as the way things coexist and relate to one another in a single moment, a theoretical approach to multiplicity advocates relating to complexity spatially without necessarily having to make it intelligible through singular simplification.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, a refusal to expel complexity together with a refusal to reduce complexity and simplicity to interdependent binary opposites that work against one another are its defining hallmarks.<sup>78</sup> As Mol and Law explain, a respect for multiplicity refuses to singularly order complexity and instead advocates ordering it in different, multiple, parallel ways. Or in other words, using one act of simplification to order and simplify complexity in one way; and then using another to order and simplify the same complexity another way; and so on and so forth until various orderings which neither replicate the same simplicities nor exist in hierarchical relation to one another lend a pattern of intelligibility to that complexity.<sup>79</sup> In an abstract sense, thinking about multiplicity theoretically offers an insight into how to order complexity spatially so that an array of different simplifications of that complexity can be reviewed, to determine something specific about one or the different ways they may relate to one another.<sup>80</sup>

In practice, this then involves thinking and writing in ways that neither repress nor push complexity to the margins 'when things relate but do not add up, [...] if events occur but not within the processes of linear time, [...] and if phenomena share a space but cannot be mapped'<sup>81</sup>. This, Mol and Law suggest, involves thinking and writing *topographically*;

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the late 1980s and 1990s subsidiary social development goals meshed with goals for greater efficiency and heralded a less than innocent role for decentralisation, collaborative state-civil society partnerships, institutional reform, good governance, and the participation of local stakeholders. See for example: Goulet, D., 'Participation in Development: New Avenues', *World Development*, Vol.17, No. 2 (1989), p. 165; Chambers, R., 'The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal', *World Development*, Vol. 22, No. 7 (1994), p. 954; Pieterse, JN., 'My Paradigm or Yours? Alternative Development, Post Development, Reflexive Development', *Development and Change*, Vol. 29 (1998), p. 346; Mohan, G., &Stokke, K., 'Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2000), p. 248; & Gore, C., 'The Rise and Fall of the Washington Consensus as a Paradigm for Developing Countries', *World Development*, Vol. 28, No. 5 (2000), p. 795.

<sup>76</sup> Calvino, I. *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller* (Vintage Books, London, 1998), p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., 'Complexities: An Introduction', pp. 1-8.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p. 20.

'discovering methods of laying out a space, for laying out spaces, and for defining paths to walk through these'<sup>82</sup>. To explain what they mean by thinking and writing topographically and of laying out spaces and defining paths to walk through those spaces, they ask their reader to imagine a simple sketchbook and to then 'imagine [...] turning the pages of that sketchbook, looking at the different pictures, one after another'<sup>83</sup>. They suggest 'that each picture orders and simplifies some part of the world in one way or another, but what is drawn is always provisional and waits for the next picture, which draws things differently'<sup>84</sup>. Indeed, as mentioned above, each picture draws and simplifies a complex picture in one way; whilst another then draws and simplifies the same complex picture another way, and so on and so forth until the whole sketchbook represents a collection of multifaceted representations of the same picture neither in opposition nor in hierarchical relation to one another.<sup>85</sup>

All in all, this chapter would like to suggest that a respect for multiplicity, and indeed thinking about multiplicity more theoretically as a way to relate to complexity, can help this thesis think about participation as a multiple meaning concept that has transformed attitudes and approaches to international development in lots of different, and often parallel, ways. In the first instance, it presents an opportunity to lay out the literature and what it has to say about participation in such a way that stops short of reductively conflating and sectioning away all of the detail and complexity it has to relay. In fact, it conceivably enables this thesis to relate to participation spatially and furthermore acknowledge that varying conceptualisations or understandings of participation as a development concept coexist at once. In fact, it conceivably enables it to recognise the different spaces in which participation is presented as beneficial for development whilst making a point of emphasising how certain practical, philosophical, historical and ideological factors have resonated differently within those spaces at specific times.<sup>86</sup>To all intents and purposes, it enables this thesis to acknowledge that different influences and pressures have rendered different conceptions of participation more meaningful and apposite in one space and less so in others, without forgetting that the provenance of meaning across these different spaces may come together and add up comfortably, in tension, or both.<sup>87</sup>

That is to say, at some very abstract and perhaps even unconscious level, there is a generally shared or assumed understanding of what the concept of participation more or less does and

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Gaventa, J., 'Foreword', in Cornwall, A., & Coelho, V.S. *Spaces for Change? The Politics of Citizen Participation in New Democratic Arenas* (Zed Books, London & New York, 2007), p. xiii.

<sup>87</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., 'Complexities: An Introduction', p. 11.

does not denote. This does not however mean that each of the multiple and varied manifestations of participatory development presented in the literature rest upon a single ‘philosophical construction of participation’<sup>88</sup>. Such an assertion would be misguided, nonsensical even; but it does intimate a need to explore what certain appropriations of participation for development retain in common as well as what differentiates them without having to choose between them and present one as truth. This latter point may seem a little obscure, but the suggestion that the ‘linguistic usage of a concept’<sup>89</sup> harbours both harmony and friction as its meaning is continually affected by different influences and pressures in different spaces is a powerful one. Put another way, it is important to concede that whilst different conceptualisations of participation are appropriated for ‘very different uses [...] at different times and places’<sup>90</sup> and that different justifications for its use ‘happen to be convincing for various people in a variety of specific situations’<sup>91</sup>, the term retains a niggling sense of familiarity or recognisability which underpins ‘all known usages [and whose] absence would deprive the broad concept of [its very] intelligibility and communicability’<sup>92</sup>.

#### *The Spatial and Temporal Volatility of Meaning*

It is therefore important to recognise that a discretely, albeit spatially and temporally volatile, ‘understood similarity’<sup>93</sup> underpins participation’s meaning across a range of different ‘participatory situations and actions’<sup>94</sup>. For example, as this chapter has already relayed, participation broadly denotes the ‘exercise of popular agency in relation to development’<sup>95</sup> and at a very abstract level, anyone talking about participation customarily alludes to this or some other closely comparable definition. Lift and map this understanding onto the dynamics of an adult literacy class within a rural village community or the deliberations of multi-sectoral international aid programmes however and its fit is simultaneously appropriate but lacking. For sure a recognisable trace of similarity makes these two different situations comparable but beyond this fragile tie of similarity, which mostly hinges on the meaning of participation at an *etymological* level, the mix of difference is far more revealing.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, as huge swathes of literature have already made known, different ‘economic, social and political’<sup>97</sup> considerations have diversified, and at times precariously polarised the aspirations of different participatory

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<sup>88</sup> Green, M., ‘Participatory Development and the Appropriation of Agency in Southern Tanzania’, p. 68.

<sup>89</sup> Freedman, M. *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York, 1998), p. 63.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>91</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., ‘Complexities: An Introduction’, p. 9.

<sup>92</sup> Freedman, M. *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, p. 62.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>94</sup> Cohen, J.M., & Uphoff, N., ‘Participation’s Place in Rural Development: Seeking Clarity through Specificity’, p. 214.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>96</sup> Here *etymological* denotes how the form and meaning of words, like participation, have changed over time.

<sup>97</sup> Cohen, J.M., & Uphoff, N., ‘Participation’s Place in Rural Development: Seeking Clarity through Specificity’, p. 214

initiatives.<sup>98</sup> Taking Mol and Law's observation that 'sensitivity to multiplicity suggests a number of questions about similarity and difference [and] and about what it is to be [...] more than one and less than many'<sup>99</sup>, there is something to be said for being receptive to this mix of harmony and friction as it occurs.

To support this point, Michael Freeden's persuasive analysis of the morphological attributes of political concepts strikes a notable degree of resonance with Mol and Law's own thoughts on the subject of multiplicity. Read together they have much to add to this chapter; including offering insight into how this thesis can relate to participation as a multiple meaning concept that harbours a multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings.<sup>100</sup> Freeden's observation that every concept harbours 'ineliminable features'<sup>101</sup> for example validates the idea that participation retains a delicate but transient sense of something recognisable and familiar by virtue of 'actual [and repeated] linguistic usage'<sup>102</sup>. Indeed, he writes that whilst 'not intrinsic to [...] the meaning of the word to which they attach'<sup>103</sup>, 'all known uses of [any concept] employ'<sup>104</sup> these ineliminable features to denote some level of substantive meaning and their absence would in fact deprive concepts of intelligibility and communicability. Freeden nonetheless cautions against inferring any richer or sophisticated meaning from these ineliminable features alone.<sup>105</sup> The familiarity or recognisability they sustain may render a concept intelligible and communicable; but its meaning in any given space, at any given moment in time, actually hinges on the context of its use together with, as Freeden takes pains to stress, its 'particular structural position within a configuration of other political concepts'<sup>106</sup>.

In fact, he writes that 'concepts [do not simply] acquire meaning [...] through temporally accumulative traditions of [linguistic usage in] spatially diverse cultural contexts.'<sup>107</sup> Instead, they accrue and impart meaning through other concepts in any given structural configuration of concepts.<sup>108</sup> In this respect, participation's meaning is also dependent upon the spatial and

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<sup>98</sup> For example, through various twists, turns and revisions of thinking at one time or another, participation has been recognised as a requirement: to mobilise and embed new technologies; to initiate and sustain patterns of production and consumption; to forge capital and labour relations between centres and peripheries; to legitimate electoral and other bureaucratic decision making processes; to entrench local ownership of specific development projects; to promote democratic governance and enhance political efficacy; and to transform ideas of citizenship and deeper human aspirations of the good life to catalogue just a few.

<sup>99</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., 'Complexities: An Introduction', p. 11.

<sup>100</sup> Cornwall, A., & Brock, K., 'Beyond Buzzwords: Poverty Reduction, Participation and Empowerment in Development Policies', p. 1

<sup>101</sup> Freeden, M. *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p. 61.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>106</sup> Freeden, M., 'Political Concepts and Ideological Morphology', *Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1994), p. 141.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*



temporal meaning of development and by consequence, their relational meaning is arguably 'contested and contextualized, invoked and revoked, posited and positioned'<sup>109</sup> in different temporal and spatial contexts. Having drawn upon Freeden's analysis to scrutinise the spatial and temporal volatility of participation's meaning, it is worth mentioning that development harbours its own ineliminable features and again by virtue of repeated linguistic usage, these features denote and demarcate its immediate intelligibility and communicability.<sup>110</sup> Yet whilst development is clearly a persuasive normative idea; its meaning fluctuates across a range of different spaces. Like participation's meaning, different conceptions of development and different conceptions of what it should amount to 'come together and add up comfortably, in tension, or both'<sup>111</sup> across this varied topography. For this reason, it is by no means unfounded or provocative to suggest that the hopes and aspirations invested in participation and particular participatory initiatives at different times and in different spaces are never all that far removed from the hopes and aspirations invested in the desire for a particular, spatially and temporally contingent, kind of development.

### *Conclusions*

All in all, Mol and Law's theoretical approach to multiplicity, together with their call to think and write in topographical ways, can from this point onwards help this thesis focus on the specific contingent, situational and relational meaning of participation within community-based approaches to participatory development without ever having to discount the coexistence of other meanings in other spaces. In fact, it enables this thesis to deftly address the daunting complexity it faces in relation to the multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings Cornwall and Brock speak of. As Mol and Law themselves advocate, adopting a theoretical approach to multiplicity allows this thesis to acknowledge that different influences and pressures have rendered different conceptions of participation more meaningful and apposite in one space and less so in others without having to repress or push that complexity to the margins. It provides this thesis with an opportunity to focus on one aspect of that complexity and to determine something specific about the meaning of participation within community-based approaches to participatory development which may or may not be relevant in other spaces. In other words, it allows this thesis to honour the multiplicity of meanings that participation's normativity harbours even as it begins to deliberately lay out a specific space to walk through and by consequence, demarcate the nature

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<sup>109</sup> Benhabib, S., 'Claiming Rights across Borders: International Human Rights and Democratic Sovereignty', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 103, No. 4 (November 2009), p. 698.

<sup>110</sup> Freeden, M. *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p. 61.

<sup>111</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., 'Complexities: An Introduction', p. 11.

and boundaries of its contribution to understandings of participation as a development concept.

Moreover, it allows this chapter to preface the introduction of this thesis' case study in the chapter to follow with an unwavering respect for multiplicity. That case study, known as REFLECT and identified in this thesis' introduction as an approach to community-based participatory development which fuses the political philosophy of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire with participatory methodologies adapted from participatory rural appraisal techniques, has been chosen to generate broader, grounded insights into the aspirations of community-based participatory development itself. The next chapter will introduce, describe and contextualise REFLECT and will do so in view of the fact that 'the human world is open and changing and the precise relationship between [ideas] and the spatial fields that [adopt and harbour] them is dynamic'<sup>112</sup>. In other words, it will do so in full acknowledgment of the spatial ontology of participation's influence as a development concept on the idea and practice of development and offer a brief synopsis of the practical, philosophical, historical and ideological factors that have shaped participation's meaning at the spatial scale within which REFLECT operates. Beyond that, it will proceed to foreground something about REFLECT which has substantially spiked this thesis' interest and in doing so, not only lay out a space for this thesis to walk through but begin to establish the nature and boundaries of its contribution to the literature on community-based approaches to participatory development.

That contribution is by consequence premised on an unwavering respect for multiplicity and is dependent upon a clear and candid articulation of an ontology that refuses to close its eyes to its irreducibility. What follows in the remainder of this thesis should therefore be taken and read as one picture amongst many. No more instructive beyond its own idiosyncrasies than any other but compelling enough to sensitise the reader to new ways of thinking; not because the observations it presents are in any way 'generally applicable but because they may be transferable [and] translatable'<sup>113</sup>. In this respect, this chapter asks that the reader imagine the same simple sketchbook mentioned earlier. It asks its reader to imagine 'turning the pages of [that] sketchbook. [To] imagine looking at different pictures, one after the other, [and to understand that] each orders and simplifies some part of the world, in one way or another, but what is drawn is always provisional and waits for the next picture, which draws things differently'<sup>114</sup>. It then asks the reader to accept this thesis and the contribution to knowledge it intends to make as just one of those pictures; one which might not tell a complete story but

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<sup>112</sup> Agnew, J., & Corbridge, S. *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy*, p. 14.

<sup>113</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., 'Complexities: An Introduction', p. 7.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

which instead foregrounds and draws attention to something significant but which will only ever constitute a partial, conditional, and interpretative picture.<sup>115</sup>

This is how this thesis envisages its contribution and as such, it asks its reader to accept this thesis in its entirety as an exercise in thinking and writing topographically. As outlined earlier in this chapter, the multiplicity of meanings that participation's normativity harbours directly affects the claims this thesis can make about its contribution to understandings of participation as a development concept; precisely because its conclusions cannot necessarily be generalised across the multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings that Cornwall and Brock speak of. In sum, Mol and Law's call to think and write topographically is embraced here to honour that honesty and at the same time defend the contribution to understandings of participation as a development concept this thesis intends to make. For one, the remainder of this thesis will lay out the literature on REFLECT and community-based approaches to participatory development in its own distinctive way. More than that though, its contribution will stem from a unique and idiosyncratic understanding of the complexities they too harbour. Its insights will be no more instructive beyond these idiosyncrasies. Yet, they may however be compelling enough to sensitise the reader to new ways of thinking; not because the observations the remainder of this thesis will present are in any way 'generally applicable [to normative understandings of participation as a development concept] but because they may be transferable [and] translatable'<sup>116</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*



## **REFLECT (Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Community Empowerment Techniques)**

### *Introduction*

This chapter will introduce, describe and contextualise REFLECT as an approach to community-based participatory development which fuses the political philosophy of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire with practical participatory methodologies adapted from participatory rural appraisal techniques.<sup>117</sup> The chapter serves a functional purpose in that it provides a summary outline of what REFLECT is and what it aspires to achieve; but in doing so, it sets out to firmly establish REFLECT as this thesis' single illustrative case study and by consequence, the subject of an in-depth, intensive and sharply focused exploration of its aspirations and related contextual conditions throughout the wider thesis.<sup>118</sup> For Robert Yin, case study research 'is used in many situations to contribute to [...] knowledge of individual, group, organisational, social, political, and related phenomena [and] whatever the field of interest, [...] arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena [within] a holistic and real-world perspective'<sup>119</sup>. In fact, beyond generating new insights into, and a better understanding of, the nature of the phenomenon under investigation, case study research can yield explanatory accounts of how the various dimensions of a specific case relate to or interact with wider contextual conditions.<sup>120</sup> As such, this chapter sets out to introduce REFLECT as its illustrative case study but also, the conduit through which this thesis will understand and generate broader, grounded insights into the aspirations of community-based participatory development itself.

The chapter begins simply with a descriptive account of what REFLECT is and a little of its history as a participatory approach to adult learning and social change that was initially piloted by Action Aid in Bangladesh, El Salvador and Uganda in the early 1990s. At a very basic level, it outlines that REFLECT stands for Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Community Empowerment Techniques and was 'originally conceived as a fusion of Paulo Freire's theoretical framework on the politics of literacy and the participatory (particularly visualisation) methodologies developed by participatory rural appraisal practitioners'<sup>121</sup>. It describes what REFLECT involves and explains to the reader how, in practice, facilitated

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<sup>117</sup> Newman, K., 'Whose View Matters? Using Participatory Processes to Evaluate REFLECT in Nigeria', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (July 2008), p. 383.

<sup>118</sup> Willig, C., 'Case Studies' in Willig, C. *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology* (Open University Press, England, 2008), p. 74.

<sup>119</sup> Yin, RK. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (SAGE Publications, London, 2014), p. 4.

<sup>120</sup> Willig, C., 'Case Studies', p. 74.

<sup>121</sup> Archer, D., & Goreth, NM., 'Participatory, Literacy and Empowerment: The Continuing Evolution of REFLECT', *Participatory Learning and Action*, Vol. 50 (2004), p. 41.

REFLECT circles attempt to harness the functional literacy acquisition process to enable participants to identify and overcome development challenges in their everyday lives whilst acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. Beyond this basic exposition, the chapter then moves on to acknowledge that REFLECT's aspirations and practice have evolved and diversified following more recent international recognition for its achievements. In doing so however, the chapter becomes more argumentative and turns to suggest that this recognition is also arguably a product of the prominence and popularity of participation as a development concept and that an additional layer of contextualisation is needed to historically locate and contextualise REFLECT in relation to participation's conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development.

From there, the chapter moves on to briefly document the confluences of thought that have brought participation and development to a point of (apparent) convergence and consensus; all the while, trying to distance itself from the standard margins to mainstream narrative which arguably offers an all too neat and all too narrow account of participation's conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development. Instead, drawing upon the work of Rajesh Tandon and Robert Chambers, the chapter sets out to argue that a swell of different ideas, influences and innovations have coalesced into different strands or streams of thinking which have in turn shaped the emergence of a wide range of unique participatory initiatives, like REFLECT, that in their own way strive to meaningfully relate the most vulnerable and excluded members of society to development practice.<sup>122</sup> Taking an ever more argumentative turn, the chapter moves to suggest that the value frameworks which underpin, encircle and energise these different initiatives render the meaning of participation and their own vision of development within them so distinctive. With that in mind, it proceeds to argue that in order to fully introduce, describe and contextualise REFLECT as this thesis' single illustrative case study, the chapter needs to engage in a discussion about REFLECT's distinctive values and not just the participatory techniques it employs.

It is therefore important to state that the second half of the chapter strives to offer something more than a conservative description of what REFLECT is and what it involves. In fact, drawing upon a close reading of the available literature, it aspires to write into being a summary interpretation of REFLECT's underlying value framework that holds true to the aspirations set out in the preceding chapter 'to think and write in topographical ways, [to discover] methods of laying out a space, for laying out spaces, and for defining paths to walk through these'<sup>123</sup>. To do this, the second half of the chapter eschews the conventions of a typical

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., 'Complexities: An Introduction', p. 8.

literature review and seeks to foreground and critically appraise aspects of REFLECT's underlying value framework – albeit, as it interprets them – in order to lay out a space and to begin to define a path for this thesis to walk through that space. Without apology therefore, the second half of this chapter will focus upon and structure itself around a summary interpretation of what this thesis interprets as three of the most distinctive and prominent aspects of REFLECT's underlying value framework: including the veneration of local communities, the influence of critical pedagogy, and the ubiquity of a will to improve that would appear to sustain a faintly detectable vision of improvement that proposes and expects a measure of psychosocial change for social transformation.

Again, in accordance with the sentiments expressed in the preceding chapter, this summary interpretation of REFLECT's underlying value framework is distinctive to this thesis and is no more instructive beyond its own idiosyncrasies than any other tendered interpretation of REFLECT's essential values. This chapter's contribution to the overall thesis should therefore be recognised as an attempt to bring into a being a partial, conditional and interpretative picture of REFLECT – neither in opposition nor in hierarchical relation to any other picture – but which is hopefully compelling enough to sensitise the reader to new ways of thinking not because the observations it presents are in any way generally applicable but because they may be transferable and translatable.<sup>124</sup> By this token, the chapter hopes to specifically foreground one aspect of REFLECT's underlying value framework that has substantially spiked this thesis' interest and which has (to this thesis at least) received very little (if any) critical attention in the literature on community-based approaches to participatory development. Indeed, having identified that REFLECT would appear to place a faintly detectable emphasis on psychosocial change for social transformation, the second half of the chapter will reveal that documentary testimonies of REFLECT's anticipated impact upon the development subject feature a series of modest assertions that appear to imagine increased personal confidence and self-esteem as indicators of the participant empowerment it seeks to realise.

Beyond empowering participants to speak to power as active politically engaged citizens, this chapter will conclude that these assertions expose a twofold expectancy that REFLECT participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being alongside political empowerment. In addition, it will suggest that this twofold expectancy is scantily theorised and to this thesis at least, raises questions about what REFLECT is actually trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in an ambiguous and potentially contradictory mixture of political and

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

psychological terms. All in all, these conclusions will spotlight a gap in the literature and part establish this thesis as a critique of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject and the normative commitments held by those who conceived and championed it. In fact, beyond bringing into being a partial, conditional and interpretative picture of REFLECT, the second half of this chapter's iterative engagement with REFLECT's underlying value framework is pivotal because it pushes the thesis on to sharpen its research questions and hone its methodological approach.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, the chapter as a whole quite decisively establishes REFLECT as an intrinsic and pragmatic case study through which the overall thesis can begin to scope out and define the exact contribution it intends to make to academic debates about the perceived aspirations of community-based participatory development.<sup>126</sup>

### *Understanding REFLECT*

Piloted by Action Aid in Bangladesh, El Salvador and Uganda between 1993 and 1995 REFLECT (an acronym of Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Community Empowerment Techniques) is a participatory approach to adult learning and transformational social change which fuses the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire with practical participatory methodologies drawn from participatory rural appraisal.<sup>127</sup> It is presented as a 'dynamic and political approach to adult learning'<sup>128</sup> and tries to harness the functional literacy acquisition process to enable participants to identify and overcome development challenges in their everyday lives whilst acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills.<sup>129</sup> It concurrently recognises that 'the ways in which people are disadvantaged by illiteracy is an issue of power and discrimination'<sup>130</sup> and that 'the acquisition of [...] literacy skills can help people demand certain rights [and] thereby [redress] inequality'<sup>131</sup>. The real distinctiveness of REFLECT

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<sup>125</sup> Willig, C., 'Case Studies', p. 78.

<sup>126</sup> Intrinsic case studies 'represent nothing but themselves. The cases in intrinsic case studies are chosen because they are interesting in their own right. The researcher wants to know about them in particular, rather than about a more general problem or phenomenon'; whilst pragmatic case study research is [...] focused, beginning with a well-defined research question that guides data collection and analysis. It works with a set of propositions that identify key areas of interest and which functions as (tentative and flexible) hypotheses [and which] are tested and revised during the course of the research' See: Willig, C., 'Case Studies', pp. 78 – 79.

<sup>127</sup> Newman, K., 'Whose View Matters? Using Participatory Processes to Evaluate REFLECT in Nigeria', p. 383.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> 'The term *functional literacy* as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) relates to the perception that 'rather than an end in itself, literacy should be regarded as a way of preparing man for a social, civic and economic role that goes beyond the limits of rudimentary literacy training consisting merely in the teaching of reading and writing. In 1978, UNESCO's General Conference adopted a definition of functional literacy – still in use today – which states: A person is functionally literate [when he or she] can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and his community's development'. See: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 'Understandings of Literacy', Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006, online - available to download at: [http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt6\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt6_eng.pdf).

<sup>130</sup> Popkins, J., 'Facilitator Training and Innovation in REFLECT', *PLA Notes*, Vol. 32 (1998), p. 69.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*



however rests in its promotion of a participatory process of literacy acquisition coupled to the realities of participants' daily lives which allows participants to determine and structure the content of their education for themselves.<sup>132</sup> As Mark Waddington and Giles Mohan neatly summarise, REFLECT seeks to 'generate literacy from within the community itself ['using participants own language and shared analysis of *their* problems'<sup>133</sup>] rather than through the use of externally imposed primers'<sup>134</sup> that more often than not cast participants as the passive recipients of exogenously developed curricula.

In practice, REFLECT adopts and promotes a spontaneous and generative key word approach to literacy learning, which advocates that adults are better equipped to learn to read and write by learning words rather than individual letters.<sup>135</sup> The process of literacy acquisition is enacted through small REFLECT circles, typically although not exclusively in rural, village locations, comprising groups of participants and a local facilitator which meet regularly at a specified time and location. Within these circles, emphasis is placed on a 'pedagogical process that [is] dialogical in nature'<sup>136</sup> with a literacy exercise beginning with discussion of the issues and problems most affecting participants' lives. Out of this discussion, recurring words and themes are identified to develop learning materials and to establish key words with special affective importance to participants that not only evoke the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they might use them but which also help them to develop basic skills in encoding and decoding print.<sup>137</sup> These key words 'are then written [...] and broken down into syllables [so that participants can] discover what other words they can make using the syllables [and] learn both the key words for that session and other new words'<sup>138</sup>. In short, literacy is generated through the discussion of local conditions and problems and the subsequent identification by participants of key words for reading and writing.<sup>139</sup>

This very basic description perhaps neglects a little more detail than is comfortably acceptable and in particular, it fails to define what participatory rural appraisal is or adequately detail how practical participatory methodologies drawn from participatory rural appraisal's toolbox

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Waddington, M., & Mohan, G., 'Failing Forward: Going Beyond PRA and Imposed Forms of Participation', in Hickey, S., & Mohan, G (Eds). *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation?* (Zed Books, London & New York, 2004), p. 223.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Popkins, J., 'Facilitator Training and Innovation in REFLECT', p. 1.

<sup>136</sup> Dighe, A., 'Pedagogical Approaches to Literacy Acquisition', background paper commissioned and prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006, Literacy for Life, online - available to download at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001459/145966e.pdf>, p. 7.

<sup>137</sup> Spener, D., 'The Freirian Approach to Adult Literacy Education', paper prepared at the Centre for Applied Linguistics, Washington DC in April 1990, revised November 1992, online - available to download at [http://www.cal.org/caela/esl\\_resources/digests/FREIREQA.html](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/FREIREQA.html).

<sup>138</sup> Carter, I., 'REFLECT: A PLA Approach to Literacy', *Footsteps: Participatory Learning & Action*, Vol. 29 (November 1996), p. 11.

<sup>139</sup> Popkins, J., 'Facilitator Training and Innovation in REFLECT', p. 1.

support and sustain REFLECT's generative key word approach to literacy learning. Participatory rural appraisal (known in abbreviation as PRA) is best described by Robert Chambers as a 'family of approaches and methods to enable [...] people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act'<sup>140</sup>. As described by Neela Mukherjee, it 'involves a set of principles, a process of communication and a menu of methods for seeking [people's] participation'<sup>141</sup> in their own development and is typically used in rural settings to initiate participatory ways of 'learning from and with [people] to investigate, analyse and evaluate constraints and opportunities'<sup>142</sup> in the spirit of 'indigenous knowledge-building'<sup>143</sup>. PRA is most commonly associated with rural development programmes and increasingly became the means through which the participation of rural people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of large-scale development programmes could be secured and facilitated.<sup>144</sup> Its methodological toolbox includes a dizzying array of overlapping qualitative and quantitative methods which Andrea Cornwall, Irene Guijt and Alice Welbourn helpfully classified under three distinctive headings as 'visualised analyses, interviewing and sampling methods and group and team dynamics methods'<sup>145</sup>.

Participatory rural appraisal's methods are so numerous in fact that it would be totally impracticable to outline and describe them here within this thesis.<sup>146</sup> That said, Cornwall, Guijt and Welbourn's classification provides a satisfactory summary for the purpose of this chapter and wider thesis. Returning then to the statement that most REFLECT exercises begin with a discussion of the issues affecting participants' lives, it is worth noting that these discussions are often initiated and guided by a range of participatory activities which add an element of the visual and the physical to proceedings. For example, groups might begin by mapping out their villages or communities using locally available materials such as sticks, stones and leaves and begin to choose a number of key words, such as houses, forests and rivers to label the

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<sup>140</sup> Chambers, R., 'The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal', p. 953.

<sup>141</sup> Mukherjee, N. *Participatory Rural Appraisal: Methodology and Applications* (Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2003), p. 30.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> Cornwall, A., Guijt, I., & Welbourn, A., 'Acknowledging Process: Challenges for Agricultural Research and Extension Methodology', IDS Discussion Paper 333, January 1993, online - available to download at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/idspublication/acknowledging-process-challenges-for-agricultural-research-and-extension-methodology>.

<sup>146</sup> Some common terms however include: secondary sources; semi-structured interviews; key informants; groups; participatory analysis of secondary sources; participatory mapping and modelling; transect walks; time lines and trend and change analysis; oral histories and ethno biographies; seasonal calendars; daily time use analysis; livelihood analysis; participatory linkage diagramming; institutional venn diagramming; well-being and wealth grouping and ranking; analysis of difference; matrix scoring and ranking; estimates and quantification; key probes; stories, portraits and case studies; team contracts and interactions; presentation and analysis; sequences; participatory planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring; group discussions and brainstorming; short standard schedules or protocols; and report writing. See: Chambers, R., 'The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal', pp. 959-961.

map.<sup>147</sup> Or alternatively, groups may use basic ranking exercises, again using similar materials, to compare how different crops grow or how much work is involved in the planting, husbandry and harvesting of crops and thus develop their numeracy alongside widening their vocabulary of key words.<sup>148</sup> In teasing out words and issues that are meaningful to participants, these tools act as reflective mirrors on the realities they portray and present participants with opportunities to 'look with new eyes on their way of life'<sup>149</sup> and inspire them to mobilise community resources to address newly identified needs.

Watching the International REFLECT Circle's promotional *Lines in the Dust* video, it is clear to see how REFLECT is used to encourage 'learning at [this] deeper, transformational level'<sup>150</sup>. In a rural community in Ghana, a group of men and women are shown participating in a mixed REFLECT circle.<sup>151</sup> Led by a local facilitator, they are asked to think about the different roles men and women undertake on a daily basis within the village and to bring items which symbolise activities such as fetching water, collecting firewood, cleaning and preparing food, into the circle. A chart, with three columns showing the hours in the day and the different tasks men and women undertake during those hours, is drawn on the ground and items are placed in the corresponding columns to visually map out the existing division of labour between the sexes. As the exercise evolves and key words are assigned to each of the symbols selected, it soon becomes clear that the women undertake the most labour intensive work in the village and this revealed reality sparks a lively debate within the group about why the men cannot take on more of the women's share of the work. As the video leads its audience to believe, many of the female participants are shown to grow in confidence as they begin to challenge the traditional roles of men and women which organise and regulate their lives.

Happy marketing scenario maybe but this footage confirms that REFLECT's community empowerment techniques are taken from the participatory rural appraisal toolbox. The theoretical implications of this connection to participatory rural appraisal will be touched upon in due course, but suffice to say, these tools are intended to arouse and strengthen a range of critical learning and empowerment processes akin to Paulo Freire's theory of conscientization. Indeed, Freire's theory of critical consciousness or conscientization is crucial to the envisaged transformational power of REFLECT; and whilst, this may not have been the case when first conceived, more recent REFLECT practice has, according to David Archer and Sara

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<sup>147</sup> Carter, I., 'REFLECT: A PLA Approach to Literacy', p. 11.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Gray, DE., 'Facilitating Management Learning: Developing Critical Reflection through Reflective Tools', *Management Learning*, Vol. 38, No. 5 (2007), p. 497.

<sup>151</sup> See: REFLECT *Lines in the Dust* video: online - available to view at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5xzpuydxjA>.

Cottingham, come to adopt conscientization, mobilisation and the transformation of power as explicit endeavours in themselves.<sup>152</sup> Described by Freire as ‘learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and taking action against an oppressive reality’<sup>153</sup>, critical consciousness fosters a capacity to understand ‘how power dynamics operate to enhance opportunities or perpetuate oppression in personal and collective life’<sup>154</sup>. Using a range of participatory tools, this more recent REFLECT practice attempts to create ‘cognitive [space] that allows individuals to free themselves from the constraints of the present moment [...] to challenge internalised images of established ways of life’<sup>155</sup> and in doing so, foster the kind of empowerment that in some (however small) way might motivate action to offset or counter those power dynamics.

It is worth noting that whilst this latter ambition illustrates that participation and empowerment are not simply sought by REFLECT as ends in themselves; the expectation that empowerment will naturally lead to action masks and conceals the actual dialectical content of conscientization as a process.<sup>156</sup> Crucially, conscientization is a cyclical process of ‘learning and action [which] works through a series of stages to develop and move [the generation of key words and] discussion [within a REFLECT circle for example] beyond participants’ [everyday activities and life encounters] to a situation of analysis and reflection and [...] ultimately [...] action’<sup>157</sup>. Returning to Freire, conscientization demarcates the act of coming to know the world since ‘the act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action’<sup>158</sup>. This ‘reflection-action cycle’<sup>159</sup> energises REFLECT and for ease of understanding, the idea goes that ‘reflection without action can quickly become meaningless, while action without reflection can limit the potential for learning or success’<sup>160</sup>. For David Archer and Nandago Maria Goreth, ‘it is not about reflection or learning [...] for the sake of it, but rather reflection is always for the purpose of eventual action. It is not about action isolated from reflection as pure activism rapidly loses direction. It is about the fusion between these elements and it can start with either’<sup>161</sup>.

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<sup>152</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual: Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Community Empowerment Techniques*, 2012, online - available to download at: <http://www.reflect-action.org/sites/default/files/u5/Reflect%20Mother%20Manual%20-%202012.pdf>.

<sup>153</sup> Evans, SD., & Prilleltensky, I., ‘Literacy for Wellness, Oppression and Liberation’, in Kincheloe, JL., & Horn Jr, RA (Eds). *The Praeger Handbook of Education and Psychology Volume 2* (Praeger, Portsmouth, NH, 2007), p. 347.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> Freire, P. *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation* (Bergin & Garvey Publishers Inc, Westport, CT, 1985), p. 124.

<sup>157</sup> REFLECT Action., ‘Process’, 2009, online - available to view at: <http://www.REFLECT-action.org/esol/process>.

<sup>158</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 10.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Newman, K., ‘Whose View Matters? Using Participatory Processes to Evaluate REFLECT in Nigeria’, p. 383.

<sup>161</sup> Archer, D., & Goreth, NM., ‘Participatory, Literacy and Empowerment: The Continuing Evolution of REFLECT’, p. 41.

As intimated above, REFLECT practice has noticeably evolved and diversified almost as quickly as its uptake by non-governmental organisations and community development groups has grown. International recognition might for example have led to the recurrent award of international prizes for 'excellence and innovation in the field of literacy'<sup>162</sup> by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2010 respectively. Yet, to echo Kate Newman, its aspirations have evolved quite rapidly away from a simple focus on literacy skills development and now incorporate ambitions for full-scale community development and transformational social change.<sup>163</sup> In fact in recent years, REFLECT has been deployed to encourage women's empowerment in early childhood care projects in Kenya, to strengthen the Dalits (untouchable caste rights) movement and women's self-help groups in Nepal, to mobilise poor and socially excluded tribal groups in Laos, to promote legal and political literacy in Cameroon and to enhance ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) education for refugees and asylum seekers in the United Kingdom.<sup>164</sup> Amongst this selection, it is also clear to see that the action REFLECT inspires 'may occur in the public or private sphere, it may be collective or individual, it may be small or large scale and it may be very local and precise [or] require linkages beyond the local level to national level mobilisation'<sup>165</sup>.

Now REFLECT's growing popularity could certainly be attributed to some of these listed achievements. It may well however also be a product of the prominence and popularity of the concept of participation and its parallel conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development. As tempting as it may be to imagine that there is something innately special about REFLECT, ignoring the ebb and flow of socio-political attitudes and their relationship to the rise and fall of recognition and reputation is foolish. Not least because the prevailing zeitgeist will often decide (typically by the rewards it confers or withholds) what ideas and practices take hold.<sup>166</sup> Indeed, a heavily mainstreamed emphasis on public participation in development has steadfastly set the tone for debates at all scales about poverty reduction, humanitarian relief, foreign aid, human rights, global governance, global health, universal education, environmental sustainability and gender equity prior to and

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<sup>162</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 'The UNESCO International Literacy Prizes', online - available to download at: <http://www.unesco.org/en/literacy-prizes/>.

<sup>163</sup> Newman, K., 'Whose View Matters? Using Participatory Processes to Evaluate REFLECT in Nigeria', p. 384.

<sup>164</sup> Taken from Newman, K., 'Whose View Matters? Using Participatory Processes to Evaluate REFLECT in Nigeria', p. 384; Duni, J., Fon, R., Hickey, S., & Salihu, N., 'Exploring a Political Approach to Rights-Based Development in North West Cameroon: From Rights and Marginality to Citizenship and Justice', in Hickey, S., & Mitlin, D (Eds). *Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Exploring the Potentials and Pitfalls* (Kumarian Press, Sterling, VA, 2009), p. 54; and [www.REFLECTION-action.org](http://www.REFLECTION-action.org). See [www.REFLECT-action.org](http://www.REFLECT-action.org) for a wider country by country inventory.

<sup>165</sup> Archer, D., & Goreth, NM., 'Participatory, Literacy and Empowerment: The Continuing Evolution of REFLECT', p. 41.

<sup>166</sup> Schoon, I., 'A Life Span Approach to Talent Development', in Heller, KA., Monks, FJ., Sternberg, RJ., & Subotnik, RF (Eds). *International Handbook of Giftedness and Talent* (Elsevier Science Ltd, Oxford, 2000), p. 215.

following the turn of the twenty first century.<sup>167</sup> The point is that REFLECT's own prominence and popularity is arguably a product of the same prominence and popularity of participation as a development concept and the investment in participatory practices this has sustained and upheld.<sup>168</sup> As such, an additional layer of contextualisation is needed to historically locate and contextualise REFLECT in relation to participation's ever growing conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development.

### *A Historical Contextualisation*

Here the preceding chapter's respect for the nuances of history, philosophy, ideology and practice that render different conceptions of participation meaningful in some spaces and inconsequential in others should surely resonate more than any other. For this reason, it would be disingenuous to locate and contextualise REFLECT under the arc of a story which narrowly suggests that a clear confluence of thought has brought participation and development to a point of (apparent) convergence and consensus. Persuasive as it is, the standard 'margins to mainstream'<sup>169</sup> narrative offers far too neat an account of participation's conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development. For any unacquainted reader, the story goes that 'primarily from experiences in rural development'<sup>170</sup> in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the virtues of community participation in development projects emerged to radically challenge 'mainstream development's neo-colonial tendencies, Western-centric values and centralised decision-making processes'<sup>171</sup>. The subsequent evolution and explosion of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methodologies pioneered by non-governmental organisations soon chimed with the decentralising zeitgeist of the late 1980s and early 1990s; and slowly but surely a myriad of participatory approaches to international development were readily 'underwritten by policy and funding support from virtually all major development agencies'<sup>172</sup>. The once radical and unorthodox had in effect been 'politically

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<sup>167</sup> Furthermore, it is arguable that the recognition and rewards conferred upon participatory practices like REFLECT in part consolidate and sustain the ideational foundation of their endeavours. See: Funder, M., 'The Social Shaping of Participatory Spaces: Evidence from Community Development in Southern Thailand', *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 10 (2010), p. 1708.

<sup>168</sup> Tandon, R., 'Participation, Citizenship and Democracy: Reflections on 25 Years of PRA', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 292-293.

<sup>169</sup> Williams, G., 'Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and (Re)Politicisation', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2004), p. 557.

<sup>170</sup> Adely, F., 'Learning and Teaching about Participatory Development: The Practical and Theoretical Challenges', *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2004), p. 64.

<sup>171</sup> Kapoor, I., 'Participatory Development, Complicity and Desire', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 8 (2005), p. 1203.

<sup>172</sup> Mohan, G., & Hickey, S., 'Relocating Participation within a Radical Politics of Development', *Development and Change*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2005), p. 238.

tamed'<sup>173</sup> and requisitioned to serve 'economic, institutional and legitimating functions for a mainstream vision of development'<sup>174</sup>.

This might satisfy those of a less discriminating nature but in the spirit of being discerning, it is imperative to discredit the smooth linearity that this margins to mainstream narrative imparts. Not least because it neglects with striking carelessness the spatial ontology of participation's ever growing conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development.<sup>175</sup> Humility safeguards against thinking too parsimoniously and here it serves as a cue to remember that 'the human world is open and changing and [that] the precise relationship between [ideas] and the spatial fields that [adopt and harbour] them is dynamic'<sup>176</sup>. For Jonathan Agnew and Stuart Corbridge, this remembrance may be 'an interpretative act and open to challenge but [it presents] a helpful way of placing contemporary trends into a historical framework'<sup>177</sup>. As such, it certainly helps this chapter advance an argument that the margins to mainstream narrative might not quite represent 'the normal state of things'<sup>178</sup>; and what is more, allow it to assert that a swell of different ideas, influences and innovations have in fact coalesced into different strands or streams of thinking which have in turn shaped the emergence of a wide range of unique participatory initiatives, like REFLECT, that in their own way strive to meaningfully relate the most vulnerable and excluded members of society to development practice.

This is certainly an accurate reflection of Rajesh Tandon's assessment of the ebb and flow of ideas that have brought participation and development to a point of awkward, unsettled and still disputed conceptual convergence. In particular, Tandon asserts that this margins to mainstream narrative is wholly inaccurate because it only seizes history at the point when 'subaltern, microexperiments in community participation were first noticed by policy makers and development experts'<sup>179</sup> in the late 1960s and 1970s. To counter that narrative, he instead talks of art, poetry, music and drama as the cultural expressions of the 'participation of the [ordinary] masses in their own communitarian'<sup>180</sup> within and throughout different periods of history.<sup>181</sup> He talks of 'the different mores and methodologies of conversation, knowledge-

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<sup>173</sup> Williams, G., 'Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and (Re)Politicisation', p. 558.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> Agnew, J., & Corbridge, S. *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy* (Routledge, London, 1995), pp. 13-15.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>178</sup> Uphoff, N. *Learning from Gal Oya: Possibilities for Participatory Development and post-Newtonian Social Science* (IT Publications, Ithaca & London, 1993), p. 390.

<sup>179</sup> Tandon, R., 'Participation, Citizenship and Democracy: Reflections on 25 Years of PRA', p. 288.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

sharing and mobilising'<sup>182</sup> and the 'practices and theories of workers' participation'<sup>183</sup> linked to cooperative societies and mutuals as early industrialisation brought 'uncertainty and anxiety'<sup>184</sup> to shop floors. In essence, he talks about the diversity of human participation far removed from the technical and perfunctory participation tagged onto and co-opted into donor led international development projects and programming. Indeed, he offers a valuable counter narrative which cautions that it is all too easy to forget that the human world is open and changing and that ideas thought to be so exclusive and distinctive in one specific spatial frame of reference equally belong and hold (different) meaning elsewhere.

Encouragingly, Tandon's own assessment of participation's conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development is constantly checked against the invisible ordinary participation of the masses in their everyday survival.<sup>185</sup> He mocks the doctrines and philosophies of the post-war development apparatus for snubbing the 'subaltern models being practiced by communities themselves'<sup>186</sup> and for assuming that these communities were simply 'sitting idle, waiting for experts'<sup>187</sup> to save them. If these practices were the margins the development machine was soon to notice, Tandon is certainly unyielding in his efforts to see them demystified and recast as routine, self-reliant, habitual and pragmatic. Furthermore, at the point when a model of bottom up, community-based participatory development begins to attract redemptive purchase, he makes an observation critical to this chapter's rejection of the margins to mainstream narrative. Like most who hang their arguments onto this narrative, he does at least acknowledge that the 1970s were a watershed moment for participation's public incorporation into conversations about development. But rather than falsifying a neat little story to skip over the tricky bits, his recognition of different streams of thinking and multiple transition points brought about by the 'forces, processes and structures of globalization'<sup>188</sup> brings the gap in the story, between what was never marginal to begin with and what is now certainly an institutionalised but hardly inclusive mainstream, to the fore.

Here Chambers' observation that 'it makes no sense to try to separate out causes, effects, innovations, influences and diffusion as though they follow straight lines'<sup>189</sup> (not least because 'in a world of continuously quicker and closer communication, the transfer and sharing of

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>189</sup> Chambers, R., 'The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal', p. 954.



ideas [may have] become more rapid and untraceable'<sup>190</sup>) is also illuminating and chips away at the smooth, straight line, linearity that the margins to mainstream narrative impart. Indeed, his suggestion that the ideas, influences and innovations surrounding the diversification of participatory rural appraisal methods which 'have, like flows in a braided stream, intermingled more and more and [at the same time] continue[d] in several forms'<sup>191</sup> supports and endorses the kind of thinking which refuses to press the story of participation's growing conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development into an immediately observable and easily recountable form. Indeed, writing largely from a practitioner's perspective, Chambers suggests that the 'causes, effects, innovations, influences and diffusion'<sup>192</sup> underpinning instances of participation in practice have 'directly or indirectly [...] contributed to confluence[s]'<sup>193</sup> of thought which remain sufficiently autonomous to conserve other streams of thinking in spite of an apparent and perceived consensus. The flow of ideas, influences and innovations accelerating the pace of innovation and change has in this respect served to preserve the existence and relative independence of different streams of thought.

In the interests of locating and contextulising REFLECT more fully then, it is worth identifying and mentioning two streams of thought that Tandon himself mentions and which emerged in the 1970s to load participation with particular recognition and meaning at different spatial scales. The first having 'roots in the practice of adult education and community organising'<sup>194</sup> and the second, concentrating on the 'structural [...] design of the administrative system[s] of [...] participatory development'<sup>195</sup>. The former is trickier to pin down in some respects; not least because it can claim a cacophony of influence deriving from the philosophies of education and liberation developed by Mahatma Gandhi, A.T. Ariyaratne, Kurt Lewin, Bell Hooks, Myles Horton, Paulo Freire and Ignacio Martin-Baró to name just a few who warrant acknowledgement and credit. Here, participation is seen as something akin to putting people at the bottom first alongside redressing imbalances in the political economy of knowledge through practice based enquiry or learning and action. The second is a little more specific and emerged out of efforts to reform 'a colonial system designed on the logic of control'<sup>196</sup> and to embed beneficiary participation vertically as governance structures changed and a need for institutional strengthening gathered apace. Here, participation is conceived in terms of the

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<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> Tandon, R., 'Participation, Citizenship and Democracy: Reflections on 25 Years of PRA', p. 288.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

operative inclusion and 'representation of hitherto excluded and marginalised groups (for whose benefit [...] development programmes were meant) in such structures'<sup>197</sup>.

At one level, REFLECT is clearly a product of the first stream of thought. That said, the influence of participatory rural appraisal cannot be factored away too casually: not least because the 'participatory learning tools and techniques'<sup>198</sup> pioneered by participatory rural appraisal practitioners have been adapted to realise Freire's educational philosophy and to forge the 'creative approaches to literacy development, community empowerment and social justice'<sup>199</sup> that all recent REFLECT practice tends to pursue. This warrants comment because much 'of the focus on the mainstreaming of participation [...], both laudatory and critical, has tended to single out the spread of participatory rural appraisal and treat it as the definitive form of participation'<sup>200</sup>. To such an extent that the acquisition and assimilation of participatory rural appraisal to inform large-scale development programming and macro-institutional policy is frequently misconstrued as watershed moment in relation to participation's standing as a development concept and its inclusion within conversations about development.<sup>201</sup> Whilst this chapter is scrupulous enough to realise that at one level participatory rural appraisal was co-opted (genuinely or otherwise) to strengthen institutional governance structures; put to use in the service of Freire's educational philosophy, its commitment to the inclusion, participation and representation of excluded and marginalised groups in their own development demonstrates that REFLECT is equally a product of a less subservient diffusion of the aforesaid second stream of thought.<sup>202</sup>

As such, REFLECT cannot be divorced from a strand of thought that still values participatory rural appraisal as an authentic and enabling participatory instrument.<sup>203</sup> Going forward then, every effort and care needs to be taken not to impoverish the forthcoming discussion of REFLECT's underlying value framework with a narrow and dogmatic account of its origins. Then again, the influence of participatory rural appraisal cannot be factored in too

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<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> Taylor, T., 'From Theory to Practice: How the REFLECT Approach to Learning Came to ESOL', *REFLECT: The Magazine of the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy*, Issue 13 (Summer 2010), p. 38.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37

<sup>200</sup> Hickey, S., & Mohan, G., 'Towards Participation as Transformation: Critical Themes and Challenges', p. 5.

<sup>201</sup> Here it is worth noting that participatory rural appraisal was adopted as an appendage to the administration and governance of participatory poverty assessments by macro-level development actors in the 1990s. See: Harper, C., 'Using Grassroots Experience to Inform Macro Level Policy: An NGO Perspective', *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 9, No. 5 (1997), p. 771.

<sup>202</sup> For a fuller discussion of PRA's co-option and perceived failings, including the privileging of the tools and techniques of development interventions and experts at the expense of an engagement with the underlying forces of socioeconomic and political change that shape people's livelihoods, see: Francis, P., 'Participatory Development at the World Bank: The Primacy of Process', in Cooke, B., & Kothari, U (Eds). *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (Zed Books, London & New York, 2001), pp. 72-87.

<sup>203</sup> Chambers, R., 'The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal', p. 954.

enthusiastically either - since other influences are equally significant. It should not be forgotten for example that the same tools and techniques transplanted from the participatory rural appraisal toolbox to REFLECT were themselves influenced by and adapted from action research [methodologies], rapid rural appraisal techniques and applied anthropology'<sup>204</sup>. Safe and recognisable descriptors may serve to make some types of comprehension more manageable but at this level of analysis they can sometimes be unhelpful. These comments may seem a little out of place since this chapter aims to introduce, describe and contextualise REFLECT (and not participatory rural appraisal) as an approach to community-based participatory development; but they are included deliberately. Nonchalantly skipping over participatory rural appraisal's relationship to REFLECT would do nothing but spoil any claim to scrupulousness and what is more, significantly undermine this chapter's efforts to sensitively stress that participation's conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development is remarkably multifaceted.

It should be clear from the emphasis placed upon this final point in particular that the remainder of the chapter aspires to do something other than scurry through a conservative description of what REFLECT is, what it involves and the type of participatory methodologies it uses to bring Freire's educational philosophy to life. In harmony with the mood of some of the literature on participation, there is absolute folly in miring this chapter in an approach which swerves ominously close to 'methodological individualism'<sup>205</sup>. Without hesitation participatory rural appraisal and REFLECT share much more in common than the imprint of the former's technical tools and techniques upon the latter.<sup>206</sup> For both, the motivation to create and nurture new ways of meaningfully relating the most vulnerable and excluded members of society to development practice and the 'underlying forces of socioeconomic and political change that shape people's livelihoods'<sup>207</sup> is supreme. As tricky as it is to make irrefutable claims, this chapter would suggest that the value framework which underpins, encircles and energises these types of participatory approaches render the meaning of participation and their own vision of development within them so distinctive. That is why, in order to fully introduce, describe and contextualise REFLECT as this thesis' single illustrative case study, this chapter

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<sup>204</sup> Adely, F., 'Learning and Teaching about Participatory Development: The Practical and Theoretical Challenges', p. 64.

<sup>205</sup> Hickey, S., & Mohan, G., 'Towards Participation as Transformation: Critical Themes and Challenges', p. 11.

<sup>206</sup> Here the distinction between imminent and immanent forms of development is useful - with imminent development relating to development in the form of specific interventions and immanent development relating to development as a historical process of social change. Both REFLECT and the first incarnations of PRA share a vision of radical social change. See: Hickey, S., & Mohan, G., 'Towards Participation as Transformation: Critical Themes and Challenges', p. 10.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

needs to engage in a discussion about REFLECT's distinctive values and not just the participatory techniques it employs.

#### *A Values Based Interpretative Contextualisation*

Here then the real potency of writing topographically can begin to reveal itself. Indeed, following the preceding chapter's statements on multiplicity and valuing an ontology that refuses to close its eyes to its own irreducibility, the process of twisting and contorting a mostly conservative description of what REFLECT is and what it publicly emphasises into something which can advance this thesis' overall contribution to knowledge starts here. Practically speaking, making a concerted commitment to foreground and draw attention to the values which underpin and energise REFLECT is part of the process of laying out a distinctive space for this thesis to walk through and holds true to the aspirations set out in the previous chapter 'to think and write in topographical ways, [to discover] methods of laying out a space [...] and for defining [a path] to walk through [that space]'<sup>208</sup>. What is more, it is part of a ploy to bring the world of community based approaches to participatory development into being with all of the unique interpretative embellishments and idiosyncrasies this thesis can muster. This then is the point at which this chapter shifts to eschew the conventions of a typical literature review and moves to write into being its own partial and conditional summary interpretation - neither in opposition nor in hierarchical relation to any other - of REFLECT's underlying value framework.<sup>209</sup>

Drawing upon a close reading of the available literature, the remainder of the chapter will now present and critically appraise the most distinctive aspects of REFLECT's underlying value framework as it sees and interprets them. This includes including the veneration of local communities, the influence of critical pedagogy, and the ubiquity of a will to improve that would appear to sustain a faintly detectable vision of improvement that proposes and expects a measure of psychosocial change for social transformation. These have all been selectively chosen to structure this chapter and what follows consequently forsakes convention for the promise of something a little more edifying and a lot more enabling. Not least because having set out its summary interpretation of REFLECT's value framework, this chapter will focus its conclusions on the creeping psychologisation of the development subject which this vision of improvement and the accompanying expectancy that REFLECT participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being alongside political empowerment would seem to foster. Indeed, as set out in this chapter's introduction,

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<sup>208</sup> Mol, A., & Law, J., 'Complexities: An Introduction', p. 8.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

this expectancy has substantially spiked this thesis' interest and having appreciably received very little (if any) critical attention in the literature, careful reflection on these aspects of its underlying value framework here may just throw new light on REFLECT's commitment to the witness and activism of those it seeks to better relate to development practice.

### *The Veneration of Local Communities*

To reach that point, this chapter first wants to reflect upon REFLECT's veneration of local communities and the significance it affords to small village communities in particular. At a very basic level, REFLECT typically (although not always exclusively) regards and thinks of local communities as 'relatively close knit rural communities'<sup>210</sup> and more often than not, employs nouns such as the village or village communities as spatial descriptors to denote the size and scale of the communities within which its literacy circles are established.<sup>211</sup> Practically and conceptually, it values and positions these relatively small, often isolated, poor, rural communities as sites of mobilisation for a type of development that is committed (at least in theory) to putting the last first.<sup>212</sup> Where the previous chapter spoke of an investment in participation never being all that far removed from an investment in a spatially contingent kind of development, it warrants confirmation here that REFLECT appreciably invests in a vision of bottom up, participatory, development that is determined, led and energised through and by the active engagement and participation of local communities. It adheres to the view that 'development [should be] people-centred'<sup>213</sup> and 'start from the lives of communities themselves'<sup>214</sup> and in doing so, regards local communities as the right and proper focus of development efforts and moreover, optimal sites for the realisation of ideas and aspirations to put the last first.

As this chapter has already alluded to however, taking this veneration of local communities at face value should be discouraged and at the very least read with a metaphorical pinch of salt. Indeed, the value ascribed to the active engagement and participation of village communities, like those within which REFLECT circles are embedded, across the leads and lags of development thinking is arguably a product of participation's remarkably multifaceted

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<sup>210</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 75.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 1-193.

<sup>212</sup> The phrase *putting the last first* is directly attributable to Robert Chambers who, in the preface to his comparably titled book *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, coined it to describe a need to concentrate attention on *the last*, or in other words the hundreds of millions of largely unseen people in rural areas who are poor, weak, isolated, vulnerable and powerless, and to therefore reverse the forces which exploit them and make and keep them physically and socially poor, weak, isolated, vulnerable and powerless. See. Chambers, R. *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* (Longman, London, Lagos & New York, 1983).

<sup>213</sup> Pieterse, JN., 'My Paradigm or Yours? Alternative Development, Post-Development, Reflexive Development', *Development and Change*, Vol. 29 (1998), p. 351.

<sup>214</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p.12.

influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development. To expand upon this point, it is worth turning to Jan Nederveen Pieterse's appraisal of the crystallisation of alternative models of development which began in the late 1970s and 1980s in response to the experienced shortcomings of modernisation theory. For Pieterse in particular, the emergence of a range of 'critical sensibilities and alternative practices'<sup>215</sup> interested in putting the last first and facilitating people-centred, participatory, bottom up approaches to development came about as a reaction to the failings of expert-led, modernisation models of development – albeit underpinned (and even domesticated) by 'a habitus of subversion, an intuitive aversion to method, to systematization and codification, [and] a distrust of experts and even of theory itself'<sup>216</sup>. In this vein, a blossoming sense of the value of local communities began to mature, alongside this interest in something exhibiting 'alternative [participatory] character'<sup>217</sup>, as reactionary demands for 'a profound and principled challenge to mainstream developmentalism'<sup>218</sup> mounted.

As Pieterse nonetheless cautioned, the alternative development product which this dissatisfaction with mainstream developmentalism aroused was by no means new and in many ways, simply revisited and reappropriated 1950s and 1960s ideas about community development.<sup>219</sup> What is more, some of the aspirations of people-centred, participatory bottom up approaches to development which shaped the reactionary alternative development debates of the 1970s and 1980s have since been reappropriated back to soften and legitimise resurgent mainstream neoliberal developmentalism.<sup>220</sup> As Frank Ellis and Stephen Biggs firmly declare, it may be 'superficially neat'<sup>221</sup> to characterise the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and now 2000s as separate and distinctive development decades, branding each in turn as the moment of dominance of a particular paradigm of developmentalism, but in truth 'popular ideas and their practical effects [...] did [and do] not [transition] in such an uncluttered manner'<sup>222</sup>.<sup>223</sup> The value ascribed to the active engagement and participation of local communities in their own development will have equally waxed and waned alongside 'leads and lags in the transmission

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<sup>215</sup> Pieterse, JN., 'My Paradigm or Yours? Alternative Development, Post-Development, Reflexive Development', p. 344.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>220</sup> Lingam, L., 'Development Theories and Community Development Practice', in Weil, M., Reisch, MS., & Ohmer, ML (Eds). *The Handbook of Community Practice* (SAGE Publications Ltd, London, 2013), p. 208.

<sup>221</sup> Ellis, F., & Biggs, S., 'Evolving Themes in Rural Development 1950s-2000s', *Development Policy Review*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (2001), p. 437.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> For ease of reference and to expand upon this point, Ellis and Biggs utilised the classification of the 1960s as the defining period of modernisation, the 1970s as that of state intervention, the 1980s as that of market liberalisation and the 1990s as that of participation and empowerment. See: Ellis, F., & Biggs, S., 'Evolving Themes in Rural Development 1950s-2000s', pp. 437-438.

of ideas [about development] across space and time'<sup>224</sup>; and as such, it is important to be observant of these complexities and critically reflect upon whether – over the course of these leads and lags – local communities are genuinely valued as the optimal architects of their own development or prized for other, perhaps less sincere, reasons.<sup>225</sup>

The point to make clear here is that this modest discussion of REFLECT's veneration of local communities is included to appraise whether local communities are genuinely valued for themselves or valued for the meaning they can append to other things external to themselves and sadly, this might just be the moment where a certain degree of cynicism kicks in. It may have gone unnoticed but care was taken earlier to talk about how REFLECT values and also positions local communities. The use of a phrase like positioning is perhaps a little opaque but it is intended to kindle a discussion about how local communities are framed over the course of the aforementioned leads and lags of development thinking. Here one of the two previously mentioned streams of thought which, according to Tandon, loaded participation with particular recognition and meaning at different spatial scales is illustrative. Not least because participation – when valued as a means to assimilate community level participatory involvement vertically within existing institutional governance structures and not as a means to explicitly put people at the bottom first and potentially challenge those status quo structures – is more vulnerable to being reappropriated for other ends. As stated above, the rhetoric of alternative development has been harnessed to soften resurgent mainstream neoliberal developmentalism and this should instil watchfulness to the veneration of local communities to simply legitimise those kinds of conservative ends.<sup>226</sup>

Reintroducing those two streams of thought here might seem unusual given that the chapter has before now recognised REFLECT as product of the former; but it does no harm to call upon them to highlight the different motivations that might underpin the veneration of local communities. Essentially, this means engaging with arguments which see the inclusion of local communities into existing governance structures not as a corrective to top down, expert-led bureaucracy but as a means of deflecting calls for far-reaching change, utilising the morally persuasive language and rhetoric of inclusion (and of course, participation and putting the last first) to shrewdly preserve the status quo albeit in a slightly altered form. This is perhaps not the moment to enter into a more detailed examination of what the likes of Nikolas Rose for example might see here in relation to the extension of neoliberal ideology and government through community but the existence of these sentiments are worth acknowledging now to

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<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, p. 437.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>226</sup> Lingam, L., 'Development Theories and Community Development Practice', p. 2008.

build upon later.<sup>227</sup> For the time being though, if this little detour can highlight one thing, it should be that the veneration of local communities may not be altogether benevolently motivated. Remembering this is part of the critical process of assessing REFLECT's veneration of local communities and should hopefully preclude any naivety when it comes to scrutinising whether it actually does put the last first.

Backtracking a little then, it is important to note that community level information, voice and agency deficits profoundly troubled those seeking an alternative to mainstream modernisation models of development. The alternative seeking mood of the late 1970s and 1980s was by no means cohesive but it prompted a turn towards 'eliciting development priorities from target communities'<sup>228</sup> so that development projects could 'better meet the needs of intended beneficiaries and potentially place them in more direct control of both the process and the outcomes of projects'<sup>229</sup>. The feeling being that locally conceived projects would be more 'equitable [and] sustainable than the top-down projects they [sought] to replace'<sup>230</sup>. Out of this emerged REFLECT's forerunners - rapid rural appraisal, participatory rural appraisal and lastly participatory learning and action - as practical mechanisms to better relate local communities to exogenously imposed development.<sup>231</sup> That said, there is cause to argue that these mechanisms increasingly came to mine local communities for efficiencies; with participatory involvement sold by the large international development organisations as a cover for improvements in the administration of development bureaucracy itself. Indeed, a World Bank working paper, wrote of 'community-driven development as a mechanism for [...] improving efficiency and effectiveness'<sup>232</sup> that is expected to rationalise the allocation of development funds, improve the targeting and delivery of poverty programmes and encourage local communities to undertake self-initiated development activities.<sup>233</sup>

Quite strikingly, next to nothing is said about nurturing those whose knowledge, voice and agency is seemingly so valuable; and likewise nothing about enabling the 'creative and analytical abilities'<sup>234</sup> of local communities to 'express, share and extend their knowledge'<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> See: Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (Free Association Books, London, 1999).

<sup>228</sup> Mansuri, G., & Rao, V., 'Community-Based and -Driven Development: A Critical Review', World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3209, February 2004, online - available to download at <http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01066/WEB/IMAGES/10650632.PDF>, p. 2.

<sup>229</sup> McPeak, J.G., Doss, C.R., Barrett, C.B., & Kristjanson, P., 'Do Community Members Share Development Priorities? Results of a Ranking Exercise in East African Rangelands', *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 10 (2009), p. 1663.

<sup>230</sup> Dill, B., 'The Paradoxes of Community-Based Development in Dar es Salaam', *Development and Change*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2009), p. 718.

<sup>231</sup> Lingam, L., 'Development Theories and Community Development Practice', p. 286.

<sup>232</sup> Mansuri, G., & Rao, V., 'Community-Based and -Driven Development: A Critical Review', p. 3.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> Chambers, R., 'The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal', p. 963.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*



for the benefit of their own development which most practitioner reflections on the value and potential of rapid rural appraisal, participatory rural appraisal and participatory learning and action all tend to articulate. Indeed, a careful and methodical reading of the abovementioned working paper, would suggest that the post-modernisation function local communities were increasingly contrived to play as the 1970s and the 1980s rolled into the 1990s might have promised a participatory and people-centred alternative but in fact delivered an efficiency drive that lacked a deep, authentic commitment to putting those communities first. This chapter has previously acknowledged that participatory rural appraisal in particular fell foul of co-option and was increasingly appropriated to simultaneously temper top down, expert led development and strengthen institutional governance structures during the 1990s. On reflection, it is easy to see why arguments of this sort proliferated. To this thesis at least, there is nothing enabling about mining local communities for efficiencies and to support that assertion, Mae Shaw's observation that local communities can be 'constructed or contrived'<sup>236</sup> to provide 'competing legitimacies for very different interests and purposes'<sup>237</sup> is insightful and certainly endorses such a position statement.

Returning to the deficits that troubled those seeking an alternative to mainstream modernisation models of development therefore; the post-modernisation construction of local communities - albeit reappropriated more recently by a resurgent mainstream neoliberal developmentalism - is arguably more concerned with repairing community-level information deficits at the expense of arrears in voice and agency. That said, this chapter is persuaded that REFLECT values and venerates local communities differently; not least because, as mentioned earlier, it remains wedded to a strand of thought that prioritises community organising and in part, still values participatory rural appraisal as an enabling participatory instrument.<sup>238</sup> Local communities are on the face of it valued for themselves and not simply for the knowledge or information they gatekeep; and by embedding methods of analysis and evaluation within local communities, knowledge is genuinely sought for the 'active [endogenous] transformation of the community by the community'<sup>239</sup>. In fact, calibrated by conscientization and a reflection-action cycle that prescribes reflection, learning and knowledge generation for the purpose of eventual community action, REFLECT moreover, venerates local communities as optimal sites for the mobilisation of democratic activism and critical action.<sup>240</sup> Nevertheless, the preceding discussion together with Shaw's shrewd observation that local communities can be

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<sup>236</sup> Shaw, M., 'Community Development and the Politics of Community', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2008), p. 30.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24-25.

<sup>238</sup> Chambers, R., 'The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal', p. 954.

<sup>239</sup> Montenegro, M., 'Ideology and Community Social Psychology: Theoretical Considerations and Practical Implications', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (2002), p. 513.

<sup>240</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 10.

'constructed or contrived'<sup>241</sup> to provide 'competing legitimacies for very different interests and purposes'<sup>242</sup>, should preclude any rush to presume that this actually materialises in practice.

### *The Influence of Critical Pedagogy*

That said, this passing mention of conscientization and of instilling communities with a capacity to act nicely lends itself to a shift in focus here. Indeed, as previously mentioned, Freire's theory of conscientization is crucial to understanding REFLECT's ambitions and a deep-seated respect for critical pedagogy is an essential characteristic of its underlying value framework. By way of a reminder, critical pedagogy is 'a term associated with [educational] strategies [which are] sensitive to the effects of relations of power [...] on learning and consciousness formation'<sup>243</sup>. As an educational practice, critical pedagogy implicitly evokes the economic, political and social separation of the haves and the have nots, including for example 'the adult illiterate, the popular classes, and [...] dependent society'<sup>244</sup>, and concerns itself with the impact of 'inequalities – of whatever kind – [wherever they might] stunt [the] human potential for learning'<sup>245</sup>. It 'does not claim to provide a comprehensive theory of learning or teaching'<sup>246</sup> but instead 'mediates between the critical sociology of education'<sup>247</sup> and 'the effects of marginality, dependency and domination [in] everyday life'<sup>248</sup>. This deep-seated respect for critical pedagogy explains why REFLECT concerns itself with the have nots of contemporary development and as outlined earlier, illuminates why it prioritises relatively small, isolated, poor, rural communities as sites of mobilisation for a type of development that is rooted in the lives of those communities themselves.

In fact, the influence of critical pedagogy arguably informs REFLECT's positioning of these types of communities as sites or spaces for the deliverance of social justice and the democratisation of development more broadly. With respect to the latter however, it would be misleading to suggest that REFLECT values the Freirian struggle for liberation in terms of outright revolution and instead, this chapter would prefer to suggest that it absorbs Freire's early 'totalizing without being dominating'<sup>249</sup> conceptualisation of 'the relationship between education, [...] *conscientização*[and] the question of [...] democratization'<sup>250</sup>. As Raymond

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<sup>241</sup> Shaw, M., 'Community Development and the Politics of Community', p. 30.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>243</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change* (Teachers College Press, London & New York, 2002), p. 1.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> McLaren, P., 'Paulo Freire's Legacy of Hope and Struggle', *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1997), pp. 151-152.

<sup>250</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 133.

Morrow and Carlos Torres note, 'the concept of transformation [in Freire's early writings alluded to] participation and integration within a democratic system'<sup>251</sup>; which unlike later conceptualisations did not bring in 'the possibility of subversion and revolution and later still the dialogue and co-operation between vanguard and masses in order to maintain the spirit of the revolution'<sup>252</sup>. In this respect, it is important to establish that REFLECT adopts and practices a pragmatic rather than a prescriptive critical pedagogy. Or, in other words, a pedagogy which 'attends dialectically to the specific or local act of knowing as a political process that take places in a larger conflictual arena'<sup>253</sup> but which recognises that the 'struggle for democratization and the realisation of individual autonomy'<sup>254</sup> is akin to 'living and struggling for a qualitatively better way of life'<sup>255</sup>.

Translated into practice, REFLECT values conscientization as a means to realise that better way of life in the very local and particular contexts in which the effects of marginality, dependency and/or domination are experienced. Its pragmatic rather than prescriptive pedagogy is stripped of any 'essentialist or teleological metaphysics'<sup>256</sup> and the literacy acquisition process it promotes instead tries to seed the collective imagination of a better future rather than impose an exact blueprint for change and transformation. This is largely a speculative point but Freire's own dreams of a positive humanist future together with his 'faith in people's ability to have their say and [...] to re-create [their] social world'<sup>257</sup> would appear to lend REFLECT's pragmatic pedagogy a 'deep sense of emancipatory hope'<sup>258</sup> or 'transformative optimism'<sup>259</sup> that furthermore encourages participants to 'see [themselves] as [...] necessary and viable [participants] in the collective process of social change'<sup>260</sup>. The REFLECT Mother Manual talks about 'building hope [...] for the future'<sup>261</sup> and given that Freire himself wrote of the need to rehabilitate an 'ontological capacity for projecting days of peace, equity, and solidarity into the closest possible future'<sup>262</sup> and to 'consciously reactivate a form of utopian but possible dreaming [...] to reclaim [...] authentic humanity'<sup>263</sup>, it would be foolhardy to dismiss this

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<sup>251</sup> Gerhardt, H., 'Paulo Freire: 1921-27', *Prospects: The Quarterly Review of Comparative Education*, Vol. 23, No.3/4 (1993), p. 448.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> McLaren, P., 'Paulo Freire's Legacy of Hope and Struggle', pp. 151-152.

<sup>254</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 67.

<sup>255</sup> McLaren, P., 'Paulo Freire's Legacy of Hope and Struggle', p. 151.

<sup>256</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 38.

<sup>257</sup> Gerhardt, H., 'Paulo Freire: 1921-27', p. 453.

<sup>258</sup> Rossatto, CA. *Engaging Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Possibility: From Blind to Transformative Optimism* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2005), p. 81.

<sup>259</sup> Mayo, P., 'Critical Notice: Critical Pedagogy for Transformative Optimism', *Interchange*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2006), p. 279.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 169.

<sup>262</sup> Roberts, P., 'Critical Notice: Educational Dreams and Political Realities', *Interchange*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2008), p. 377.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

optimism as a whimsical and largely superficial aspect of REFLECT's own underlying value framework.<sup>264</sup>

It is in fact crucial to all that REFLECT values and upholds; including the underlying expectation that 'dialogical processes [of conscientization] involving distanciation [...] from given and taken-for-granted realities [will set off the] transformative cognitive and affective processes required'<sup>265</sup> to empower REFLECT circle participants to act to try and overcome 'the effects of marginality, dependency and domination [in their] everyday [lives]'<sup>266</sup>. As César Rossatto explains, these cognitive and affective processes are crucial for generating 'personal and social transformation [based on the establishment of] new perceptions [...] that deconstruct [unquestioned] beliefs and [passive] behaviour that have been enforced [and sustained] by the historical hegemony of the social order'<sup>267</sup>. This transformation is made 'possible by constructing [a belief] among people that they can be the agents of their own history'<sup>268</sup> [and] involves 'a change of mentality, [...] unlearning old beliefs and ideologies and constructing new ones embedded in [a] transformative critical optimism [that is grounded in taking] action that anticipates the best outcome toward a more humane and just society'<sup>269</sup>. The expectation that REFLECT can stimulate the critical consciousness necessary to empower its participants to realise a qualitatively better way of life would appear to depend upon a pragmatic critical pedagogy that can transmit its own transformative optimism and seed the personal and social transformation necessary to enable participants to act upon the very hope it seeks to instil.<sup>270</sup>

What is more, the identification of the subject-as-citizen is irrefutability bound into the fabric of these ambitions (including the ambition to turn REFLECT participants into 'agents of their own history, capable of interacting with, intervening in and transforming their worlds'<sup>271</sup>) and is arguably a further defining feature of REFLECT's underlying value framework. Very little has thus far been said about the concept of citizenship – even though REFLECT's ambition to enable participants to identify and overcome development challenges in their everyday lives will naturally require them to understand and assert their rights as they do so. The literacy acquisition process REFLECT promotes crucially seeks to enhance participants' 'socio-political awareness and political literacy'<sup>272</sup> and as Mark Waddington and Giles Mohan confirm, it does this by capturing participants' 'understanding of their rights and responsibilities by recording

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<sup>264</sup> As Peter Roberts acknowledges, the notion of dreaming is pivotal in Freire's work. See: Roberts, P., 'Critical Notice: Educational Dreams and Political Realities', p. 376.

<sup>265</sup> Morrow, R.A., & Torres, C.A. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 110.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid*, p. 116.

<sup>267</sup> Rossatto, C.A. *Engaging Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Possibility: From Blind to Transformative Optimism*, p. 161.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid*, p. 159.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid*, p. 161.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid*, p. 162.

<sup>271</sup> Rossatto, C.A. *Engaging Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Possibility: From Blind to Transformative Optimism*, p. 161.

<sup>272</sup> Waddington, M., & Mohan, G., 'Failing Forward: Going Beyond PRA and Imposed Forms of Participation', p. 226.

them, looking at them in new ways and exploring their meaning'<sup>273</sup>. Through facilitated discussion within a REFLECT circle, these rights and responsibilities are then 'assessed against [participants'] own aspirations, capabilities and restrictions'<sup>274</sup> as part of a broader discussion about the 'practical things that [they might] do to effect change [within] their communities'<sup>275</sup>. As alluded to above, this in effect encourages participants to reflect upon how they might try and overcome 'the effects of marginality, dependency and domination [in their] everyday [lives]'<sup>276</sup> and begins to nudge participants into positions of active citizenship.<sup>277</sup>

At this point, a detailed discussion of the type of citizenship valued by REFLECT might be expected. Lots could be said about the influence of civic republicanism, which stretches understandings of citizenship beyond liberal 'legal definitions concerning the formal status of citizens'<sup>278</sup> to include 'the practices through which individuals and groups formulate and claim new rights or struggle to expand and maintain existing rights'<sup>279</sup>. However, the fact that REFLECT values a 'notion of participatory citizenship'<sup>280</sup> is hardly surprising and quite a straightforward observation to make. What is actually more striking is the value attributed to the notion of the developmental subject and the corresponding idea that learning to be, and becoming, a citizen is a developmental process which involves knowing about rights and responsibilities in the abstract but also understanding how to claim and fulfil those rights and responsibilities in the spirit of active participatory citizenship for real. For Freire, the developmental subject is continually engaged in an open ended (and reversible) process of humanization which is 'envisioned as a creative struggle for freedom through which people regain their humanity and take responsibility for it in specific contexts of dialogue'<sup>281, 282</sup>. Little might be said by Freire about the specific content of this process of humanization; but its origins in Christian existentialism and developmental psychology would suggest something psychologically and even emotionally profound.<sup>283</sup>

Such a suggestion nevertheless risks making a fetish of the individual and care should be taken not to misinterpret REFLECT's veneration of the developmental subject as part of an agenda to produce happy individualists in splendid isolation. Freire's critical pedagogy is

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<sup>273</sup> *Ibid*, p. 231.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>276</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 116.

<sup>277</sup> Waddington, M., & Mohan, G., 'Failing Forward: Going Beyond PRA and Imposed Forms of Participation', p. 226.

<sup>278</sup> Mohan, G., & Hickey, S., 'Relocating Participation within a Radical Politics of Development', p. 253.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid*, p. 254.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>281</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 95.

<sup>282</sup> Again, hope, struggle and on-going movements towards transformative reflexivity (or *conscientization*) stripped of a specific teleology are once again its hallmarks. See: *Ibid*, pp. 91-98 & 111.

<sup>283</sup> See: *Ibid*, pp. 91-88.

fundamentally dialogical in nature and ontologically, his selfhood is not an independent entity, but a product of an interactive and intersubjective dialogic situation.<sup>284</sup> Likewise, REFLECT exercises and employs a literacy acquisition process which relies on 'subject-subject co-participation and mutual learning'<sup>285</sup> and for those interested in theoretical commonalities, this 'broadly complements [Jurgen] Habermas' more elaborate thesis of communicative action [and deliberative democracy]'<sup>286</sup>. There are obvious points of similarity and difference between Habermas and Freire, but crucially Habermas's 'grounding of knowledge in a theory of argumentation based on subject-subject dialogue of communicative action'<sup>287</sup> shines further light on collective consciousness conceived through socialisation and solidarity. Read together, Freire and Habermas construct a 'critical social psychology of a developmental and dialogical subject'<sup>288</sup> and underscore a need to semantically recalibrate REFLECT's identification of the subject-as-citizen as simultaneously developmental and dialogical. Its veneration of the dialogical and developmental subject thus needs to be firmly rooted in an understanding of the 'making [of] self in society'<sup>289</sup> and the positioning once more of local communities as sites for the personal and social transformation necessary to transform participants into the active agents of their own history mentioned above.

#### *A Will to Improve and Psychosocial Change for Social Transformation*

All things considered, a huge amount of faith and optimism is invested in participants' developmental potential and this arguably speaks to an agenda of aspiration, improvement and betterment that Tania Murray Li, having reflected upon the motivations behind the 'transnational practice of development'<sup>290</sup> itself, has interpreted and named as 'a will to improve'<sup>291</sup>. In Li's mind, development is a 'horizon, continually strived for and redefined'<sup>292</sup> and an endeavour that responds to a seemingly 'benevolent [and] even utopian [...] desire to make the world better than it is'<sup>293</sup>. It contains within itself a will to improve that persists as an Enlightenment inspired corrective kick to always seek to make good and which manifests itself in multiple schemes of aspiration, improvement and betterment that fundamentally energise

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<sup>284</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, pp. 95 & 117-119.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid*, p. 111.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid*, p. 53.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

<sup>289</sup> Shor, I., 'What is Critical Literacy?', *Journal for Pedagogy, Pluralism & Practice*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1999), online - available to download at <http://www.lesley.edu/journal-pedagogy-pluralism-practice/ira-shor/critical-literacy/>.

<sup>290</sup> Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics* (Duke University Press, Durham & London, 2007), pp. 4-6.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>292</sup> Rutherford, D., 'Book Review - The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (2010), p. 204.

<sup>293</sup> Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, p. 5.

its practice wherever development is sought and in whatever guise it takes. REFLECT correspondingly incorporates ‘a vision of improvement [that] involves [empowering] people [to] actively [claim] their rights and [take] on the duties of democratic citizenship’<sup>294</sup> and combines this with a further array of ambitions that together strive to positively transform illiterate to literate, passive to active and disenfranchised to empowered. In light of this, REFLECT plausibly represents a ‘betterment scheme’<sup>295</sup> in more ways than one and as such, an all-encompassing ‘will to improve [alongside its] will to empower’<sup>296</sup> endures as a seminal feature of its underlying value framework.

Beyond seeking to positively transform illiterate to literate, passive to active and disenfranchised to empowered however; REFLECT’s will to improve also manifests itself in far subtler ways. In fact, or to this thesis at least, it would appear to sustain a faintly detectable vision of improvement that proposes and expects a measure of psychosocial change for social transformation. This chapter has for example noticed that a number of testimonies about REFLECT’s anticipated impact upon the development subject feature a series of modest assertions which appear to imagine improvements in personal confidence and self-esteem as indicators of the participant empowerment it seeks to realise. As two notable REFLECT enthusiasts write, ‘empowerment is not just about group struggle, institutional capacities and alliance building, but also about personal development [...], identity and confidence’<sup>297</sup>. Indeed, the growing confidence of REFLECT circle participants repeatedly appears as a subtle descriptor of its impact and potential throughout the seminal Mother Manual. The transformative power of that confidence is celebrated in the Mother Manual’s preface and is then succeeded by a steady stream of statements confirming participants growing, gaining, building, and developing confidence following participation in facilitated REFLECT circle activities.<sup>298</sup> Add to that, the promotion of outcome and impact data claiming that one hundred percent of REFLECT circles reported gains in self-confidence and soon a sense of something worthy of deeper scrutiny reveals itself.<sup>299</sup>

Surprisingly, very little else is said about the transformatory potential of the confidence and self-esteem REFLECT purportedly builds; even though many of the aforementioned statements resolutely speak of the confidence to do certain things, to behave in certain ways

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<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>295</sup> Buscher, B, ‘Review Article: Development between Nuance and Neoliberalism’, *Focaal – European Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 51 (2008), p. 162.

<sup>296</sup> Own italicised emphasis added: Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, p. 25.

<sup>297</sup> Waddington, M., & Mohan, G., ‘Failing Forward: Going Beyond PRA and Imposed Forms of Participation’, p. 226.

<sup>298</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, pp. 1, 17, 20, 21, 33, 38, 44, 46, 49, 62, 63, 65, 104, 170, 174, 186, 187 & 190.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65 & 190.

and to demand and secure rights and needs as if nothing hampered these endeavours before apart from the development subject's prior lack of confidence and (perhaps diminished) sense of self. What is more, statements which herald the importance of 'the confidence to assert [...] rights in decision making'<sup>300</sup> or 'the confidence [...] to address larger structural change'<sup>301</sup> borrow the rhetoric of personal development, personal change and even 'personal reform'<sup>302</sup> to bring alive a vision of transformatory empowerment predicated on improvements in participants' psychosocial development. One comment within the Mother Manual for example quite boldly suggests that 'people realise themselves in social transformation [...] not through better knowledge but through more confidence'<sup>303</sup>; and at once, the faintly detectable vision of improvement mentioned above that proposes and expects a measure of psychosocial change for social transformation reveals itself. All in all, these modest but striking assertions give this chapter cause to claim that beyond empowering participants to speak to power as active politically engaged citizens, REFLECT's will to improve harbours a twofold expectancy that REFLECT circle participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being alongside political empowerment.

As alluded to above, this twofold expectancy is scantily theorised and to this thesis at least, raises questions about what REFLECT is actually trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in this mixture of political and psychological terms. However well-intentioned, empowering participants 'with [the] confidence to act to secure their own needs'<sup>304</sup> is potentially problematic when 'social transformation is [wholly conceptualised] in terms of psychosocial change'<sup>305</sup> and even, 'emotional adjustment'<sup>306</sup>. As Vanessa Pupavac in particular has begun to persuasively argue in recent years, a 'psychologised understanding of justice and [a] conception of social transformation in terms of psychosocial change'<sup>307</sup> has ushered in an array of development initiatives and projects that try to remedy the 'social recognition of the poor as opposed to the [outright] eradication of poverty'<sup>308</sup>. Indeed, Pupavac writes that development has gradually begun to embrace a 'therapeutic turn'<sup>309</sup> and morphed into 'a form of therapeutic governance focused on enhancing people's capacities, motivation and sense of well-being within their existing

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<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>302</sup> Williams, G., 'Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and (Re)Politicisation', p. 92.

<sup>303</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 33.

<sup>304</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 175.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*



material circumstances'<sup>310</sup>. Later chapters will scrutinise Pupavac's work and other derivative literature on therapeutic governance much more thoroughly; but in the meantime, passing mention of her observations here should heed a watchfulness to the effects of a will to improve which endorses a vision of social transformation that values self-esteem, confidence, and personal strength as conduits and indicators of political empowerment.

In particular, Pupavac's work should heed a watchfulness to any will to improve that '[valorises] the personal'<sup>311</sup> and prioritises 'personal reform over political struggle'<sup>312</sup>; not least because any development initiative or project that measures political empowerment against indicators of personal confidence and self-esteem might well extend 'new parameters of external intervention'<sup>313</sup> into formerly private 'matter[s] of personal concern'<sup>314</sup>. As Alison Howell and Julian Reid separately comment, they should be 'watched closely [...] to ascertain the politics of their effects'<sup>315</sup>, including 'the nature of the subject'<sup>316</sup> they consequently strive to construct or produce. For Li especially, 'the ways [in which development interventions] construct and regulate particular subject positions which are more or less empowered as political actors'<sup>317</sup> should be scrutinised for signs that they pathologise the development subject as a 'deficient subject whose conduct [must be] conducted'<sup>318</sup> and whose emotional state must be regulated or reformed. Likewise, Pupavac herself insinuates that some interventions locate the cause of the development subject's disempowerment in deficits of personal confidence and self-esteem and seek to bring about a depoliticised vision of empowerment grounded in 'reforming [its emotional] subjectivity'<sup>319</sup> alone. Following these reflections and the REFLECT Mother Manual's own earnest declaration that 'confidence [...] can itself be transformative'<sup>320</sup>, this chapter would suggest there is cause to scrutinise the ways in which REFLECT's own will to improve manifests itself in far greater detail.

As Li accordingly advocates, questioning and making any implicit will to improve strange is useful for teasing out its manifest, as well as its less manifest, effects.<sup>321</sup> Any 'will to improve

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<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>311</sup> Kelly, U., 'Confrontations with Power: Moving Beyond 'The Tyranny of Safety' in Participation', in Hickey, S., & Mohan, G (Eds). *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation?* (Zed Books, London & New York, 2004), p. 205.

<sup>312</sup> Williams, G., 'Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and (Re)Politicisation', p. 92.

<sup>313</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 150.

<sup>314</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.

<sup>315</sup> Howell, A., 'The Demise of PTSD: From Governing through Trauma to Governing Resilience', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2012), p. 224

<sup>316</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', *Development Dialogue*, Vol. 58 (2012), p. 74.

<sup>317</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 5.

<sup>318</sup> Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, p. 24.

<sup>319</sup> Pupavac, M., & Pupavac, V., 'Trauma Advocacy, Veteran Politics and the Croatian Therapeutic State', p. 203.

<sup>320</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 1.

<sup>321</sup> Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, p. 3.

can be taken at its word<sup>322</sup>, but having drawn upon the work of Michel Foucault, Li's thoughts on trusteeship (defined here as 'the intent which is expressed, by one source of agency, to develop the capacity of another'<sup>323</sup>) make clear that the practice of politics, albeit in less obvious ways, can never be discounted. Bringing insights from Foucault's work on governmentality together with Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, Li suggests that understanding 'the multiplicity of power [and] the many ways that practices [of power] position people'<sup>324</sup> is deeply important.<sup>325</sup> Not least because it informs her supposition that 'subjects [are] formed by practices of which they might be unaware, and to which their consent is neither given nor withheld'<sup>326</sup>. Equivalent then to the position of trustee, is the 'position of deficient subject whose conduct is to be conducted'<sup>327</sup> and whose deficiency is 'defined by [a trustee's] claim to know how others should live, to know what is best for them, to know what they need'<sup>328</sup>. In short, doubt the benevolence to make good and a will to improve could arguably legitimise the appropriation of 'characteristic deficiencies [...] as points of entry for corrective interventions'<sup>329</sup>.

A will to improve, practiced through schemes of aspiration, improvement and betterment, which pathologises and forms deficient subject positions of others certainly jars with the optimism it was introduced with earlier. In Li's view, any will to improve that appropriates 'characteristic deficiencies [...] as points of entry for corrective interventions'<sup>330</sup> does so off the back of the problematisation and representation of subjects' perceived deficiencies as deficits of subjective capacity and not the product of structural social, political and economic 'practices through which one social group impoverishes another'<sup>331</sup>.<sup>332</sup> Pupavac's work on development's therapeutic turn also takes this kind of appropriation to task and embodies a severe critique of development interventions which conceive 'social transformation in terms of psychosocial change'<sup>333</sup>; not least because, to her, ambitions to address the confidence and self-esteem of the development subject represent the execution of a subtle trusteeship that pathologises its psychology, positions it as a 'deficient subject whose conduct is to be conducted'<sup>334</sup>, and then

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<sup>322</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4-5.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>332</sup> As Li writes, the structure of political-economic relations are excluded from the diagnoses and prescriptions of those assuming the position of trustee and questions of underdevelopment and poverty are recast as technical problems responsive to technical *development* interventions. See: Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, p. 7.

<sup>333</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 173.

<sup>334</sup> Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, p. 24.

prescribes how it might overcome those pathologies to become the architect and agent of its own development. In fact, Pupavac chastises efforts to empower the development subject 'with [the] confidence to act to secure [its] own needs'<sup>335</sup> for the simple reason that they locate the causes of that subject's exclusion, poverty and underdevelopment in personal rather than structural or material deficits.

Many REFLECT practitioners would be horrified to discover that their ambitions to empower participants might be interpreted as a scheme to correct deficiencies of character and viewed as anything other than a benevolent endeavour to make good. These are certainly severe accusations but if REFLECT's will to improve endorses a vision of social transformation which requires its participants to embrace some degree of personal change or reform to bolster those ambitions; it would be imprudent not to scrutinise it against the standards of trusteeship set out by Li and the additional markers of therapeutic governance set out by Pupavac. All things considered, it certainly casts the positioning of local communities spoken of earlier in this chapter in an alternative shade of light and casts a further shadow over REFLECT's transformative optimism and its reverence of the dialogical and developmental subject. Further still it confirms that putting certain things under different spotlights to scrutinise uncritically accepted assumptions and motivations can precipitate revelations that fundamentally alter the perception of things as they once were. If truth be told it delivers an anxiety that REFLECT, for all of its expectant promise, may actually assimilate aspects of the trusteeship that Li identifies and in accordance with Pupavac's thinking is characterised by a darker will to improve which pathologises the subjective capacity of its participants and positions itself as a corrective intervention to reform their subjectivity.

### *Conclusions*

This chapter has set out to establish REFLECT as its sole illustrative case study and to bring into a being an ever partial, ever conditional and ever interpretative picture of it as an approach to community-based participatory development which fuses the political philosophy of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire with practical participatory methodologies adapted from participatory rural appraisal techniques. It has hopefully fulfilled this function and in doing so, introduced REFLECT as the conduit through which this thesis might begin to understand and generate broader, grounded insights into the aspirations of community-based participatory development itself. As promised earlier in its introduction, this chapter has outlined what REFLECT is, what it involves and said a little about participation's conceptual influence upon the idea and real world practice of contemporary development to historically

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<sup>335</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 175.

locate and contextualise it further. Beyond that, the second half of the chapter has set out a distinctive summary interpretation of REFLECT's underlying value framework which has, by its own admission, focused upon and structured itself around three of the most distinctive and prominent aspects - albeit as it interprets them- of that value framework. This has included the veneration of local communities, the influence of critical pedagogy, and the ubiquity of a will to improve that would appear to sustain a faintly detectable vision of improvement that proposes and expects a measure of psychosocial change for social transformation.

This critical engagement with REFLECT's underlying value framework has furthermore enabled this chapter to specifically foreground something which has substantially spiked this thesis' interest and which has seemingly received very little (if any) critical attention in the literature on community-based approaches to participatory development. As outlined over recent pages, a series of modest assertions that appear to imagine increased personal confidence and self-esteem as indicators of the participant empowerment REFLECT seeks to realise has captured its attention. These have since been interpreted as a sign that REFLECT practices a will to improve which, amongst other ambitions to positively transform the development subject from illiterate to literate, passive to active and disenfranchised to empowered, would appear to sustain a faintly detectable vision of improvement that proposes and expects a measure of psychosocial change for its own vision of social transformation to stick. Beyond empowering participants to speak to power as active politically engaged citizens, this chapter has surmised that these assertions expose a twofold expectancy that REFLECT participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being alongside political empowerment. This expectancy however remains scantily theorised and to this thesis at least, raises questions about what REFLECT is actually trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of (potentially ambiguous and even contradictory) political and psychological terms.

As stated above, this perceptible psychologisation of the development subject has arguably received very little (if any) critical attention in the literature on community-based approaches to participatory development. Some peripheral critical analysis of the depoliticisation of participatory development has skirted around the 'valorisation of the personal'<sup>336</sup> and a tendency to stress 'personal reform over political struggle'<sup>337</sup>; although generally only when questions about how moments of personal revelation or realisation can be 'built into longer term projects or alliances for change'<sup>338</sup> are raised. Pupavac's aforementioned work on the

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<sup>336</sup> Kelly, U., 'Confrontations with Power: Moving Beyond 'The Tyranny of Safety' in Participation', p. 205.

<sup>337</sup> Williams, G., 'Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and (Re)Politicisation', p. 92.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*

emotionology of a new international security paradigm comes the closest but as an international relations specialist, the majority of her research into the apparent demoralisation and securitisation of humanitarianism and development never quite fully engages with the micro matters of development in practice.<sup>339</sup> Some of her more provocative arguments about the displacement of universal prosperity as the goal of international development policy together with the increasing conceptualisation of needs and rights in 'psychological rather than material terms'<sup>340</sup> are useful; but nonetheless a qualitative gap between her work and the creeping psychologisation of the development subject remains.<sup>341</sup> As it stands therefore, very little research has sought to scrutinise the emergence of a 'psychologised understanding of justice and its conception of social transformation in terms of psychosocial change'<sup>342</sup> within community-based approaches to participatory development, let alone, a specific approach like REFLECT.

This gap in the literature presents this thesis with an opportunity; and as luck would have it, Anthony Bebbington's rallying call 'to throw light [...] on how personal transformations occur and how people matter to the course taken by participatory interventions'<sup>343</sup> paradoxically ratifies the need to ask ever more critical questions about why personal transformations, and the psychosocial change underpinning them, matter so much. He might recommend greater 'ethnographic engagement with participation in practice'<sup>344</sup> to determine 'what happens to certain people (and why) when they become involved in the participation game'<sup>345</sup>; but his appeal arguably fails to notice, let alone challenge, the teleological assumption that something will invariably happen to the participatory development subject. This may be a coarse and opportunistic interpretation of Bebbington's thoughts but it is included here to demonstrate that involvement in the participation game is expected to be consequential; and that beyond scrutinising the minutiae of what actually happens to people in practice, there is also cause to determine what those anticipated consequences are, to understand the normative commitments which sustain them and to scrutinise their potential effects and implications. This thesis champions the latter approach and with that in mind, it should be read as a critique

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<sup>339</sup> See: Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', pp. 149-170.

<sup>340</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 173.

<sup>341</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', pp. 150-155.

<sup>342</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 173.

<sup>343</sup> Bebbington, A., 'Theorising Participation and Institutional Change: Ethnography and Political Economy', in Hickey, S., & Mohan, G (Eds). *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation?* (Zed Books, London & New York, 2004), p. 281.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*

of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject and the normative commitments held by those who conceived and championed it.<sup>346</sup>

What is more, this thesis wants to explicitly ask whether REFLECT is characterised by a darker will to improve which pathologises the subjective capacity of its participants and positions itself as a corrective intervention to reform their subjectivity. This chapter's more immediate appraisal of Li and Pupavac's respective work on trusteeship and therapeutic governance has in particular helped to hone its research questions and methodological approach. Having subsequently assessed the gaps in the literature, it seems obvious that anything which uncritically 'conceive[s] social transformation and social justice in psychological terms'<sup>347</sup> should be checked for the pathologising and corrective tendencies they allude to. As Bebbington concedes, 'theorising participation necessarily requires an engagement with practices [and theories] that pose awkward questions about attitudes and behaviours [...], unexpected outcomes, and normative commitments'<sup>348</sup> and for that reason, this thesis wishes to do just that and ask whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance itself. Nothing could be more awkward than opening up a conversation about the extent to which REFLECT might problematise and pathologise the psychology and subjective capacity of its participants; but as it stands, there are surely legitimate grounds for concern when subtle descriptors of its impact and potential, utilising the language of confidence and self-esteem, seem to corroborate Pupavac's argument that development has increasingly begun to embrace a therapeutic turn.

The question of whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance will consequently structure the remainder of the thesis. The chapter that follows will focus on how this thesis intends to address that question methodologically and in doing so, will set out the methods used to develop an immanent critique of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject and the normative commitments held by those who conceived and championed it. The chapter after that will locate the creeping psychologisation of the development subject within broader debates about psychologisation, 'the making [...] of the modern [psychologised] subject'<sup>349</sup> and the ways in which 'moral, political or social categories are [increasingly] reduced or transformed into questions of psychological factors'<sup>350</sup> and 'linked up in various configurations with practices

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<sup>346</sup> Anthony Bebbington's call to throw new light on how personal transformations occur and how people matter to the course taken by participatory interventions moreover warrants an empirical project far beyond the scope and capabilities of this thesis.

<sup>347</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 174.

<sup>348</sup> Bebbington, A., 'Theorising Participation and Institutional Change: Ethnography and Political Economy', p. 281.

<sup>349</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 187.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid*, p. 180.

of self-improvement'<sup>351</sup>. Whilst further middle chapters will, as promised earlier in this chapter, unfold and scrutinise Pupavac's work and other derivative literature on therapeutic governance much more thoroughly. These will hopefully provide the 'conceptual articulation'<sup>352</sup> necessary to address this thesis' research questions more fully and moreover, help it work towards a conclusion which critically appraises what REFLECT is actually doing and what participation is actually for when it aspires to empower the development subject to become the agent of its own history, capable of interacting with, intervening in and transforming its world.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 264.

<sup>352</sup> Stenner, P., Barnes, M., & Taylor, D., 'Editorial Introduction – Psychosocial Welfare: Contributions to an Emerging Field', *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2008), p. 411.

<sup>353</sup> Rossatto, CA. *Engaging Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Possibility: From Blind to Transformative Optimism*, p. 161.





## Chapter Three

# Methodological Framework

### *Introduction*

This chapter will decisively establish this thesis as an immanent critique of both the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject and the normative commitments held by those who conceived and championed it. In summary, the chapter provides a detailed overview of this thesis' methodological framework (including its methods) and explains why immanent critique has been chosen to unfold and examine the twofold expectancy that REFLECT participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being *alongside* political empowerment. To recap, the previous chapter recognised that documentary testimonies of REFLECT's anticipated impact upon the development subject incorporated a series of modest assertions that appeared to imagine increased personal confidence and self-esteem as indicators of the participant empowerment it seeks to realise. Alongside an expectancy that REFLECT circle participation would empower participants to speak to power as active politically engaged citizens, these assertions would also seem to articulate a twin expectancy that participation would yield additional improvements in participants' sense of self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being. As set out towards the end of the preceding chapter, this twofold expectancy is scantily theorised and to this thesis at least, raises a question about what REFLECT is actually trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in an ambiguous and potentially contradictory mixture of political *and* psychological terms.

The aim of this chapter is therefore fairly simple in that it seeks to introduce immanent critique, defined here as a form of philosophical-hermeneutic criticism that 'remains within what it criticises'<sup>354</sup> and 'uses [...] internal [conceptual] contradictions to criticise [something] in its own terms'<sup>355</sup>, as a worthwhile and defensible methodological means of unfolding what REFLECT is actually trying to achieve. It presents immanent critique as a methodologically unique 'form of interpretation'<sup>356</sup> that enables this thesis to expose and scrutinise the perceived ambiguity and contradictions sedimented within REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject that the previous chapter has begun to highlight without using the act of critique to completely attack or denigrate REFLECT or its ambitions.<sup>357</sup> Indeed, this chapter will assert that immanent critique is useful to this thesis because it works to make 'concealed or

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<sup>354</sup> Jarvis, S., *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*, p. 6.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>356</sup> Sabia, D., 'Defending Immanent Critique', *Political Theory*, Vol. 38, No. 5 (2010), p. 685.

<sup>357</sup> Jarvis, S., *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*, p. 6.

insufficiently thematised contradictions'<sup>358</sup> more explicit; and can improve understandings of 'the significance of [...] particular kinds of [conceptual] contradiction present within'<sup>359</sup> its object of study and 'in particular, what these contradictions [reveal] about the social [environment] out of which [that object of study]'<sup>360</sup> emerged. In short, this chapter presents immanent critique as the most appropriate methodological means to disentangle REFLECT's internal conceptual contradictions picked up in the previous chapter and critically interrogate the normative expectations and anticipated consequences of REFLECT participation that prevail in the social environment in which it was first conceived.

The chapter will therefore set out how immanent critique has informed this thesis' methodological framework. To do so, it will outline how this thesis understands and orients itself to immanent critique; not least because immanent critique is something of 'a polysemous concept'<sup>361</sup> and 'is actually best construed as a family of philosophical-hermeneutic practices bearing a complex lineage and associations with a wide variety of moral and philosophical projects and thinkers'<sup>362</sup>. Mention of its heritage 'within a trajectory of Marxist critiques of ideology'<sup>363</sup> will initially serve to contextualise this thesis' own methodological framework within the broad sociological project of critical theory. In addition, a more detailed description of immanent critique as a form of philosophical-hermeneutic criticism is included to demonstrate a clear understanding of the methodological approach utilised and to impress that it naturally holds this thesis to 'certain ontological and epistemological commitments'<sup>364</sup>. For very similar reasons, a discussion of the perceived methodological limitations of immanent critique is also included to address and wherever possible, rebuff accusations that it represents a form of philosophical conventionalism that is inherently conservative, too subjective and likely to produce characteristically underdetermined results.<sup>365</sup> Each will in turn help to layer up a picture of why immanent critique has been chosen as this thesis' preferred method of inquiry and wherever necessary, defend that choice.

The chapter will then move on to specify how immanent critique has shaped this thesis' research methods and influenced the design of a project of inquiry that marries the normative principles just described with an element of empirical research informed by them. It will

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<sup>358</sup> *Ibid*, p. 171.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>361</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., Armstrong, P., Armstrong, H., Bourgeault, I., Choiniere, J., Lexchin, J., Peters, S., & White, J., 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', *Journal of Social Science & Medicine*, Vol. 67 (2008), p. 197.

<sup>362</sup> Sabia, D., 'Defending Immanent Critique', p. 684.

<sup>363</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 195.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>365</sup> Sabia, D., 'Defending Immanent Critique', p. 685.

describe how this thesis has been inspired by innovative empirical research projects that operationalise immanent critique to 'explore tensions/contradictions within authoritative forms of knowledge'<sup>366</sup> using qualitative research methods. Whilst this thesis should not be read as a wholesale qualitative research project; it has sought to supplement its normative analysis with a small, exploratory empirical study that utilised qualitative data collection methods. In doing so, it adopted an approach that sought to explore the 'concealed or insufficiently thematised contradictions'<sup>367</sup> at the heart of REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject picked up in the previous chapter; but which then made use of a small number of qualitative research interviews with non-governmental organisation staff involved in REFLECT's initial design and implementation to explore the significance of these internal conceptual contradictions and what they might reveal about the social environment in which REFLECT was initially conceived and championed. In short, this chapter will outline this approach in more detail and set out how qualitative research methods were utilised to gather deeper discursive accounts of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT participation upon participants' sense of self, well-being and political empowerment.

#### *Contextualising Immanent Critique*

Broadly speaking, this thesis' methodological framework is informed by 'the normative politics of immanent critique'<sup>368</sup>; and as such, 'immanent critique defines an overall analytic space for [this thesis'] research and holds [it] to certain [...] commitments'<sup>369</sup>. Generally speaking, immanent critique is a form of normative ideology critique which seeks to identify and unveil the presence of dominant ideology or ideologies within an object of study and reappropriate that understanding in the service of human emancipation. Although now closely associated with 'the project of critical theory initiated at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt'<sup>370</sup> (otherwise known as the Frankfurt School), it originally stems from an orientation, first developed in the work of Karl Marx, committed to identifying 'the potentials for emancipation immanent in the needs of subjects and [...] to provide an analysis of contemporary society that apprehends its developmental possibilities'<sup>371</sup>. This immediately locates this thesis' methodology 'within a trajectory of Marxist critiques of ideology'<sup>372</sup>; and as such it is only polite to introduce Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse as

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<sup>366</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 195.

<sup>367</sup> Jarvis, S., *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*, p. 171.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>371</sup> Browne, C., 'The End of Immanent Critique?', *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 11, No. 1(2008), p. 7.

<sup>372</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 195.

first generation critical theorists of the Frankfurt School who took up the interpretation of 'Marx's enlightenment thought and his dialogue with [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich] Hegel'<sup>373</sup> to advance approaches to normative ideology critique that championed the constitutive role of theory and a synthesis of normative principles and empirical analysis.<sup>374</sup>

It is fair to say that within the fold of the Frankfurt School, immanent critique became the subject of candid debate and contributed to theoretical unity and schism in equal measure. For this reason, it 'is actually best construed as a family of philosophical-hermeneutic practices bearing a complex lineage and associations with a wide variety of moral and philosophical projects and thinkers'<sup>375</sup>. Sadly shortages of time and space mitigate against the inclusion of a narrative that charts the historical twists and turns and schisms of the Frankfurt School here; but for clarity, this thesis seeks to sensibly orient itself to 'immanent critique as a term referencing more or less general forms of normative ideology critique deriving from Marx, rather than a term signalling allegiance to specific traditions within critical theory or other varieties of Marxism'<sup>376</sup>. Dismissing the rich texture of these debates is perhaps controversial but it is done decisively and not without precedent. For example, Eric Mykhalvskiy *et al* are keen to stress in descriptions of how they operationalised immanent critique that they very much oriented to it as an approach to inquiry which held them to 'certain ontological and epistemological commitments'<sup>377</sup> but not the minutiae or finer detail of historical, theoretical wrangles. This thesis' methodology has been approached and planned in much the same manner and as such, it seemed sensible to mention this here before beginning to discuss immanent critique's relevance to this research and why it was preferred as a method of inquiry and analysis over others.

To summarise, immanent critique has been chosen to shape this thesis' methodology because it 'foregrounds an interest in exploring tensions and/or contradictions within authoritative forms of knowledge'<sup>378</sup>. In this respect, it is a methodological asset precisely because it looks to make the conceptual contradictions within ideas and knowledge claims that much more explicit; and as such, enables this thesis to disentangle a number of 'concealed or insufficiently thematised contradictions'<sup>379</sup> that the previous chapter noticed within documentary statements about the anticipated impact of REFLECT participation. To recap, the previous

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<sup>373</sup> Brookfield, S., 'Repositioning Ideology Critique in a Critical Theory of Adult Learning', *Adult Learning Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (2001), p. 8.

<sup>374</sup> Browne, C., 'The End of Immanent Critique?', p. 7.

<sup>375</sup> Sabia, D., 'Defending Immanent Critique', p. 684.

<sup>376</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 197.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>378</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 195.

<sup>379</sup> Jarvis, S., *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*, p. 171.

chapter recognised that testimonies of REFLECT's perceived or anticipated impact incorporated a series of modest assertions that appeared to imagine increased personal confidence and self-esteem as indicators of the participant empowerment it seeks to realise. Alongside an expectancy that REFLECT circle participation would empower participants to speak to power as active politically engaged citizens, these assertions would seem to articulate a twin expectancy that participation would also yield improvements in participants' sense of self and personal well-being. In the absence of any explanation of how the latter might actually occur, and given that a cross application of Vanessa Pupavac's work on therapeutic governance, might suggest that the development subject's prior disempowerment is in part rooted in deficits of personality, confidence and self-esteem, immanent critique is presented here as the most appropriate methodological means to critically appraise the contradictions within that twin expectancy.<sup>380</sup>

As mentioned towards the end of the previous chapter, 'theorising participation necessarily requires an engagement with [...] attitudes and behaviours [...], unexpected outcomes, and normative commitments'<sup>381</sup>. Immanent critique is to this thesis the best possible critical practice through which to purposely engage with the latter; and as such, it should be read as an immanent critique of both the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject and the normative commitments held by those who conceived and championed it. In particular, it should be read as an immanent critique of the latter's normative expectations of the development subject's involvement in REFLECT where participation is seemingly theorised to elicit heightened levels of self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being alongside political empowerment. The twin expectancy mentioned above is itself loaded with ideas and representative of an authoritative knowledge claim that would appear to suppress a number of 'concealed or insufficiently thematised contradictions'<sup>382</sup>. Indeed, as stated in that chapter, some of those modest assertions would appear to muddy understandings of the conceptual relationship between participation and empowerment by simultaneously presenting improvements in participants' self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being as by-products of the former and conduits of the latter. By those standards, the anticipated consequences and normative expectations of REFLECT circle participation are ripe for critical scrutiny through the lens of a methodological framework informed by immanent critique.

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<sup>380</sup> Hawel, M., 'Philosophy and Ethics in Germany: The Ideology-Critical Method of Immanent Critique', The Goethe-Institut, May 2008, online - available to download at <http://www.goethe.de/ges/phi/eth/en3352666.htm>.

<sup>381</sup> Bebbington, A., 'Theorising Participation and Institutional Change: Ethnography and Political Economy', p. 281.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid*, p. 171.

Of course describing this thesis as a form of immanent critique is not without consequence and as stated earlier; a balance between remaining faithful to certain epistemological and ontological commitments and avoiding the inertia of theoretical complexity needs to be found. As Mykhalvskiy *et al* concede, immanent critique is a 'polysemous [and] heterogeneous critical practice'<sup>383</sup> which, according to Neil Larsen, suffers from a 'deficit of methodological clarity, rigour, or consensus regarding the fundamental principles and categories of an immanent critique'<sup>384</sup> and is almost 'methodologically unmethodological'<sup>385</sup>. Further still, as Roberto Antonio explains, immanent critique is 'a historically applied logic of analysis'<sup>386</sup> with no 'fixed theoretical or empirical content'<sup>387</sup> and whose 'critical standards are [actually] ones given [to it] in the historical process'<sup>388</sup>. It therefore needs to be understood as 'a *method* of analysis deriving from a nonpositivist epistemology'<sup>389</sup> whose 'method cannot be separated from its historical application'<sup>390</sup>. Indeed for Craig Browne, immanent critique's universal 'commitment to modes of analysis that proceed from the historically given, material realm of human existence rather than from the ideal space of a metaphysical subject'<sup>391</sup> is its distinguishing ontological feature. A critique can therefore only be immanent in 'the sense that it [proceeds] not from a dogmatic standpoint beyond material and historical reality, but a standpoint within that reality pointing out contradictions within it'<sup>392</sup>.

This issue of the historical grounding of analysis will be returned to shortly; but first, in light of what has been said about REFLECT's own 'concealed or insufficiently thematised contradictions'<sup>393</sup>, immanent critique's reverence of *the contradiction* as an analytical lever requires extra comment. As stated earlier, immanent critique has been chosen to shape this thesis' methodology and methods precisely because it 'foregrounds an interest in exploring tensions and/or contradictions within authoritative forms of knowledge'<sup>394</sup>, or the 'discrepancy between a subject/object's concept and its actuality'<sup>395</sup>, and seeks 'to lay them open and assess

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<sup>383</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 195.

<sup>384</sup> Larsen, N., 'Literature, Immanent Critique and the Problem of Standpoint', *Mediations*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Spring 2009), p. 51.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>386</sup> Antonio, RJ., 'Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory: Its Origins and Developments in Hegel, Marx and Contemporary Thought', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (September 1981), p. 330.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>391</sup> Antonio, RJ., 'Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory: Its Origins and Developments in Hegel, Marx and Contemporary Thought', p. 330.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>393</sup> Jarvis, S., *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*, p. 171.

<sup>394</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 195.

<sup>395</sup> Held, D. *Introduction to Critical Theory: From Horkheimer to Habermas* (Hutchinson & Co Ltd, London, 1980), p. 382.

their claims'<sup>396</sup>. Here David Held's explanation that 'individual (or sets of) claims, perspectives and philosophies can be regarded as ideological if they conceal or mask social contradictions on behalf of a dominant class or group'<sup>397</sup> is useful.<sup>398</sup> Not least because, methodology and method have furthermore been swayed by the fact that immanent critique is 'a method capable of unveiling veiled justifications, that is, essentially particular interests masked as universal interests'<sup>399</sup>. In fact, the slippage of contradictions out from under ideologies that mystify, and make benign or harmonious, conflict-ridden social situations for example, is to an immanent critic a sign of emancipatory potential. Indeed, in seeking 'to expose and thematise contradictions between [...] performance [(the actuality)] and legitimating ideologies [(the concept)]'<sup>400</sup>, opportunities to disrupt or destabilise political positions become feasible.<sup>401</sup> It thus follows that the contradictions, tensions and antinomies constitutive of any given historical form of social relations make the method of immanent critique possible and potent.<sup>402</sup>

For Browne this 'historical grounding of analysis and contribution to the reflexive liberation of subjects differentiates immanent critique from what can loosely be categorised as [...] context-independent models of normative criticism'<sup>403</sup>. Referring back to Antonio's remark that immanent critique's 'method cannot be separated from its historical application'<sup>404</sup>, it is important (as Browne does in part) to differentiate between immanent and transcendent forms of critique, otherwise known as context-independent models of normative criticism. Unlike forms of transcendent critique, in which inquiry is 'performed from an imaginary independent point of reference from which standards of justice are supplied *a priori*'<sup>405</sup>, immanent critique is 'immanent in the sense that it [proceeds] not from a dogmatic standpoint beyond material and historical reality, but a standpoint within that reality'<sup>406</sup>. Indeed for immanent critique to be truly immanent, a common 'interest in the critical evaluation of practical norms, [social practices and social relations] internal to some society or culture'<sup>407</sup> must be matched and underpinned by 'the conviction that this requires assessing the rationality or worth of those

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<sup>396</sup> Hawel, M., 'Philosophy and Ethics in Germany: The Ideology-Critical Method of Immanent Critique'.

<sup>397</sup> Held, D. *Introduction to Critical Theory: From Horkheimer to Habermas*, p. 186.

<sup>398</sup> See: *Ibid.* For example, 'forms of consciousness are ideological in so far as they claim to represent generalisable interests but conceal the particular and sectarian interests of the ruling class; and/or in so far as they maintain that societal outcomes represent natural ones, when they are the result of particular constellations of social relations; and/or in so far as they glorify the social situation as harmonious, when it is in fact conflict ridden'.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>401</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 202.

<sup>402</sup> Azmanova, A., 'Social Justice and Varieties of Capitalism: An Immanent Critique', *New Political Economy*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (2012), p. 450.

<sup>403</sup> Browne, C., 'The End of Immanent Critique?', p. 8.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>405</sup> Azmanova, A., 'Social Justice and Varieties of Capitalism: An Immanent Critique', p. 449.

<sup>406</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 197.

<sup>407</sup> Sabia, D., 'Defending Immanent Critique', p. 685.

conventional norms, practices [and relations] by drawing on resources internal to the society or culture of which they are a part'<sup>408</sup>. This is why the internal jumble of contradictions, tensions and antinomies constitutive of any given historical form of social relations motivate the task of immanent critique so fully.

For Eva Illouz, to whom this thesis owes a sizeable debt of methodological inspiration, the contention that the activity of critique 'ought to develop criteria of evaluation that are as much as possible internal to the traditions, criteria and meanings of the object [analysed]'<sup>409</sup> ties into this. This is largely due to a sense that forms of transcendent critique already presume 'to know the winners and losers'<sup>410</sup> and appear to pinpoint 'the emancipatory or the repressive in advance'<sup>411</sup>. Indeed, Illouz is wary of approaches that are 'predicated on *a priori* political assumptions about what social relations should look like'<sup>412</sup> and very critical of those who simply seek to *count the ways* an object endorses (or fails to endorse) a particular political agenda.<sup>413</sup> Echoing Held, she writes that powerful critiques should 'derive from an intimate understanding of their object'<sup>414</sup> in order 'to avoid [...] the charge that its concepts impose irrelevant criteria of evaluation [upon that] object'<sup>415</sup>. Instead, she advocates that critique 'should start with the conceptual principles and standards of an object and [unfold] their implications and consequences'<sup>416</sup> from within. As articulated in this chapter's introduction, the ambition to remain within what it criticises drives this thesis and as such, this involves getting inside and interrogating the normative framing of empowerment and well-being as the presumed derivatives of REFLECT circle participation.<sup>417</sup>

#### *The Perceived Methodological Limitations of Immanent Critique*

Before setting out how this evaluation was undertaken, it is necessary to concede that immanent critique is regularly censured for a number of perceived methodological limitations. As Dan Sabia observes, it is often reproached as a form of philosophical conventionalism which is inherently conservative, too subjective and likely to produce results that are characteristically underdetermined.<sup>418</sup> If valid, each of these accusations potentially undermines the merit and validity of this thesis' academic contribution so some discussion of

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<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>409</sup> Illouz, E. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2012), p. 95.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>412</sup> Illouz, E. *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy, Emotions and the Culture of Self-Help* (University of California Press Ltd, London, 2008), p. 5

<sup>413</sup> Illouz, E. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*, p. 94.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>417</sup> Jarvis, S., *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*, p. 6.

<sup>418</sup> Sabia, D., 'Defending Immanent Critique', p. 685.



its apparent shortcomings is needed to rebuff these criticisms and defend methodology, method and academic contribution alike. Much of the rebuttal presented here will draw on Sabia's own defence of immanent critique against the charges of conventionalism, conservatism and subjectivity. However, in an attempt to tie in some agreement with Sabia's own refusal to see immanent critique's subjectivity as a theoretical problem, it is also worth remembering this thesis' overriding respect for multiplicity and the ambition to make a contribution that may not be generally applicable but at least sensitises its reader to new ways of thinking.<sup>419</sup> Multiplicity is after all valued by this thesis as a way of topographically writing into being a very particular and conditional interpretation of REFLECT which foregrounds and draws attention to the ways in which REFLECT imagines increased personal confidence, self-esteem and well-being as indicators of the kind of participant empowerment it seeks to realise.

As intimated, the spectre of philosophical conventionalism haunts those who practice immanent critique; with allegations of conventionalism primarily set out against it precisely because its method cannot be separated from its historical application. In other words, it fails to 'adopt a critical posture towards both conventions and conventional foundations'<sup>420</sup> and it treats 'as acceptable what is widely accepted [and regards] as sacrosanct the putative foundations of any culture or social order'<sup>421</sup>. This is arguably 'theoretically and practically limited'<sup>422</sup> because anything that takes a philosophically conventionalist stance takes for granted 'the rationality and/or normative worth of the assumptions, beliefs, and principles'<sup>423</sup> that make up these foundations. Some value can perhaps be derived from criticism which steers a conventionalist course; for example 'when valuable norms like political equality are ignored or violated [...] appeals to convention – to prevailing values and standards – are often helpful reminders and effective correctives'<sup>424</sup>. However, for anyone seeking to engage in the kind of critique that aspires to arouse profounder reflection and reform, taking these kinds of things for granted serves little progressive purpose. In the interests of defending this thesis' contribution from charges of conventionalism therefore, a critical distinction between first-order *immanent criticism* and second-order *immanent critique* needs to be made and in doing so differentiate between the former as a 'meta-ethical theory or position'<sup>425</sup> and the latter as an active 'political project'<sup>426</sup>.

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<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 692.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 686.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 691.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*

Sabia makes this distinction in defence of immanent critique and it is a distinction that should positively strengthen this chapter's own defence of methodology and method. For Sabia, first order *immanent criticism* is inherently conventional because it endorses a philosophical stance which claims that 'cultural acceptance, or cultural acceptance alone, ultimately grounds standards of reason and right'<sup>427</sup>. This is where accusations of value relativism become potent because in *treating as acceptable what is widely acceptable*, first order immanent criticism overlooks and disregards 'criteria – the historical narratives, traditional values, scriptural injunctions and ideals, or ideological norms and principles – ordinarily deployed to ground or justify ways of living and being'<sup>428</sup>. These points about cultural acceptance are crucial because the argument that the eventual 'authority or validity of moral norms depends on cultural acceptance or concordance'<sup>429</sup> subtly splits immanent criticism from immanent critique. Indeed, whilst the latter certainly 'accepts the sociological fact that the moral authority and persuasive force of prevailing norms and practices [eventually] rest on shared interpretations of those practices and norms'<sup>430</sup>; it does not shy away from recognising, setting apart, evaluating and challenging the criteria upon which they rest and recommending change on this basis.<sup>431</sup> The rub with this of course is that unlike transcendent forms of critique, which methodologically step away and appeal to independent standards or arguments to augment change, 'immanent critique seeks to work with and within these [culturally shared] interpretations'<sup>432</sup>.

This of course raises the sticky issue of whether 'the potential for immanent critique is always present'<sup>433</sup>. Sabia keenly feels that 'there are *always* resources for immanent critique'<sup>434</sup> because 'societies and cultures are, in brief, multivalent and dynamic'<sup>435</sup>. Drawing upon the work of Michael Oakeshott, he argues, that 'contemporary cultures [...] always contain [...] a variety of intimations and [...] diverse, often inconsistent or conflicting conceptual, empirical, and normative understandings and practices'<sup>436</sup>. This is a contention which certainly resonates with Eva Illouz's own moves against the kind of critiques which flatten the 'complexity of the social'<sup>437</sup> and together, Illouz and Sabia separately rally to argue that the ubiquity of immanent critical potential rests upon this incoherence and dynamism rather than any perceived,

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<sup>427</sup> *Ibid*, p. 692.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid*, p. 691.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid*, p. 692.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid*, p. 693.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid*, p. 692.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid*, p. 693.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 692-693.

<sup>437</sup> Illouz, E. *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy, Emotions and the Culture of Self-Help*, pp. 4-12.

presumed or taken for granted coherence and stability.<sup>438</sup> With this in mind, gaps between 'ideals and conduct, expectations and results, aspirations and experiences [and] promises and performances [...] all put the lie to the absence of critical potential'<sup>439</sup> and present the possibility for change. Of course, change of any form requires hospitality to the kind of thinking that can destabilise prevailing norms and practices; and whilst 'a desire to bring about change through suasion [is often used to explain] why immanent critique seeks to work with and within'<sup>440</sup> shared interpretations of them, a second charge of conservatism is never far removed from the first charge of conventionalism.

Indeed these comments about the ubiquity of immanent critical potential do not mean that 'immanent critique has any easy time of it'<sup>441</sup>; especially when it comes to asserting that its 'criticisms and prescriptions [hold] substantive meaning and bite, and therefore, possible authority and efficacy'<sup>442</sup>. As Sabia writes, immanent critique's perceived conservatism is often given as reason enough 'for recommending putatively extra cultural or transcendental modes of reasoning [because] such modes of reason enable escape from the always confining and usually parochial grounds of culture'<sup>443</sup>. Here the subtle, and sometimes opaque, difference between first order immanent criticism and second order immanent critique is once again crucial and hinges on degrees of critical depth. First order immanent criticism, in deploying 'directly, culturally dominant understandings and norms'<sup>444</sup>, is lamentable for its deeply entrenched conservatism. That said, because second order immanent critique 'presumes to find in the target of the criticism precisely the critical resources on which the criticism depends'<sup>445</sup> it too cannot necessarily escape the same allegations. Once again though, its appeal to 'the second order grounds [...] or horizon [...] on which [prevailing practices and norms] depend'<sup>446</sup> reveals the semblance of an activist sensibility; and somewhat ironically, 'immanent critics believe this gives to their arguments a certain [additional] authority, plausibility, and persuasiveness, because what they have to say relies in some fashion on ideas and ideals already presupposed or shared to some extent by their audience'<sup>447</sup>.

As such, the receptiveness of the audience to whom immanent critique speaks is crucial in determining its potential meaning and bite. Most accusations of conservatism hinge on interpretations of its methodology but as Sabia points out, these things also depend on the

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<sup>438</sup> Sabia, D., 'Defending Immanent Critique', p. 693.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 692.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 695.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 696.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 695.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 686.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 687.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 690.

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 687.

degree of ‘psychological and social resistance to criticism [and especially] radical criticism’<sup>448</sup> within the very audience to whom the critique appeals. Following the contention that there are always resources for immanent critique within societies or cultures, keeping ‘the wholly implausible claim that a society will have within it no possibility of immanent critique [distinct from] the obviously plausible claim that a society may be highly resistant to criticism and change’<sup>449</sup> is important. Indeed immanent critique’s actual bite and authority equally rests on measures of conservatism and submissiveness to prevailing orthodoxies within its audience as well as its own methodology. The relationship between critique and audience, and in particular the latter’s receptiveness to the former’s criticism (‘whether reactionary or progressive’<sup>450</sup> as Sabia spells out), is therefore decisive and demands some thought about influence on the immanent critic’s part. Whilst a degree of hermeneutical dexterity is required to critically clash arguments and confidently proclaim truth over error; adopting strategies to ‘earn the trust of [an] audience’<sup>451</sup>, ‘reminding them of their convictions, duties, and their potential efficacy as political actors’<sup>452</sup> are entirely necessary and equally valuable too.<sup>453</sup>

Here in practice this means employing ‘every [possible] effort to persuade’<sup>454</sup> through the written word. As Sabia writes, challenging ‘prevailing assumptions and preconceptions [about] social processes and practices; notions of normalcy, value and reason; the meanings, implications, and reach of principles and ideals; and acceptable justifications and so on’<sup>455</sup> is potentially inflammatory and necessitates a style of writing that can hopefully extend an invitation for reflection rather than resistance. As acknowledged in an earlier chapter, nothing could be more awkward than opening up a conversation about the extent to which REFLECT might problematise and pathologise the subjective and emotional capacity of its participants. For those who see it as a positive, enabling practice, setting out an alternative interpretation of the meaning, implications and reach of its principles and ideals is potentially pretty provocative. Recognising and articulating this potential to aggrieve early on feels a little kinder in some respects and acts a way of presenting a critique that does genuinely want to appeal to its audience and affect some level of change. Indeed, in many ways it seeks to reassure and cajole its audience to accept that the critique may well jar with their existing sensibilities but at the same time, asks them to embrace, persevere with and think through the arc of its

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<sup>448</sup> *Ibid*, p. 695.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid*, p. 703.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid*, p. 704.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid*, p. 703.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid*, p. 704.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid*.

arguments. This may be overly idealistic, but it rests on a simple hope that ‘there is [ultimately] something in the heart of man which will bend under moral suasion’<sup>456</sup>.

This emphasis on the receptivity of others to the interpretative, hermeneutic method of immanent critique might not satisfy those who cling to indictments of conservatism but it offers one way of arguing against claims that its findings lack meaning and bite. When it comes to the charges of underdetermination and subjectivism however, acceptance is perhaps a much more sensible strategy. The ‘problem of underdetermination’<sup>457</sup> or in other words, the propensity for ‘individual critics [...] to produce a variety of plausible yet conflicting interpretations and therefore a variety of plausible yet conflicting assessments’<sup>458</sup> precedes questions about the reliability and credibility of any interpretative method. Immanent critique is beset by these reproaches and both ‘underdetermination, and something like subjectivity, are [negatively levied as] characteristic features of the approach’<sup>459</sup>. Not so however for Sabia who sees both as less of a limiting theoretical problem than others might *and* do. For him, ‘underdetermination seems to [be] inevitable, a reflection or result of the human condition and not of the approach’<sup>460</sup> per se. As such, he calls for ‘theorists, on the one side, to recognise and respect human diversity and, on the other, to admit to the [ever pervasive] role of power [...] in political and social life’<sup>461</sup>. This is a bold statement but it reflects a sentiment set out earlier in this thesis around the theme of multiplicity and a commitment to writing topographically.

In fact, accepting immanent critique’s inevitable subjectivity and the underdetermination of its product is crucial for fastening these previously established convictions to methodology here. As outlined in chapter one, this thesis has openly committed itself to topographically writing into being a very particular and conditional interpretation of REFLECT which foregrounds and draws very particular attention to the ways in which it imagines increased personal confidence, self-esteem and well-being as indicators of the kind of participant empowerment it seeks to realise. Indeed, it has set out to paint a provisional, interpretative picture of REFLECT that exists neither in opposition nor in hierarchical relation to any other interpretation of the knowledge claims and conceptual framework upon which it rests. Extending Sabia’s indifference to arguments that immanent critique’s subjectivity and underdetermination represent out-and-out methodological flaws, it therefore makes no apology for pushing an interpretation of REFLECT which is perhaps no more instructive

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<sup>456</sup> Sabia, D., ‘Defending Immanent Critique’, p. 704.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 688.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 685.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*

beyond its own idiosyncrasies than any other. Instead the beauty of immanent critique, subjectivity, underdetermination and all, is that it enables this thesis to really focus on a particular set of contradictions within REFLECT that might otherwise elude exposure. In spite of these perceived limitations, immanent critique really does provide the best possible methodological means to expose them and make possible a kind of ‘expository writing’<sup>462</sup> that can genuinely test if its ‘arguments and appeals [are] coherent and consistent’<sup>463</sup>.

### *Operationalising Immanent Critique*

Not surprisingly, all of this rests on successfully *operationalising* immanent critique as a research method. However, given that immanent critique is a historically applied logic of analysis, *operationalising* it as a research method is tricky.<sup>464</sup> It might hold this thesis to ‘certain ontological and epistemological commitments’<sup>465</sup> but the dearth of ‘methodological clarity, rigour, or consensus regarding the fundamental principles and categories of an immanent critique’<sup>466</sup> just mentioned remains an abiding issue. In fact, very little guidance on how to carry out or operationalise an immanent critique is offered by the literature beyond a few cursory instructions to ‘uncover the guiding idea of a phenomenon and to disentangle the self-contradictions which [that] phenomenon displays [within] itself’<sup>467</sup>. The word operationalise has been utilised throughout this chapter to stress the applied challenge of doing so and in the absence of any definitive *how to* guidance, this thesis has fallen back on Illouz’s earlier cited pronouncement that any critique ‘should start with the conceptual principles and standards of an object and [unfold] their implications and consequences’<sup>468</sup>. As such, this thesis has adopted an approach to immanent critique that moves to extrapolate the concepts that make REFLECT intelligible and then evaluate the fit between its source conceptual framework and the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject that prevail in the social environment in which it was first conceived.<sup>469</sup>

Beyond that though, this thesis’ methods are also inspired by innovative empirical research projects that operationalise immanent critique to ‘explore tensions/contradictions within

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<sup>462</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, ‘Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique’, p. 196.

<sup>463</sup> Sabia, D., ‘Defending Immanent Critique’, pp. 690-691.

<sup>464</sup> Antonio, RJ., ‘Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory: Its Origins and Developments in Hegel, Marx and Contemporary Thought’, p. 330.

<sup>465</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, ‘Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique’, p. 197.

<sup>466</sup> Larsen, N., ‘Literature, Immanent Critique and the Problem of Standpoint’, p. 51.

<sup>467</sup> Held, D. *Introduction to Critical Theory: From Horkheimer to Habermas*, p. 382.

<sup>468</sup> Illouz, E. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*, p. 94.

<sup>469</sup> Procyshyn, A., ‘The Structure and Straits of Immanent Critique’, online –available to download at: [http://www.academia.edu/1304246/Structure And Straits of Immanent Critique](http://www.academia.edu/1304246/Structure_And_Straits_of_Immanent_Critique).

authoritative forms of knowledge'<sup>470</sup> using qualitative research methods. One such study has directly influenced the design of its methods and inspired this thesis to make use of qualitative research methods to supplement its normative scrutiny of REFLECT's epistemic base. This thought-provoking study, whilst grounded in a health-related research discipline far removed from this thesis' own disciplinary grounding, drew upon and combined the normative politics of immanent critique with qualitative research methods to determine how authoritative knowledge claims and assumptions internal to organisational healthcare reform initiatives were comparatively understood and experienced in practice by those excluded from their formulation. To do so, it took 'claims [...] internal to specific managerial initiatives and [explored] them against the experiences that health care workers [had] of those same initiatives and claims'<sup>471</sup>. Moreover, it did so through empirically generated accounts of health care worker experiences that were then used to talk back to and complicate prevailing managerial claims. In much the same vein, this thesis has sought to utilise qualitative research methods to generate comparable experiential accounts that can be used to talk back to and complicate the seemingly prevailing expectancy that REFLECT participation will elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being *alongside* political empowerment.

Without wanting to devalue the use of qualitative research methods to do so, this thesis should still be read and understood as a piece of philosophical-hermeneutic criticism rather than a comprehensive and fully-fledged qualitative research project. Interpretative methods utilising specific critical standards dominate and direct the task of scrutinising both the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject and the normative commitments held by those who conceived and championed it. However, having taken the abovementioned study as an exemplar of how to successfully operationalise immanent critique using qualitative research methods, a small number of qualitative research interviews with non-governmental organisation staff involved in REFLECT's initial design and/or subsequent implementation and use were undertaken. These interviews were designed to explore the seemingly prevailing expectancy that REFLECT participation would elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being *alongside* political empowerment and sought to determine what REFLECT is actually trying to achieve when its vision of that empowered development subject is expressed in an ambiguous and potentially contradictory mixture of political *and* psychological terms. The remainder of this chapter will therefore set out the critical standards used to critically unfold REFLECT's epistemic base underpinning this perceived expectancy and its vision of the empowered

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<sup>470</sup> Mykhalvskiy, E., *et al.*, 'Qualitative Research and the Politics of Knowledge in an Age of Evidence: Developing a Research-Based Practice of Immanent Critique', p. 195.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

development subject and will finish by summarising the qualitative data collection and analysis methods used to shape this small, exploratory empirical study.<sup>472</sup>

### *Critical Standards*

As repeatedly emphasised throughout this chapter, immanent critique is ‘a historically applied logic of analysis’<sup>473</sup>, lacking any ‘fixed theoretical or empirical content’<sup>474</sup>, whose critical standards must ‘derive from an intimate [historically situated] understanding of [its] object’<sup>475</sup>. In other words, it should use ‘criteria of evaluation that are as much as possible internal to the traditions, criteria and meanings of the object [to be analysed]’<sup>476</sup>. As a method, it therefore necessitates ‘[extrapolating] the concepts, norms, or principles that make an object intelligible’<sup>477</sup> and then ‘[evaluating] the fit between [this] extrapolated conceptual scheme and the particular [historical] instance’<sup>478</sup> of the object under scrutiny. For Marcus Hawel, this intelligibility is entirely dependent upon prevailing knowledge claims which, as ‘packages of symbols, ideas, images, and theories’<sup>479</sup>, continually feign an unfounded coherence and belie a syncretic amalgamation of different forms of concepts, norms, or principles and even different truths and falsehoods in the service of a reified basic position.<sup>480</sup> In fact, for Hawel, every prevailing knowledge claim is a syncretism and as such, the method of immanent critique must first identify its object’s intelligible conceptual framework and then apply ‘a [critical] process of [philosophical-hermeneutic] *separating* and *distinguishing*’<sup>481</sup> that probes down ‘to the [conceptual] intersections [within those] reified syncretisms’<sup>482</sup> to set apart, evaluate and challenge the reification upon which that object’s intelligibility rests.<sup>483</sup>

Moreover, the critical standards deployed to unfold REFLECT’s epistemic base have evolved out of this thesis’ own conditional and situated understanding of the concepts that make it intelligible. Beyond Hawel’s assertions that an object’s intelligibility is entirely dependent upon prevailing knowledge claims and the aforesaid syncretisms which service their influence and authority; this chapter is keen to stress that extrapolating the concepts that make an object intelligible is itself a subjective interpretative exercise. Or in other words, an exercise that is

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<sup>472</sup> *Ibid*, p. 171.

<sup>473</sup> Antonio, R.J., ‘Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory: Its Origins and Developments in Hegel, Marx and Contemporary Thought’, p. 330.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>475</sup> Illouz, E. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*, p. 94.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid*, p. 95.

<sup>477</sup> Procyshyn, A., ‘The Structure and Straits of Immanent Critique’, online.

<sup>478</sup> Hawel, M., ‘Philosophy and Ethics in Germany: The Ideology-Critical Method of Immanent Critique’, online.

<sup>479</sup> Held, D. *Introduction to Critical Theory: From Horkheimer to Habermas*, p. 186.

<sup>480</sup> Hawel, M., ‘Philosophy and Ethics in Germany: The Ideology-Critical Method of Immanent Critique’, online.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>483</sup> A syncretism here is understood to be a philosophical representation of any attempted reconciliation or union of different or opposing concepts, norms, or principles.



dependent upon the immanent critic's own conditional and situated interpretation of the conceptual basis of those prevailing knowledge claims and the shared understandings of those concepts which sustain that influence and authority. The critical standards used to unfold REFLECT's epistemic base here within this thesis are consequently the interpretative products of a conditional and situated reading of REFLECT as an episteme; and in accordance with this thesis' underlying respect for multiplicity, exist neither in opposition nor in hierarchical relation to any other possible interpretation of the knowledge claims and conceptual framework upon which it rests.<sup>484</sup> Indeed, just as this thesis' overall contribution to knowledge should be taken and read as one picture amongst many within a metaphorical sketchbook which presents every picture as a provisional representation that always waits for the next picture to draw things differently, its critical standards are equally idiosyncratic.

What is more, these critical standards derive from a conditional and situated reading of one very noticeable knowledge claim already separated, distinguished and brought to the fore by this thesis. As mentioned earlier, the twofold expectancy that REFLECT circle participation will empower participants to speak to power as active politically engaged citizens and similarly yield additional improvements in participants' sense of self-esteem and confidence is (to this thesis at least) REFLECT's prevailing and most established knowledge claim and a fundamental source of its epistemic intelligibility. In accordance with Hawel's thinking however, it is arguable that it too feigns an unfounded coherence and belies a syncretic amalgamation of meaning that, whilst drawing its authority from a tripartite conceptual framework that normatively tethers participation to empowerment and well-being, actually masks significantly different (and possibly even contradictory) expectations of what REFLECT participation might achieve. Indeed, the remainder of this thesis intends to treat the claim that REFLECT participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being *alongside* political empowerment as a syncretism whose reification is brought into being by this authority loading and intelligibility lending conceptual framework. This thesis' critical standards therefore derive from an intimate conditional and situated understanding of that tripartite conceptual framework and will take to task the conceptual linkages that bind the concepts of participation, empowerment and well-being together in the service of that authority and intelligibility.

In other words (and to add a little definition to what Hawel describes as 'a [critical] process of [philosophical-hermeneutic] *separating* and *distinguishing*'<sup>485</sup>), this thesis will use these concepts

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<sup>484</sup> Hawel, M., 'Philosophy and Ethics in Germany: The Ideology-Critical Method of Immanent Critique', online.

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*

as its critical standards to evaluate the fit between this tripartite conceptual framework and the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject that prevail in the social environment in which it was first conceived. Practically speaking this involves interrogating the normative framing of empowerment and well-being as the presumed derivatives of REFLECT circle participation and unfolding the implications and consequences of this framing in relation to the prevailing knowledge claim that REFLECT circle participation will empower participants to speak to power as active politically engaged citizens and at the same time yield additional improvements in participants' sense of self-esteem, confidence and well-being. As Hawel alluded to, this involves questioning and to a greater extent destabilising the conceptual intersections (or in his slightly more opaque wording, the binding 'neuralgic intersections'<sup>486</sup> between concepts) that service this framing and foreground particular meaning. In short, this thesis' critical standards have been adopted to take that framing to point of crisis; which in Hawel's words involves laying open, reflecting upon and challenging the knowledge claims it sustains and wherever possible, re-appropriating its fundamental concepts and the intersections between them to realise new meaning making possibilities from the inside out.<sup>487</sup>

#### *Empirical Methods*

This thesis' empirical methods were subsequently designed to supplement these critical standards. To recap, an approach to immanent critique has been adopted by this thesis which responds to Illouz's now frequently cited pronouncement that any critique 'should start with the conceptual principles and standards of an object and [unfold] their implications and consequences'<sup>488</sup>. To augment that interpretative task, an empirical study has been designed to comparatively explore and scrutinise actual understandings and experiences of the twofold expectancy that REFLECT participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being *alongside* political empowerment. To do this, a small number of qualitative research interviews with non-governmental organisation staff involved in REFLECT's initial design and/or subsequent implementation and use were undertaken. These interviews were designed to collect further data for normative analysis and scrutiny and have in hindsight added a remarkable richness to this thesis's own comprehension of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject as well as the normative commitments held by those who conceived and championed it. The remainder of this chapter sets out the scope of this empirical study and in turn describes the

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<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>488</sup> Illouz, E. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*, p. 94.

specific data collection methods used to gather data and the later analytical approach employed to organise that data and set the stage for interpreting and drawing meaningful conclusions from it.

### *Data Collection*

A series of twenty semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews with non-governmental aid and development organisation staff were undertaken to collect data for further normative analysis and scrutiny. The recruited research participants collectively represented a mixture of different non-governmental organisations, from relatively small to large, internationally recognised charities, and were all invited to participate in and contribute to the research on the basis of their known involvement in REFLECT's conceptual design and/or subsequent implementation and use. A snowball sampling technique was used to identify and recruit suitable research participants. This was judged to be the most appropriate method to target individuals within a relatively unfamiliar organisational landscape and relied upon the identification and recruitment of key visible actors to act as gatekeepers and open up possibilities to expand the study's web of contacts and inquiry.<sup>489</sup> Five key individuals were identified and directly approached to participate in the research due to their known role in REFLECT's initial creation and were subsequently, asked to recommend colleagues and acquaintances who might also be interested in taking part in the research. In the main, recommendations were readily volunteered and introductions carried out via email or in person and as hoped for, they yielded a number of significant connections for the benefit of the research, swelling the number of available research participants to twenty in total.

The qualitative interview method was chosen because it suits research that is 'interested in understanding the perceptions of participants or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events'<sup>490</sup>. An informal semi-structured approach was adopted to generate conversational narratives of participants' experiences of REFLECT and capture how they came to 'arrive at the cognitions, emotions, and values [relayed within] the conversational [interview]'<sup>491</sup>. Wherever possible, this approach sought to create a discursive 'space where meaning [could be] constructed through an interexchange [...] of verbal viewpoints in the interests of [...] knowing'<sup>492</sup>. Interviews were loosely structured and began

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<sup>489</sup> Atkinson, R., & Flint, J., 'Snowball Sampling', in Lewis-Beck, MS., Bryman, A., & Liao, TF (Eds). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods* (Sage Publications Ltd, London, New York & New Delhi, 2004), p. 1043.

<sup>490</sup> Berg, B., & Lund, H., 'A Dramaturgical Look at Interviewing' in Berg, B., & Lund, H (Eds). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (Pearson Education Ltd, Essex, 2014), p. 115.

<sup>491</sup> Miller, WL., & Crabtree, BF., 'Depth Interviewing' in Crabtree, BF., & Miller, WL (Eds). *Doing Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications Ltd, London, Second Edition, 1999), p. 106.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid*, p. 89.

with some initial exploratory, open-ended questioning that invited participants to clarify and expand upon their specific experiences of REFLECT. From thereon in, lightly facilitated conversations took hold and progressed steadily as a 'mutual [interpersonal] understanding of the research topic'<sup>493</sup> emerged. Wherever necessary, participants were encouraged to expand upon statements or points of discussion that warranted further explanation. Beyond that, prompts and probes were carefully used to maintain a steady momentum and refocus or redirect a conversation's course as and when needed.<sup>494</sup> Each interview for the most part tended to proceed fairly smoothly and whilst no one interview was the same, this informal and conversational semi-structured approach produced a sizeable amount of narrative material to analyse and reflect upon.

Most interviews were carried out in person. However, as outlined above, a small number were conducted over the telephone: either at the request of participants themselves or where geographic distance presented a significant and insurmountable barrier to interviewing in person. The majority of the research participants were based in the UK; however those working overseas were not excluded and invited to participate in the research via a telephone interview. Given that the majority of the research participants were typically elites working on the administrative and management side of non-governmental aid and development organisations, telephone interviewing was not seen as an exclusionary method. The ability to respond to visual clues and build a more intimate interpersonal relationship with the research participant was obviously lacking but otherwise no major impediments were experienced using this medium. Face-to-face interviews were typically carried out within the participant's organisational base although a small number were conducted in public settings and one was undertaken in a participant's home. No follow up or second interviews were undertaken with any of the research participants. Every interview was audio recorded – irrespective of whether they were conducted face-to-face or over the telephone - with prior permission to do so sought from each research participant before an interview began. Each participant was promised complete confidentiality and reassurances were made that all attributable comments and observations would be cited anonymously.

The study was nevertheless hampered by several profounder practical constraints and its sample size in particular requires further justification. As outlined, only a very small number of individuals were initially sampled to participate in the research and/or help expand the study's web of contacts and inquiry. From a distance this might seem a little narrow. However, it reflects reality and the fact that REFLECT was conceived and developed by a tiny handful of

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<sup>493</sup> *Ibid*, p. 101.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 102-103.

people under the sponsorship of one individual organisation. Whilst it has since been adopted and utilised by many more, its chief architects and early proponents are few in number and this automatically constrained the initial sample population. All but one of the five approached consented to participate and this one self-exclusion was notably regrettable. However the snowball sampling technique helped to swell the number of willing research participants and despite initial population constraints, enabled the study to exploit a less visible network of REFLECT practitioners and identify others who had also been involved in its early development. It also generated introductions to unfamiliar individuals and organisations who had or were actively using REFLECT. In the end, the resultant sample featured initial architects and early proponents alongside more recent champions including those with direct experience of facilitating REFLECT circles and those who had evaluated its impact for their respective organisations.

To complicate matters further, a significant proportion of those invited to participate in the research had since moved on to work for other aid and development charities. On the one hand, this reality further validated the use of a snowball sampling technique to track down and recruit research participants through unknown personal and professional networks. However, REFLECT was not necessarily used by some of the research participants' newest employers. To the extent that some participants spoke almost entirely retrospectively about their involvement and perceptions of REFLECT and at times, even explicitly distanced their personal views and perceptions within the conversational interview from those of their current employer. In terms of the representativeness of the resultant sample of research participants, this warrants further qualification. Indeed, whilst the resultant sample included staff from a mixture of different non-governmental aid and development organisations, this diversity and spread should not be taken as a sign of its representativeness. Instead, its representativeness was determined by inclusion/exclusion criteria that prioritised individual rather than organisational level involvement in REFLECT's conceptual design and/or subsequent implementation and use. For that reason, and given the need to ensure parity across the sample, every research participant's personal identity, organisational affiliation and contribution to the research, including all attributed quotations, have been anonymised to preserve and uphold the confidentiality within which views and opinions were expressed.

### *Data Analysis*

Every interview was subsequently transcribed for analysis. The analytical approach adopted broadly adhered to the conventions of a thematic template analysis which involves working through and interacting with the textual transcripts before organising and coding the

component data into a broad template or framework of themes. Generally speaking, coding enables 'a researcher to identify meaningful data and set the stage for interpreting and drawing conclusions'<sup>495</sup> and 'should be thought of as essentially heuristic, providing ways of interacting with and thinking about the data'<sup>496</sup>. It typically involves looking for patterns or themes that at a minimum describe and organise possible observations and at a maximum interpret aspects of the phenomenon under scrutiny.<sup>497</sup> Themes 'may be identified at the manifest level (directly observable in the information) or at the latent level (underlying the phenomenon)'<sup>498</sup> and likewise, 'may initially be generated inductively from the raw information or generated deductively from theory and prior research'<sup>499</sup>. In this case, themes were generated deductively through an *a priori* set of themes that initially focused on extracting research participants' expectations of the impact or consequences of REFLECT circle participation. Supplementary themes were then drawn out inductively whenever and wherever the interview transcripts yielded something of additional interest or relevance to the research and were then incorporated into an overarching template of themes (otherwise known as a coding framework) to inform the next phase of the analytical process.

A deductive approach to coding was prioritised precisely because it holds steady to Illouz's earlier and much cited edict that immanent critique 'should start with the conceptual principles and standards of an object and [unfold] their implications and consequences'<sup>500</sup>. As 'a historically applied logic of analysis'<sup>501</sup> that lacks any 'fixed theoretical or empirical content'<sup>502</sup>, immanent critique's critical standards must 'derive from an intimate [historically situated] understanding of [its] object'<sup>503</sup> and it therefore stands to reason, that a predetermined thematic framework generated out of that understanding should inform the initial stages of the coding process. This of course involves imposing structure on the data and to some could be construed as a barrier to the interpretation of the data and the flexibility of the analysis. However, given that one of the most distinguishing features of immanent critique is that it derives its legitimacy from its object of study and takes its point of departure from its subject matter, it follows through that the analytical approach adopted should do the same.<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies* (Sage Publications Ltd, London, 1996), p.27.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30.

<sup>497</sup> Boyatzis, RE. *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development* (Sage Publications Ltd, Thousand Oaks, London & New Delhi, 1998), p. 4.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>501</sup> Antonio, RJ., 'Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory: Its Origins and Developments in Hegel, Marx and Contemporary Thought', p. 330.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>503</sup> Illouz, E. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*, p. 94.

<sup>504</sup> Morgan, WJ. *Leftist Theories of Sport: A Critique and Reconstruction* (University of Illinois Press, United States of America, 1994), p. 10.

With that in mind, a set of succinct themes were drawn up to evaluate the fit between the normative framing of empowerment and well-being as the presumed derivatives of REFLECT circle participation and the anticipated impact or consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject as described and articulated by this thesis' research participants.

The qualitative data analysis software package NVivo was used to physically code the interview transcripts because it made the process of working through significant volumes of qualitative textual data much more manageable. It subsequently proved to be invaluable and helped to condense 'the bulk of [the] data [...] into analysable units'<sup>505</sup>. All of the interview transcripts were uploaded into NVivo and using an initial set of tree nodes that mapped onto the predetermined thematic framework described above, the data was sequentially worked through using a mixture of data reduction and data complication techniques to first break up and segment the data into these general themes and to then expand and tease out the data, in order to formulate new themes and deeper levels of interpretation and understanding.<sup>506</sup> Whilst the former sought to 'retrieve and [...] aggregate instances [within the data] to a restricted number of categories'<sup>507</sup> and brought more and more segments of the data under those primary organising tree nodes; the latter sought to 'expand the conceptual frameworks and dimensions for analysis'<sup>508</sup> and expand the emerging template of themes through the use of additional free nodes. This certainly enabled the data to be organised more creatively but as it began to evidence further patterns and relationships, many of these free nodes were incorporated into existing or converted into new tree nodes with their own sub-sets of child nodes to tighten up the template once more.

The textual data was coded using three hundred codes in total. As the twin analytical processes of data reduction and data complication accelerated and intertwined, these individual codes were finally organised into a set of three distinct tree nodes each with their own sub-sets of child nodes to produce an overarching template of themes for use during the next stage of the analytical process. This template of themes is set out in appendix two and is included to provide a visual representation of the thematic analysis undertaken. Having organised the data into meaningful categories, this overarching template of themes greatly facilitated the interpretative process; enabling the examination of similarly coded segments of text and the subsequent identification of similarities and differences within them to try and definitively tease out the expectant impact of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject

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<sup>505</sup> Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*, p.26.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid*, p.30.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid*.

and the underlying normative commitments of the research participants who themselves championed it. Indeed, this approach definitely advanced this thesis' understanding of that expectant impact and how REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject, expressed in an ambiguous and potentially contradictory mixture of political *and* psychological terms, shaped that expectancy.<sup>509</sup> The full findings and implications of this analytical approach are set out in chapter seven and that chapter comprehensively documents these findings and the contribution of this empirical study to the thesis as a whole.

### *Conclusions*

In summary, this chapter has introduced and outlined why the philosophical-hermeneutic method of immanent critique underpins this thesis' methodological framework, informing both methodology and methods alike. In particular, it has explained how this thesis understands and orients itself to immanent critique, acknowledging and addressing its limitations in the process, as a form of criticism which 'remains within what it criticises'<sup>510</sup> and which 'uses [...] internal [conceptual] contradictions to criticise [something] in its own terms'<sup>511</sup>. More than that though, the chapter has also sought to spotlight immanent critique's expediency as a method precisely because it can improve understandings of 'the significance of [...] particular kinds of [conceptual] contradiction present within'<sup>512</sup> an object of study and moreover 'what these contradictions [can reveal] about the social [environment] out of which [that object of study]'<sup>513</sup> emerged. In doing so, it has hopefully demonstrated why immanent critique complements this thesis' overall ambitions to engage with its illustrative case study, REFLECT, as an epistemic body of knowledge claims and why, by virtue of its ability to foreground 'concealed or insufficiently thematised contradictions'<sup>514</sup> within authoritative forms of knowledge, it has been chosen by this thesis as the most appropriate and prudent methodological means to help expose and scrutinise the contradictions sedimented within REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject without using the act of critique to completely attack or denigrate REFLECT or its ambitions.<sup>515</sup>

The chapter has also set out how immanent critique has informed and shaped this thesis' research methods and above all, influenced the design of a project of inquiry that supplements this thesis' theoretical critique of REFLECT's normative foundations with a small, exploratory empirical study utilising qualitative methods. As described, the research documented in this

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<sup>509</sup> Miller, WL., & Crabtree, BF., 'Depth Interviewing', p. 170.

<sup>510</sup> Jarvis, S., *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*, p. 6.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.



thesis reached out to a small epistemic community of non-governmental organisation actors, who first conceived and then subsequently championed REFLECT as a community-based approach to international development, to generate additional critical resource for immanent critique.<sup>516</sup> Beyond confirming this thesis' engagement with that epistemic community, the chapter has outlined how this empirical work was conceived, undertaken and analysed to generate richer, grounded insights into the normative commitments which underpin the twofold expectancy that REFLECT circle participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being *alongside* political empowerment. In doing so, the chapter documents how and why this thesis should be read as an immanent critique of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject as well as the normative commitments held by those who first conceived and championed it and more specifically, how a methodological framework informed by it can help determine what REFLECT is trying to achieve when its vision of the development subject is expressed in what the previous chapter identified as a poorly theorised, mixture of political and psychological terms.

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<sup>516</sup> Haas, PM., 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', p. 3.



## Chapter Four

### **Psychologisation and the Making of the Modern Psychologised Subject**

#### *Introduction*

This chapter will set out to locate creeping *psychologisation* of the development subject identified earlier in this thesis within broad sociological debates about ‘the making [...] of the modern [psychologised] subject’<sup>517</sup>. The chapter’s contribution to the overall thesis is a little unusual in that it chooses to focus on the critical psychological concept of *psychologisation* and the ways in which psychological explanations are increasingly drawn upon and utilised to transform and reduce a whole range of moral, social and political issues to matters of psychology and innate psychological causation.<sup>518</sup> It remains a largely unknown concept to development and political theorists alike, let alone anyone interested in community-based approaches to participatory development, and whilst the term has been used and drawn upon by this thesis to articulate how REFLECT’s vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms, it was casually done with little explanation or concrete definition. This chapter sets out to remedy that negligence and outline how *psychologisation*, which in general terms means ‘to make something psychological’<sup>519</sup> and denotes an ‘ever expanding tendency to manage non-psychological issues in psychological [ways]’<sup>520</sup>, has foreshadowed the emergence of a Western therapeutic culture in conjunction with a ‘system of evolving therapeutic governance’<sup>521</sup> that has noticeably influenced the ways in the modern subject is thought about and acted upon.

As stated above, this chapter’s contribution to the overall thesis is a little unusual and to certain readers, this might mark an unexpected deviation away from the promised immanent critique of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject and the normative commitments held by those who conceived and championed it. That said, the question of whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance drives this intent and as such, it is important to validate this as a legitimate research question. This chapter’s forthcoming discussion of *psychologisation*, ‘the making [...] of the modern [psychologised] subject’<sup>522</sup> and the ways in which ‘moral, political or social categories are [increasingly] reduced or transformed into questions of psychological factors’<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>517</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., ‘The Disappearance of Psychologisation’, p. 187.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid*, p. 180.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>520</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., ‘Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation’, p. 3.

<sup>521</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 64.

<sup>522</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., ‘The Disappearance of Psychologisation’, p. 187.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid*, p. 180.

and 'linked up in various configurations with practices of self-improvement'<sup>524</sup> is intended to do just that. What is more, its focus on the concept of *psychologisation* along with therapeutic culture and the 'new forms of subjectivity'<sup>525</sup> it has precipitated is intended to provide another layer of 'conceptual articulation'<sup>526</sup> to help this thesis address whether REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject might, like the forms of therapeutic governance due to be discussed in the next chapter, replicate demands for a type of psychologised personhood which prioritises the 'personal life of the individual as locus of both problem and responsibility for change'<sup>527</sup>.

The chapter consequently serves a useful bridging function at this point in the thesis and following confirmation of the latter's research questions and methodological approach within the preceding two chapters, it is included here to preface a critical review of Vanessa Pupavac's work, together with other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance in the next chapter. It intends to provide a précis of the socio-cultural changes which heralded the emergence of the Western therapeutic culture mentioned above that Pupavac specifically lamented as the harbinger of development's own therapeutic turn and to broadly contextualise those changes before moving on to foreground her frontier work on that very topic in the chapter to follow. At this point, it is important to note that Pupavac makes no mention of *psychologisation* as a concept; firstly because it is the product of a body of work that succeeded the publication of her own and secondly because academic disciplines, like critical psychology, have more recently begun to label and theorise the general trends that she lamented in their own unique way. This chapter consequently takes *psychologisation* as both a bridging and organising concept that can preface with renewed currency its scrutiny of the changing form of subjectivity over subsequent pages together with its exploration of what is meant by therapeutic governance in the context of development policy and practice in the chapter to come.

In practice, the chapter will scrupulously define the critical psychological concept of *psychologisation* and in doing so will acknowledge that an interest in *psychologisation* equates to an interest in 'psychology's variegated imprints on late modern Western society'<sup>528</sup> and the ways in which a 'psychological culture that focuses on the micropolitical or interpersonal realm [...] has permeated contemporary society'<sup>529</sup>. From there, it will move along to spotlight

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<sup>524</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 264.

<sup>525</sup> Gordo-Lopez, ÁJ., 'On the Psychologisation of Critical Psychology', *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, Vol. 2 (2000), p. 55.

<sup>526</sup> Stenner, P., Barnes, M., & Taylor, D., 'Editorial Introduction – Psychosocial Welfare: Contributions to an Emerging Field', p. 411.

<sup>527</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1.

<sup>528</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 179.

<sup>529</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable Object', p. 73.

the contention that *psychologisation* should really to be understood as ‘a discursive practice’<sup>530</sup> which sustains the political production of ‘the modern [psychologised] subject’<sup>531</sup> and ‘transforms social problems into individual problems and personal dilemmas’<sup>532</sup>. In this respect, it has heralded ‘the [...] acceptance and adoption of a therapeutic consciousness’<sup>533</sup> which propagates ‘individualistic, psychological interpretations of life’s problems’<sup>534</sup> and discursively transforms ‘situations suffered by people [...] into situations which the individual is ostensibly responsible for’<sup>535</sup>. Beyond that, it will suggest that discursive practices such as these convert ‘political and economic fragility [into] personal vulnerability’<sup>536</sup> and espouse ‘an ethics of responsibility’<sup>537</sup> that asks the subject to take up and perform countless different practices of self-improvement as a strategy for ‘assuaging misery’<sup>538</sup> and promoting ‘self-insurance’<sup>539</sup>. This, the chapter will argue, depoliticises ‘social and political antagonisms’<sup>540</sup> and accelerates the ‘modern process of subjectivation and autonomisation’<sup>541</sup> that, as mentioned above, positions the ‘personal life of the individual as locus of both problem and responsibility for change’<sup>542</sup>.

From there, the chapter will turn to spotlight the types of socio-cultural change that have enabled (and concealed) ‘psychology’s variegated imprints on late modern Western society’<sup>543</sup>; most notably because the critical psychological literature drawn up to define *psychologisation* fails to address this in sufficient detail. To do this it will draw on a range of sociological commentary that collectively identifies the emergence of something akin to a Western therapeutic culture and which has something significant to say about the consequences of psychologisation, without perhaps recognising or acknowledging it as *psychologisation* per se. Following Frank Furedi’s example, it will hang its discussion around six key indicators of contemporary social change, including *the decline of tradition, the decline of religion, the demise of politics, the institutionalisation of permissiveness, the professionalisation of everyday life and the*

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<sup>530</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 46.

<sup>531</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., ‘The Disappearance of Psychologisation’, p. 187.

<sup>532</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work, the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 45.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>534</sup> McLaughlin, K., ‘Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable’, p. 65.

<sup>535</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 46.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>538</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, pp. 265-266.

<sup>539</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 53.

<sup>540</sup> Mentinis, M., ‘Rebel Pathologies: From Politics to Psychologisation ...And Back’, *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, Vol. 8 (2010), p. 231.

<sup>541</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 46.

<sup>542</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1.

<sup>543</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., ‘The Disappearance of Psychologisation’, p. 179.

*disorganisation of the private sphere*, and use these headings to locate and contextualise the making of the modern psychologised subject. These are all included to chart the changing from of subjectivity within Western therapeutic culture and to highlight how a type of psychologised personhood, which expects the subject to practice its subjectivity in particular ways, has come about. What is more, it is anticipated that the observations it yields will be readily transferable and universal enough to stand as potential gauges of the creeping *psychologisation* of the development subject itself.

#### *The Critical Psychological Concept of Psychologisation*

As prefaced above, *psychologisation* remains a largely unknown concept to development and political theorists alike; let alone anyone interested in community-based approaches to participatory development. This thesis has talked about the creeping *psychologisation* of the development subject in passing and more specifically, drawn upon that phrase to convey the expression of REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject in a mixture of political *and* psychological terms. It was casually done however with little explanation or concrete definition. This chapter sets out to remedy that negligence and more importantly, attribute the concept of *psychologisation* to critical psychology and in particular a special issue of the *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, entitled *Psychologisation under Scrutiny*, which takes to task the blurring of the boundaries between the psychological and the non-psychological that *psychologisation* denotes.<sup>544</sup> Critical psychology in itself is a broad church that is 'best understood as an approach [or] orientation towards psychological knowledge and practice'<sup>545</sup> that 'puts questions of politics and power on the agenda in theoretical debates about what psychology is'<sup>546</sup>. For a thesis which remains staunchly loyal to political science, leaning on critical psychological insights might seem a little out of character; but putting all disciplinary allegiances aside, *psychologisation* is presented here as a surprisingly useful concept which can illuminate the source of contemporary Western therapeutic sensibilities as well as the influences that may have induced development's own therapeutic turn.

Psychologisation is accordingly a term deployed by critical psychologists to denote the ways in which psychological explanations are increasingly drawn upon and utilised to transform and reduce a whole range of moral, social and political issues to matters of psychology and innate psychological causation.<sup>547</sup> In general terms it means 'to make something

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<sup>544</sup> See: De Vos, J., & Gordo, Á (Eds), 'Psychologisation Under Scrutiny', *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, Vol. 8 (2010), pp. 1-236.

<sup>545</sup> Hook, D (Ed). *Critical Psychology* (UCT Press, Lansdowne, 2004), p. 11.

<sup>546</sup> Goodley, D., & Parker, I., 'Editorial: Critical Psychology and Action Research', *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, Vol. 2 (2000), p. 4.

<sup>547</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 180.

psychological'<sup>548</sup> and denotes an 'ever expanding tendency to manage non-psychological issues in psychological [ways]'<sup>549</sup>. To Ole Jacob Madsen, Svend Brinkman and Kenneth McLaughlin, the term also spotlights 'psychology's variegated imprints on late modern Western society'<sup>550</sup> and the ways in which a 'psychological culture that focuses on the micropolitical or interpersonal realm [...] has permeated contemporary [Western] society'<sup>551</sup>. An interest in *psychologisation* thus equates to an interest in 'psychological culture [and] the way psychology has moved beyond the boundaries of academia and professional practice'<sup>552</sup> following its 'exponential growth [as an academic discipline and applied science] throughout the twentieth century'<sup>553</sup>. In this respect, psychologisation should be 'conceptualised as a process rather than a steady position'<sup>554</sup>; and moreover a phenomenon, which as Ángel Gordo and Jan de Vos write, necessitates 'a shift away from the analysis of the psy-sciences [and] their institutional and knowledge based synergies [...] to [an analysis] of the wider political and economic conditions which [have enabled and concealed] the naturalisation of their knowledge, practices and social orders [within the wider social body]'<sup>555</sup>.

Psychology, the argument goes, is implicitly and explicitly everywhere and 'has left no aspect of our world untouched'<sup>556</sup>; metamorphosing, under the arc of modernity, into 'the science of everything that scientific materialism could not explain, which as it happens, was almost everything about human beings, including meaning, morality, and more or less, life as such'<sup>557</sup>. As de Vos writes, the 'history of psychology is also the history of processes of psychologisation'<sup>558</sup> and as such, it should be understood as 'a cluster-term that addresses psychology's place in today's power-nexus'<sup>559</sup>. It is, as Madsen and Brinkman note, an appellation that captures and describes the seeping out of 'the discourse of psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, social workers, counsellors and the other *engineers of the human soul*'<sup>560</sup> into every orifice of social, political and cultural life. Nikolas Rose may flippantly attribute this to the generosity of those professionals and their willingness 'to give away their vocabulary, their grammars of conduct, [and] their styles of judgement to others'<sup>561</sup>; but

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<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>549</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 3.

<sup>550</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 179.

<sup>551</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable Object', p. 73.

<sup>552</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 3.

<sup>553</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 180.

<sup>554</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 6.

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>556</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 185.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>558</sup> De Vos, J., 'Christopher Lasch's The Culture of Narcissism: The Failure of a Critique of Psychological Politics', *Theory & Psychology*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2010), p. 528.

<sup>559</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 181.

<sup>560</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 264.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*

beneath the impertinence, he really means to say that a ‘quasi-psychological ethics’<sup>562</sup> has mutated out of the ‘institutional and knowledge-based synergies’<sup>563</sup> of the *psy* sciences to such an extent that, as stated above, ‘the naturalisation of their knowledge, practices and the social orders’<sup>564</sup> is now ‘a central characteristic of modernity, at least as it has been understood in Western culture’<sup>565</sup>.

This naturalisation of ‘psychological explanatory schemes [beyond] the traditional theoretical and practical terrains of psychology’<sup>566</sup> has, as all of the critical psychologists cited above concede, consequently foreshadowed the emergence of a pervasive Western therapeutic culture in conjunction with a ‘system of evolving therapeutic governance’<sup>567</sup>. As Gordo, de Vos and McLaughlin acknowledge, the ‘sociocultural flow of psychologising logics’<sup>568</sup> have accelerated the ‘widespread acceptance and adoption of a therapeutic consciousness’<sup>569</sup> within Western society to such an extent that ‘therapeutic categorisations and ways of thinking are no longer confined to the clinic or formal therapeutic encounter between analyst and analysand’<sup>570</sup>. In other words, they have spilled out into popular culture so pervasively that ‘social and existential problems are increasingly viewed through a therapeutic prism’<sup>571</sup>. This has lamentably left ‘people more susceptible to individualistic, psychological interpretations of life’s problems’<sup>572</sup> that transform ‘social problems into individual problems and personal dilemmas’<sup>573</sup>. In turn, this has fostered a ‘tendency to [...] intervene in evermore areas of people’s lives’<sup>574</sup> as the therapeutic consciousness concurrently conflates ‘[social], political and economic fragility [with] personal vulnerability’<sup>575</sup> and renders ‘the individual [...] the object of political intervention’<sup>576</sup>. To de Vos in particular, this ‘colonisation of the wider social body by a [pervasive] therapeutic culture’<sup>577</sup> is the hallmark of psychologisation’s hegemony as ‘a

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<sup>562</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>563</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., ‘Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation’, p. 3.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>565</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 44.

<sup>566</sup> De Vos, J. *Psychologisation in Times of Globalisation* (Routledge, New York, 2012), p. 1.

<sup>567</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 64.

<sup>568</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., ‘Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation’, p. 4.

<sup>569</sup> McLaughlin, K., ‘Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable’, p. 63.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>573</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work, the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 45.

<sup>574</sup> McLaughlin, K., ‘Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable’, p. 64.

<sup>575</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work, the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 58.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>577</sup> McLaughlin, K., ‘Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable Object’, p. 76.



discursive practice'<sup>578</sup> which sustains the political production of 'the modern [psychologised] subject'<sup>579</sup>.

### *Psychologisation as Political Production*

As de Vos further surmises, psychologisation is 'a hegemonic discourse delivering particular signifiers and discursive schemes for looking upon oneself and upon the world'<sup>580</sup> which, for Eduardo Crespo and Amparo Serrano, sustains 'a particular way of constructing the modern individual [as well as a range of] discursive [practices] forming and legitimating it'<sup>581</sup>. These by themselves are pivotal points; not least because they impress that psychologisation should be understood as a multi-faceted phenomenon that is in part responsible for 'the subjectivation and autonomisation of the individual, in conjunction with the consolidation of a socio-political demand for the individual to become responsible for oneself'<sup>582</sup>. At this juncture, it is worth noting that psychologisation is not totally responsible for modern Western culture's overwhelming reverence of the individual and the processes of 'individualisation [...] that [create] the possibility for new types of individuals to appear'<sup>583</sup>. As Crespo and Serrano assert, 'individualisation is a [...] process of modernity'<sup>584</sup>; whilst psychologisation on the other hand is 'but one very limited way of realising that process of individualisation'<sup>585</sup>. Or in other words, one way of realising the possibility of one particular type of individual which 'involves, in one respect, an individualisation of the social, and in another, the limited, quotidian contention that the core explaining this individual is psychological, understood as processes of an intra-personal and asocial mind'<sup>586</sup>.

It is, in short, an exceptionally 'asocial, or antisocial way, of understanding the modern individual'<sup>587</sup> and is 'grounded in [a] politics'<sup>588</sup> that relies heavily on its 'subjectivation and autonomisation'<sup>589</sup>. Psychologisation should therefore be understood as 'a specific, systemised practice of constructing the modern individual, for which [...] a certain type of [essentialist and

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<sup>578</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 46.

<sup>579</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 187.

<sup>580</sup> De Vos, J., 'Christopher Lasch's The Culture of Narcissism: The Failure of a Critique of Psychological Politics', p. 528.

<sup>581</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 46.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>588</sup> De Vos, J. *Psychologisation in Times of Globalisation*, p. viii.

<sup>589</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 44.

positivist] psychology [...] is essential'<sup>590</sup>. Such a psychology hinges on a Cartesian ontological separation of the materiality of body from the intangible mind 'by an invisible barrier that separates [...] inside from everything outside'<sup>591</sup>. It is therefore less about psychology giving away '[its] vocabulary, [its] grammars of conduct, [and its] styles of judgement to others'<sup>592</sup> but 'one type of discursive psychology'<sup>593</sup> forming and legitimating a disciplinary power hegemonically. For Crespo and Serrano, psychologisation for that reason represents the political production of the asocial, self-contained individual 'who ostensibly contain[s] the main determinants of [his or her] behaviour and destiny within [itself]'<sup>594</sup> and whose 'characteristics [and] behaviour are an effect of exclusively individual processes'<sup>595</sup>. What is more, communitarian notions of the individual's interdependence with society are conceptually weakened as the 'autonomy and agency of modern individuals is affirmed'<sup>596</sup> and 'an ontological concept [of] the individual [as] morally autonomous, self-determined, independent and responsible, as well as governed by free will'<sup>597</sup> prevails.

The observation that this atomised individual contains within itself the main determinants of its behaviour and destiny is profound. It certainly illuminates comments made in this chapter's introduction that psychologisation should be understood as a discursive practice which propagates 'individualistic, psychological interpretations of life's problems'<sup>598</sup> and transforms 'situations suffered by people [...] into situations which the individual is ostensibly responsible for'<sup>599</sup>. In short, it implies that the experiences, sufferings, failures and achievements of the atomised individual are all a product of the '*psy*-shaped space within us'<sup>600</sup> and nothing to do with the 'everything outside'<sup>601</sup> of us. An individual's social, political and economic fragility is - as mentioned a few pages ago - conflated with personal vulnerability, paradoxically leaving it responsible for matters beyond its control, as the moral discipline of the Western therapeutic consciousness performs and executes the subjectivation and autonomisation spoken of above.<sup>602</sup> Psychologisation, to impress these points further, should thus be seen as 'a psychopolitical process of producing individuals, whose main characteristic consists of the

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<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>592</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 264.

<sup>593</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 46.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>598</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable', p. 65.

<sup>599</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 46.

<sup>600</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 265.

<sup>601</sup> Elias, N. *What is Sociology?* (Hutchinson & Co Publishers Ltd, Great Britain, 1978), p. 119.

<sup>602</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', pp. 44 & 58.

production of a moral discourse aimed at transforming social problems into personal and psychological problems, in addition to [re-casting and] transforming their solutions'<sup>603</sup> as 'micro-psychological issues'<sup>604</sup>. What this then leaves is an individualised, psychological 'ethics of responsibility'<sup>605</sup> that encourages self-improvement and highly internalised personal change as a strategy of 'self-insurance'<sup>606</sup> to assuage the risk of social, political and economic fragility.

As alluded to earlier, this soon renders 'the individual [and its interior life] the object of political intervention'<sup>607</sup> and moreover, quickens the 'depoliticisation of [the] social and political antagonism'<sup>608</sup> that the individual must now safeguard itself against. Psychologisation, as McLaughlin writes, consequently legitimises a model of social intervention concerned with individual behaviour change rather than the 'constitutive structure of social relations'<sup>609</sup>; and instead turns to 'focus on [...] each individual's capacity to act according to the manifestations of their [morally autonomous, self-determined, independent and responsible] will'<sup>610</sup>. The individual becomes the subject of intervention itself rather than, to reuse Norbert Elias' phrase, the stuff of external power relations, the 'everything outside'<sup>611</sup>; and as McLaughlin writes, seeds the individual's paradoxical dependency on 'expert professional help [or] external authority'<sup>612</sup> to manage its vulnerability and safeguard itself against the social, political and economic fragilities it is now ostensibly responsible for negotiating. This underpins the 'ever increasing tendency to manage non-psychological issues in psychologised [ways]'<sup>613</sup> pinpointed earlier and mention of it here again, arguably brings this chapter's definitional efforts full circle. All things considered, it simply remains to be said that the transformation of social, political and economic fragility into personal vulnerability precipitates demands for a type of psychologised personhood which once again prioritises the 'personal life of the individual as locus of both problem and responsibility for change'<sup>614</sup>.

#### *Psychologisation and the Making of the Modern Psychologised Subject*

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<sup>603</sup> *Ibid*, p. 57.

<sup>604</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable', p. 73.

<sup>605</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 55.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid*, p. 53.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>608</sup> Mentinis, M., 'Rebel Pathologies: From Politics to Psychologisation ...And Back', p. 231.

<sup>609</sup> Bryant, L., 'Žižek's New Universe of Discourse: Politics and the Discourse of the Capitalist', *International Journal of Zizek Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (2008), p. 4.

<sup>610</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 55.

<sup>611</sup> Elias, N. *What is Sociology?*, p. 119.

<sup>612</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable', p. 75.

<sup>613</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 3.

<sup>614</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1.

This is a crucially significant point because it alludes to how changing expectations of the subject, or more to the point changing expectations of how the subject should practice his or her subjectivity, have come about as a result of the naturalisation of 'psychological explanatory schemes [beyond] the traditional theoretical and practical terrains of psychology'<sup>615</sup> mentioned earlier. As Madsen and Brinkman summarise, psychologisation and 'modernity's [ensuing] development along individualised and psychologised lines'<sup>616</sup> has fostered an expectation that the modern subject should practice its 'subjectivity, freedom and autonomy'<sup>617</sup> through 'endless immersion in the depths of [its] psychological self'<sup>618</sup>. In other words, the 'socio-cultural flow of psychologising logics'<sup>619</sup> just described have instilled an expectation that the modern, psychologised subject must 'choose [and practice] a life of responsible selfhood'<sup>620</sup>; in that it must 'be a subjective being, it [must] aspire to autonomy, it [must] strive for personal fulfilment in its earthly life, it [must] interpret its reality and destiny as a matter of individual responsibility [and] it [must] find meaning in existence by shaping its life through acts of [self-understanding and self-improvement]'<sup>621</sup>. All in all, it must '[psychologise its] relationship to the world'<sup>622</sup>, acquiesce to an ethic of 'self-improvement [in accordance with] a master plan of [itself] and following a clear model of self-realisation'<sup>623</sup>, and ultimately inculcate 'a socio-political demand [...] to become responsible for [itself]'<sup>624</sup>.

This, in short, is how psychologisation has influenced 'new forms of subjectivity'<sup>625</sup> and contributed to the 'making [...] of the modern [psychologised] subject'<sup>626</sup>. None of this however has taken hold in isolation and it would be foolish to presume that the naturalisation of 'psychological explanatory schemes [beyond] the traditional theoretical and practical terrains of psychology [as an academic discipline and applied science]'<sup>627</sup> occurred in a vacuum. As Gordo and de Vos insist, understanding 'psychological culture [and] the way psychology has moved beyond the boundaries of academia and professional practice'<sup>628</sup> requires an 'analysis of the wider political and economic conditions which [have enabled and concealed] the

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<sup>615</sup> De Vos, J. *Psychologisation in Times of Globalisation*, p. 1.

<sup>616</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 187.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>618</sup> Álvarez-Uría, F., Varela, J., & Gordo, Á., & Parra, P., 'Psychologised Life and Thought Styles', p. 11.

<sup>619</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 4.

<sup>620</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998), p. 168.

<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>622</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 197.

<sup>623</sup> Illouz, E., 'Who Will Care for the Caretaker's Daughter? Toward a Sociology of Happiness in the Era of Reflexive Modernity', *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 14, No. 31 (1997), p. 58.

<sup>624</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 44.

<sup>625</sup> Gordo-Lopez, Á.J., 'On the Psychologisation of Critical Psychology', p. 55.

<sup>626</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 187.

<sup>627</sup> De Vos, J. *Psychologisation in Times of Globalisation*, p. 1.

<sup>628</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 3.

naturalisation of [its] knowledge, practices and social orders [within the wider social body]’<sup>629</sup>. In fact, much more needs to be said about the ‘socio-political investments behind psychologisation processes’<sup>630</sup> to ‘explain the cultural currency [through which they - and concomitant expectations of how the subject should practice his or her subjectivity - have] permeated contemporary society’<sup>631</sup>. Psychologisation thus needs to be understood alongside ‘a compendium of the various themes that make up the sociology [...] of modernity’<sup>632</sup>; as well as the ‘tensions and anxieties of [...] prevailing social conditions’<sup>633</sup> that have outwardly augmented the saturation of a psychologised way of thinking and by consequence, influenced the ways in which this modern psychologised subject is thought about and acted upon.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a broad array of sociological commentary has come to recognise this saturation. Rose for example, notes ‘the [emergent] contemporary regime of the self’<sup>634</sup> and holds ‘the psycho sciences [including] psychology, psychiatry and their cognates’<sup>635</sup> responsible for bringing into ‘existence a variety of new ways in which human beings have come to understand themselves and to do things to themselves’<sup>636</sup>. Others, including Frank Furedi and Eva Illouz in particular, have turned to idioms such as a *therapeutic culture*, a *therapeutic ethos*, a *therapeutic sensibility*, and a *therapeutic consciousness* to label this hyper psychologised state of affairs.<sup>637</sup> Furedi, for example, talks about ‘the vocabulary of therapeutics [becoming] part of our cultural imagination’<sup>638</sup> to such an extent that ‘the expanding usage of the idiom of therapeutics is not simply of linguistic interest. [This] changing form of language communicates new cultural attitudes and expectations [and] represents one of the most significant developments in contemporary Western culture’<sup>639</sup>. Next to none talk about psychologisation in any great detail however; preferring to only very occasionally use it as a momentary descriptor of the processes that now ‘hold personhood – identity, selfhood, autonomy, individuality – in place’<sup>640</sup> rather than - as this chapter has tried

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<sup>629</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>631</sup> McLaughlin, K., ‘Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable’, p. 73.

<sup>632</sup> Illouz, E. *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy, Emotions and the Culture of Self-Help*, p. 2.

<sup>633</sup> Lasch, C. *The Cultural of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (W.W. Norton & Company, London & New York, 1991), p. 50.

<sup>634</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 2.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>637</sup> Miller, P., & Rose, N., ‘On Therapeutic Authority: Psychoanalytical Expertise under Advanced Liberalism’, in Miller, P., & Rose, N. *Governing the Present: Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2009), p. 142.

<sup>638</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 1.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid*, p.4.

<sup>640</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 2.

to do - presenting it as a multi-faceted phenomenon that denotes 'the conditions under which [the making of the modern, psychologised subject] has taken shape'<sup>641</sup>.

This is hardly surprising given that the critical psychological literature drawn upon thus far has only relatively recently begun to champion psychologisation as a coherent explanatory concept with which to enunciate what others have and continue to label somewhat nebulously. Again, as mentioned earlier, this chapter presents psychologisation as a useful organising concept that lends descriptive clarity to the abstract effects of the naturalisation of psychological explanatory frameworks within contemporary Western culture. Nevertheless, much of the critical psychological literature cited fails to delineate the socio-cultural changes that have arguably enabled and concealed their naturalisation in sufficient detail. In fact, despite calls for a thorough analysis of the 'socio-political investments behind psychologisation processes'<sup>642</sup>, much of it struggles to fully explain 'the cultural currency [through which a therapeutic consciousness and concomitant expectations of how the subject should practice his or her subjectivity have actually] permeated contemporary society'<sup>643</sup>. The broad array of sociological commentary mentioned above however does just that; and whilst the work of Furedi, Illouz and Rose as well as insights from the work of Anthony Giddens, Charles Taylor, Christopher Lasch, Dana Cloud, James Nolan, Philip Rieff, Richard Sennett, and Talcott Parsons (to name just a few) might not explicitly refer to psychologisation, it can certainly be read *through* what each has to say about the therapeutic sensibilities that have seemingly infiltrated contemporary Western culture.

Furedi's influential analysis of a therapeutic turn within Anglo-American societies in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century certainly validates that point. Indeed, he works through many of the same observations presented by the critical psychologists quoted in this chapter including: the haemorrhaging of psychological vocabulary into everyday life; the ever growing preoccupation with the '*psy*-shaped space within us'<sup>644</sup>; the construction of 'a diminished [...] self that characteristically suffers from an emotional deficit and possesses a permanent consciousness of vulnerability'<sup>645</sup>; 'the distancing of the self from others'<sup>646</sup>; and the 'opening up [of] the [private] sphere of [...] life to therapeutic management'<sup>647</sup>. In fact, most of the principal signifiers of the therapeutic ethos that Furedi observes are equivalent, if not identical, to the principal signifiers of psychologisation that Gordo, de Vos *et al* present in the

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<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>642</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 7.

<sup>643</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable', p. 73.

<sup>644</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 265.

<sup>645</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 21.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

special issue of the *Annual Review of Critical Psychology* which this chapter has utilised so heavily. Nonetheless, Furedi's efforts to contextualise the therapeutic turn that he sees are far more socially and politically informed than any explanation tendered by the latter; and he points to the *decline of tradition*, the *decline of religion*, the *demise of politics*, the *institutionalisation of permissiveness*, the *professionalisation of everyday life* and the *disorganisation of the private sphere* as indicators of the kind of socio-cultural change that made the naturalisation of psychological explanatory frameworks possible.

In fact, following Furedi's example, this chapter intends to make use of his work and avail itself of those exact indicators to spotlight the types of socio-cultural change that have allowed new 'signifiers and discursive schemes for looking upon oneself and upon the world'<sup>648</sup> to take hold. The *decline of tradition*, the *decline of religion*, the *demise of politics*, the *institutionalisation of permissiveness*, the *professionalisation of everyday life* and the *disorganisation of the private sphere* are all included to further contextualise the making of the modern psychologised subject and highlight how changing expectations of the subject, or changing expectations of how the subject should practice his or her subjectivity, have come about. Taking an explanatory framework from elsewhere is perhaps a little pert; but given the original's remarkable breadth and richness, it cannot be bettered and provides this chapter with a readily transferable structure that immediately lends itself to exploring increasingly 'individualised forms of subjectivity'<sup>649</sup> in more detail. Its use (or should that read, its appropriation) does not preclude the possibility of critiquing Furedi from within the parameters of his own analysis and should on balance be taken and accepted as a way to understand why a type of psychologised personhood which prioritises the 'personal life of the individual as locus of both problem and responsibility for change'<sup>650</sup> has taken hold within relatively recent history.

This forthcoming synopsis of the socio-cultural changes that have arguably enabled and concealed the naturalisation of psychological explanatory frameworks within contemporary Western culture is also included in the hope that its observations might yield some universal and readily transferable gauges of the creeping psychologisation of the development subject itself. Having already noted that 'modernity's development along individualised and psychologised lines'<sup>651</sup> has fostered an expectation that the modern subject should practice its 'subjectivity, freedom and autonomy'<sup>652</sup> through 'endless immersion in the depths of [its]

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<sup>648</sup> De Vos, J., 'Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism: The Failure of a Critique of Psychological Politics*', p. 528.

<sup>649</sup> Gordo-Lopez, Á.J., 'On the Psychologisation of Critical Psychology', p. 57.

<sup>650</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1.

<sup>651</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 187.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*

psychological self'<sup>653</sup>; this synopsis will scrutinise that expectancy in more detail. In fact, following the subsequent observation that the 'socio-cultural flow of psychologising logics'<sup>654</sup> just described have instilled an expectation that the modern, psychologised subject must 'choose [and practice] a life of responsible selfhood'<sup>655</sup>, this chapter intends to use this synopsis to definitively suggest that a cultural benchmark of psychologised personhood, under which changing expectations of the subject or more to the point changing expectations of how the subject should practice his or her subjectivity mentioned throughout this chapter have coalesced, has become the hallmark of our recent psychologised times. In short, it aims to use this synopsis to identify the determining characteristics of that cultural benchmark of psychologised personhood and in doing so, illuminate a better understanding of the potential markers of the development subject's own *psychologisation* as well.

### *The Decline of Tradition*

It thus follows that the decline of tradition first and foremost enabled the 'widespread acceptance and adoption of a therapeutic consciousness'<sup>656</sup> to take hold and permeate Western culture. Like Furedi, Christopher Lasch, Philip Rieff, and Richard Sennett all attribute 'the rise of therapeutic culture [to] the erosion of social solidarity and of communal norms [together with] the weakening of the influence of traditional authority on the conduct of everyday life'<sup>657</sup>. What is more, they all allude to the intensification of late industrial capitalism and the democratic revolution in the twentieth century as harbingers of the 'fragmentation of social life and [the] construction of an intensely individualised private existence'<sup>658</sup>. Steven Gardner, writing about Rieff's Freudian inspired sociology of culture, suggested that 'the democratic revolution [...] utterly transformed moral understandings sanctified by time immemorial'<sup>659</sup> and quickened the reorganisation of 'social relations, not just on the political or economic level [...] but far more interestingly, in the realm of personal life'<sup>660</sup>. His reading of Rieff leads him to surmise that 'the cultural revolution of democracy produce[d] [...] a new *kind* of culture [...] along with a new kind of man'<sup>661</sup> and that in 'removing or crippling the old formalities and

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<sup>653</sup> Álvarez-Uria, F., Varela, J., & Gordo, Á., & Parra, P., 'Psychologised Life and Thought Styles', p. 11.

<sup>654</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 4.

<sup>655</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 168.

<sup>656</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable', p. 63.

<sup>657</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 86.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>659</sup> Gardner, S.L., 'Critical Essay: The Eros and Ambitions of Psychological Man', in Rieff, P. *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud* (ISI Books, Delaware, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, 2006), p. 228.

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*



conventions of social life'<sup>662</sup>, it transformed 'the outward institutions of society and relations of individuals so far as they [were] identified by estate, function, or social position'<sup>663</sup>.

The path dependency of late modernity, industrial capitalism, and democratisation are of course enduringly contested; but suffice to say they have all contributed to the 'erosion of an [established] system of meaning through which people [made] sense of their lives [and] which [linked] people to an accepted way of doing things'<sup>664</sup>. Lasch, for example, talks about the changing nature of *the family* in the twentieth century as motive for 'escapist solutions to the psychological problems of dependence, separation, and individuation'<sup>665</sup> when it becomes 'more difficult to achieve a sense of continuity, permanence or connection with the world around us'<sup>666</sup>. Similarly, in a preface to Sennett's work, Harvey Cox's rebuke of 'the need to seek out intimacy everywhere'<sup>667</sup> seemingly came from a blurring of 'the balance between public and private life, a balance between an impersonal realm in which men could invest one kind of passion and a personal realm in which they could invest another'<sup>668</sup>. As risk society theorists such as Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck and Ernest Gellner might argue, these and other examples contributed to the distancing of the self from others and the ever growing preoccupation with the world of the self as social fragmentation began to challenge the stability of individual identity.<sup>669</sup> This might be a brief synopsis but the decline of tradition arguably weakened the communal ties that were soon to affirm 'an ontological concept [of] the [autonomous] individual'<sup>670</sup>.

### *The Decline of Religion*

The decline of organised religion and the moral framework it once issued is also comparably cited as a possible enabler of the onset of Western therapeutic sensibilities. For example, in the absence of faith, Furedi supposes that individuals begin to look inwards for their own privatised systems of meaning and embrace more neutral psychological perspectives as a way to understand and cultivate the best qualities of the human personality instead.<sup>671</sup> In this respect, the impetus 'to make sense of the subjective inner experience of the individual'<sup>672</sup> in

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<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>664</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 86.

<sup>665</sup> Lasch, C., 'Afterword: The Culture of Narcissism Revisited' in Lasch, C. *The Cultural of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, p. 250.

<sup>666</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>667</sup> Cox, HG., 'Introduction: Sociology and the Meaning of History', in Sennett, R. *The Fall of Public Man* (Penguin Books, London, 2002), p. xvii.

<sup>668</sup> Sennett, R. *The Fall of Public Man*, p. 338.

<sup>669</sup> See: Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>670</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 56.

<sup>671</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, pp. 89-91.

<sup>672</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

the absence of religion is again levied as one of the harbingers of 'the naturalisation of [psychology's] knowledge, practices and social orders [within the wider social body]'<sup>673</sup> spoken about earlier in this chapter. As Alan Woolfolk writes, 'where once religion, morality and custom accounted for human conduct in terms of good and bad, right and wrong'<sup>674</sup>, psychology has instead assailed and subjugated formal religion's vocabulary and grand narratives and now 'guides us towards criteria of well-being and sickness, functional or dysfunctional'<sup>675</sup>. For Woolfolk as well as John Steadman Rice, 'the moral revolution that erupted in the mid-twentieth century'<sup>676</sup> (informed in part by 'liberation psychotherapy'<sup>677</sup>) promoted a revolutionary 'ethic of self-actualisation or - affirmation based upon [...] anti-cultural and anti-institutional premises that specified therapeutic criteria of health and sickness as the new standards by which to measure [self-improvement] and spiritual growth'<sup>678</sup>.

A therapeutic consciousness, as Lasch picks up and proposes, is 'the faith of those without faith'<sup>679</sup>; with the directive to 'live as if making a *project* of [ourselves]'<sup>680</sup> together with '[personal] development and self-actualisation [becoming the symbols of worship and devotion] in humanistic form'<sup>681</sup>. Rice's observation that liberation psychotherapy's formative statement of belief was the absolute primacy of the self hardly undermines that hypothesis, particularly when he writes that it encouraged 'self-actualised individuals'<sup>682</sup> to 'behave in accordance with inner directives, expressing their autonomy from, rather than their subordination to, conventional social expectations'<sup>683</sup>. Here, it almost seems as if the demands and discipline of religious faith have been usurped by a secular creed and are now 'linked up in various configurations with practices of self-improvement that [can – quite ironically - claim a Christian] heritage'<sup>684</sup>. To Rose, who senses that the therapeutic ethic represents a continuation of the regulation of conduct demanded by 'religion and other transcendental systems for imparting meaning to quotidian existence'<sup>685</sup>, this is an accurate assessment. In fact, he writes that 'therapeutics, like religion, may be analysed as a heterogeneous array of

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<sup>673</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 3.

<sup>674</sup> Woolfolk, A., 'The Dubious Triumph of the Therapeutic: The Denial of Character', in Imber, JB (Ed). *Therapeutic Culture: Triumph and Defeat* (Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick & London, 2004), p. 71.

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>677</sup> Rice, JS. *A Disease of One's Own: Psychotherapy, Addiction and the Emergence of Co-Dependency* (Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick & London, 1998), p. 29.

<sup>678</sup> Woolfolk, A., 'The Dubious Triumph of the Therapeutic: The Denial of Character', p. 72.

<sup>679</sup> Lasch, C. *The Cultural of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, p. 51.

<sup>680</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 157.

<sup>681</sup> Lasch, C. *The Cultural of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>682</sup> Rice, JS. *A Disease of One's Own: Psychotherapy, Addiction and the Emergence of Co-Dependency*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>684</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 264.

<sup>685</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 97.

techniques of subjectification through which human beings are urged and incited to become ethical beings, to define and regulate themselves according to a moral code, to establish precepts for conducting or judging their lives, [and] to reject or accept moral goals'<sup>686</sup>.

### *The Demise of Politics*

The demise of politics, or perhaps more specifically, the rise of political disaffection as well as the increasing individualisation of political life is likewise thought to have prefigured and consolidated a therapeutic turn in Western society.<sup>687</sup> Here Lasch's scathing critique of 'the rationalisation of inner life accompanied by [a] false promise of personal fulfilment'<sup>688</sup> ('played out in a setting of [increasing] alienation'<sup>689</sup>) is presented by Furedi as the cause of the 'growth of narcissistic politics'<sup>690</sup>. Lasch's conception of the narcissistic personality, with its excessive preoccupation with the inner world of the self, was (as Furedi writes) a threatening construct to politics; not least because it 'mitigates against collective social action for change'<sup>691</sup> and augments the 'depoliticisation of social and political antagonisms'<sup>692</sup> spoken about earlier in this chapter.<sup>693</sup> Narcissism to Lasch is the hysteria of our times - the bedrock of our therapeutic outlook - and 'having replaced religion as the organising framework of [...] culture'<sup>694</sup>, he forecast that it '[threatened] to displace politics as well'<sup>695</sup>. Indeed, he felt that the hymn of 'psychic self-improvement'<sup>696</sup> refracted politics away from the public realm of ideology and radical political contestation into the inner subject of the self. What is more, this preoccupation with the inner world of the self served, particularly through the mechanics of politically conservative bureaucracies, to transform collective grievances into personal problems amenable to therapeutic interventions.<sup>697</sup>

To some, including Dana Cloud for example, this has been interpreted as 'an outcome of elite initiative'<sup>698</sup> and part of 'a political strategy [to contain] dissent through the discourse of individual responsibility'<sup>699</sup>. In fact, as Furedi summarises, she implies that the Reaganite and

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<sup>686</sup> *Ibid*, p. 156.

<sup>687</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 92.

<sup>688</sup> Lasch, C. *The Cultural of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, p. 43.

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>690</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 92.

<sup>691</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 2.

<sup>692</sup> Mentinis, M., 'Rebel Pathologies: From Politics to Psychologisation ...And Back', p. 231.

<sup>693</sup> Here it is important to remember the psychological as well as the sociological determinants of Lasch's narcissistic personality. For him, it was very much a dual ethic of self-preservation and psychic survival rooted in objective conditions of warfare and chaos and the subjective experience of emptiness and isolation and is as much a projection of inner anxieties as a perception of the way things are. See: Lasch, C. *The Cultural of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, pp. 31-51.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid*, pp.13-14.

<sup>698</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 92.

<sup>699</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. xv.

Thatcherite political right of the 1980s manipulated an emerging therapeutic cultural consciousness for their own ends and rode their neoliberal big 'C' conservatism and attendant ideals of individual responsibility and self-interest on the back of therapeutic discourses.<sup>700</sup> Here, Furedi stops short of extrapolating 'the instrumental use of the therapeutic by political interests'<sup>701</sup> to explain the enormity of changes to 'individual and cultural subjectivity'<sup>702</sup> brought on by this prevailing therapeutic turn. However, he does concede that 'despite [attempts] to link it to a distinct economic or class interest, the therapeutic ethos [provided] a cultural script [through] which a diverse range of motives [could] be expressed'<sup>703</sup>. Cloud, on the other hand, takes the argument one step further; and suggests that the translation of 'social and political problems into the language of individual responsibility and healing [and a] focus on the personal life of the individual as locus of both problem and responsibility for change'<sup>704</sup> has become: a 'powerful rhetorical strategy within liberal capitalist society [to mitigate] against collective social action for change'<sup>705</sup> and depoliticise the 'social and political antagonisms'<sup>706</sup> that such action typically rallies around.

#### *The Institutionalisation of Permissiveness*

Furthermore, the institutionalisation of permissiveness – or in other words, the assimilation of therapeutic objectives and practices by public authority - is conceivably one of the most arresting conduits of Western therapeutic culture.<sup>707</sup> In fact, when this chapter spoke earlier of the emergence of a pervasive Western therapeutic culture *together* with a 'system of evolving therapeutic governance'<sup>708</sup>; it, in part, spoke of the entrenched 'management of emotion'<sup>709</sup> within the architecture of government. To summarise, Rose writes that 'subjectivity now enters into the calculations of political forces about the state of the nation [to such an extent that] governments and parties of all political complexions have formulated policies, set up machinery, established bureaucracies and promoted initiatives to regulate the conduct of citizens by acting upon their mental capacities and propensities'<sup>710</sup>. The system of evolving therapeutic governance this represents is notably ubiquitous and demonstrates that the 'management of subjectivity has become a central task'<sup>711</sup> of government to such an extent that

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<sup>700</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 93.

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>704</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1.

<sup>705</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1-2.

<sup>706</sup> Mentinis, M., 'Rebel Pathologies: From Politics to Psychologisation ...And Back', p. 231.

<sup>707</sup> Furedi, F., 'The Silent Ascendancy of Therapeutic Culture in Britain', in Imber, JB (Ed). *Therapeutic Culture: Triumph and Defeat*, p. 28.

<sup>708</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 64.

<sup>709</sup> Furedi, F., 'The Silent Ascendancy of Therapeutic Culture in Britain', p. 27.

<sup>710</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

its manifestations have 'come to fill the space between the private lives of citizens and the public concerns of rulers'<sup>712</sup>. Of even greater concern however is our overwhelming receptiveness and acquiescence to the institutionalisation of therapeutic objectives and practices by public authority; principally because it raises fundamental questions, as Lasch himself acknowledged, about the compliant amenability of a narcissistic society to therapeutic interventions.<sup>713</sup>

Here Talcott Parsons' concept of *permissive empathy* is insightful; not least because it reveals an interesting dynamic at work.<sup>714</sup> To understand what is meant by permissive empathy however, it is first necessary to think about the nature of the therapeutic relationship and to then consider the role of empathy within that relationship. In view of that, permissive empathy is enacted within a therapeutic 'framework of solidarity'<sup>715</sup> and relates to the way in which a therapist might empathise within an individual's predicament in order to first establish trust and then some degree of subjective involvement.<sup>716</sup> This 'privileged access to people's subjectivity'<sup>717</sup> is then - in the 'Parsonian paradigm of illness'<sup>718</sup> - rewarded with a diagnosis of sickness which 'shapes the way the individual understands his or her condition'<sup>719</sup> and ultimately acquiesces to the 'remedial action'<sup>720</sup> of the therapist and the therapeutic treatment on offer. Extrapolate this to the relationship between individuals and the apparatus of state and it is possible to argue that Parsons' permissive therapeutics 'sensitises a [...] sociological generation to a set of [new] ideas and problems'<sup>721</sup>. Indeed, the thinking goes that Lasch's narcissistic culture facilitates the prevailing acceptance of ever wider valuations of physical and psychological sickness which in turn encourages a submissive public to happily adopt identities of sickness or vulnerability and acquiesce quite voluntarily to the *treatment* (intervention) of the state.<sup>722</sup>

What Lasch's narcissism demands, the Parsonian paradigm of illness essentially secures. Yet, following Charles Taylor's famous assertion that 'a number of strands of contemporary politics turn on the need, sometimes the demand, for recognition'<sup>723</sup>, it is possible to argue that these

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<sup>712</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>713</sup> Lasch, C. *The Cultural of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, p. 14.

<sup>714</sup> Parsons, T. *Social Structure and Personality* (The Free Press, Collier-Macmillan Ltd, London, 1970), p. 320.

<sup>715</sup> Parsons, T., 'Research with Human Subjects and the Professional Complex', *Daedalus*, Vol. 98, No. 2, *Ethical Aspects of Experimentation with Human Subjects* (1969), p. 334.

<sup>716</sup> Post, S.L., 'Origins, Elements and Functions of Therapeutic Empathy', *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 61 (1980), p. 277.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>718</sup> Gerhardt, U., 'The Parsonian Paradigm and the Identity of Medical Sociology', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1979), p. 229.

<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>720</sup> Parsons, T., 'Research with Human Subjects and the Professional Complex', p. 355.

<sup>721</sup> Gellner, E., 'Ethnomethodology: The Re-Enchantment Industry or the Californian Way of Subjectivity', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 5 (1975), p. 432.

<sup>722</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, pp. 96-98.

<sup>723</sup> Taylor, C., 'The Politics of Recognition', in Taylor, C., et al: Gutmann, A (Ed). *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey and Chichester, West Sussex, 1994), p. 25.

permissive therapeutics actually exploit a demand for recognition and affirmation in the absence of a sense of connection to the world.<sup>724</sup> Or in other words, 'through the provision of calculated empathy and [the] recognition of [...] distress, permissive therapeutics offers a relationship or a point of contact to [bridge] otherwise estrangement'<sup>725</sup>. To reaffirm, 'the contemporary world is [increasingly] characterised by the loss of a web of meaning through which people make sense about who they are and where they stand in relation to others'<sup>726</sup>. It therefore stands to reason that therapeutic objectives and practices, which arguably satiate demands for recognition and validation, might thrive in this vacuum.<sup>727</sup> This presents grounds to suggest that the institutionalised forms of permissive therapeutics outlined earlier could be looked on as mechanisms of indirect social control that offer nothing more than a relationship of submission to the regulation of external authority and a further relationship of dependence upon its ensuing recognition, affirmation and validation.<sup>728</sup> They demand acquiescence to the directive to make oneself the subject of political intervention and in doing so, politicise the imperative to live as if making a *project* of ourselves.<sup>729</sup>

#### *The Professionalisation of Everyday Life*

The perception that individuals are unable to make sense of the modern world without professional assistance has furthermore fortified Western therapeutic culture and ensconced additional frameworks of therapeutic governance.<sup>730</sup> As James Nolan has recognised, a new *priestly class* or professional complex - denoting a mix of psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, therapists and social workers trading on ever increasing valuations of perceived psychological sickness and vulnerability - has emerged to help others make sense of, and negotiate, the habitual conduct of life.<sup>731</sup> This in part stems from 'the belief that the conduct of everyday [life now] requires special skills'<sup>732</sup> and has surreptitiously 'created an opportunity for *the expert* to colonise the realm of personal relations'<sup>733</sup>. This might be a simplistic analogy but it partially explains - in light of the continual slackening and thinning of traditional assemblages of family, community and faith through which individuals previously sought support and guidance - the creep of professional others into positions of authority *vis-a-vis* the

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<sup>724</sup> Lasch, C. *The Cultural of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, p. 249.

<sup>725</sup> *Ibid*, p. 96.

<sup>726</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 162.

<sup>727</sup> *Ibid*, p. 96.

<sup>728</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.

<sup>729</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 157.

<sup>730</sup> Nolan, J.L. *The Therapeutic State: Justifying Government at Century's End* (New York University Press, London & New York, 1998), p. 7.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>732</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 98.

<sup>733</sup> *Ibid*.

mediation of life and all its experiences.<sup>734</sup> In fact, as Nolan's *priestly class* metaphor implies, this professional therapeutic elite has conceivably usurped the social recognition and occupational prestige once afforded to spiritual counsellors or the celebrants of religious faith and come to 'perform certain rather specialised functions for others [...] in society on the basis of [...] specialised competence with attendant fiduciary responsibility'<sup>735</sup>.

The emergence of this professional complex is arguably a product of the problematisation of normal human experience or in other words, the 'misleading medical characterisation of the problems of living'<sup>736</sup> which transmits and recasts personal problems as medical or psychological conditions requiring professionalised treatment and remedy.<sup>737</sup> Following the ever widening valuations of physical and psychological sickness mentioned above, the medicalisation of social experience works by 'locating [the] problems [of everyday life] in individual biology'<sup>738</sup>. This not only fudges 'the line that divides the state of illness from that of being well'<sup>739</sup> but encourages diagnostic and remedial practices 'trading on the authority of medical pronouncement'<sup>740</sup> to infiltrate and pathologise other areas of life. Many commentators, including James Chriss and Tana Dineen, suggest that this professional complex has self-servingly sought to concoct many of the needs and social pathologies they claim to be able to satiate.<sup>741</sup> For Furedi however, the 'readiness with which the pathologisation of human behaviour is embraced'<sup>742</sup> is equally responsible from a demand-side perspective for the rapacious professionalisation of everyday life. Either way, the colonisation and management of personal relations by a new *priestly class* suggests that submission to the regulation of external authority and its ensuing recognition, affirmation and validation is characterised by a startling dependency upon therapeutic experts to mediate between the individual and the daily lived experience of life.

What is more, this serves to recast everyday matters of life as psychologised domains of mastery. Its trials and tribulations are no longer things to endure and work through informally as part of the mundane endurance of being; but occurrences and circumstances that demand an emotional dexterity that has to be learnt, evidenced and monitored within a framework of

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<sup>734</sup> Nolan, J.L. *The Therapeutic State: Justifying Government at Century's End*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>735</sup> Parsons, T., 'Research with Human Subjects and the Professional Complex', p. 331.

<sup>736</sup> Moncrieff, J., 'Psychiatric Imperialism: The Medicalisation of Modern Living', *Soundings*, Vol. 6 (Summer 1997), p. 63.

<sup>737</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 100.

<sup>738</sup> Moncrieff, J., 'Psychiatric Imperialism: The Medicalisation of Modern Living', p. 63.

<sup>739</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 98.

<sup>740</sup> Summerfield, D., 'The Invention of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Social Usefulness of a Psychiatric Category', *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 322 (2001), p. 96.

<sup>741</sup> See: Chriss, JJ (Ed). *Counselling and the Therapeutic State* (Aldine De Gruyter, New York, 1999); & Dineen, T. *Manufacturing Victims: What the Psychology Industry is Doing to People* (Robert Davies Publishers, Toronto, 1998).

<sup>742</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 100.

therapeutic professional surveillance. In short, amidst the chatter of ‘parenting skills, social skills, communication skills, and relationship skills’<sup>743</sup> lies a dynamic that has ‘systematically expanded the range of personal issues that demands expert knowledge’<sup>744</sup> and which, following the ‘problematization of human relationships and lived experience’<sup>745</sup>, works to locate problem and identify pathology within normal ‘communicative interaction’<sup>746</sup>. This redefines ‘personal difficulty as a pathology requiring professional management’<sup>747</sup> and in line with Rose’s previously cited thinking, exemplifies the ‘techniques of subjectification through which human beings are urged [...] to define and regulate themselves’<sup>748</sup>. This has notably shaken ‘traditionalist understandings of the public/private split’<sup>749</sup> to such an extent that the once private sphere has effectively been requisitioned and reconfigured as a site of intervention, and even justice, which must submit to the scrutiny and regulation of professional expertise. It renders ‘the dependency of the individual [upon] the expert [...] increasingly more systematic and marks a change in the relationship between citizens and state particularly when professional others act as representatives of the latter.

#### *The Disorganisation of the Private Sphere*

This disorganisation of the private sphere has finally further entrenched Western therapeutic culture. For Eva Illouz in particular, the parameters of the private sphere – or what Hannah Arendt characterised as ‘the shadowy world of the interior’<sup>750</sup> - have been irreversibly disturbed and its inner disorganisation is strikingly illustrative of the impact of psychologising undercurrents.<sup>751</sup> Indeed, as Furedi confirms, the erosion of the personal bonds of dependence that link people to one another provide the space for, and the terrain upon which, our therapeutic sensibilities thrive.<sup>752</sup> Illouz’s arguments however are interesting in that she does not replicate, or follow in the footsteps of, Lasch, Sennett and Rieff’s communitarian critiques of public man collapsing in on ‘a false, narcissistic and empty subjectivity severed from public and collective moral frameworks’<sup>753</sup> or the decline of civic virtue and the thinning of ‘the strength and content of our social commitments’<sup>754</sup>. Instead, Illouz looks into the private sphere

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<sup>743</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.

<sup>744</sup> *Ibid*, p. 99.

<sup>745</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>746</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

<sup>747</sup> *Ibid*, p. 100.

<sup>748</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 156.

<sup>749</sup> Benhabib, S. *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2007), p. 112.

<sup>750</sup> Illouz, E., ‘That Shadowy Realm of the Interior: Oprah Winfrey and Hamlet’s Glass’, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1999), p. 114.

<sup>751</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 267.

<sup>752</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 103.

<sup>753</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>754</sup> Illouz, E., ‘Who Will Care for the Caretaker’s Daughter? Toward a Sociology of Happiness in the Era of Reflexive Modernity’, p. 52.



and sees profound changes in the bonds of 'friendship, courtship, intimate relations, family, [and] community [...] that stand between the individual and the abstract [...] state and economy'<sup>755</sup>. The politics of intimacy might be a niche research area currently led by sociologists, rather than political theorists, but the contributions and contours of her work, together with that of Giddens for example, are equally valuable to both disciplines and worthy of note here.

As shake ups go, contemporary transformations in the experience of intimacy add layers upon layers of thought to existing debates about the legitimacy and porosity of the public/private split. For Giddens, 'the domain of personal relations is [...] an area of extraordinarily rapid change'<sup>756</sup> and has contributed to what he sees as 'an emerging democracy of the emotions'<sup>757</sup> in everyday life. His examination of the changing nature of intimate relationships under conditions of reflexive modernisation in particular has led him to observe that the ties that once formally bound people's lives together are falling way to an idealised conception of pure and democratic relationships, predicated on communicative disclosure.<sup>758</sup> These new relationships, he writes, represent an extension of the 'revolution going on in how we think of ourselves and how we form ties and connections with others'<sup>759</sup>. What is more, they act as arrangements which foster democratic discourses of equality, rights and obligations; normalising communicative demands for external recognition, affirmation and validation and demarcating a need for reflexive actualisation in even the smallest, informal and most private of milieu.<sup>760</sup> Drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, Illouz suggests that the different ways in which we now relate to one another demand new forms of habitus and new forms of competence to secure recognition, affirmation, validation and intimacy within those arrangements.<sup>761</sup>

Her subsequent standpoint is also interesting because in seeking 'to enquire about intimacy [...] as a sphere of meaning and well-being in its own right'<sup>762</sup>, she is quick to comment upon the 'the mechanics of exclusion from [...] intimacy'<sup>763</sup> particularly when 'the dominant definition of intimacy demands an androgynous emotional and verbal competence'<sup>764</sup>. Or in other words, new forms of habitus and new forms of competence to deploy the 'resources the

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<sup>755</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 104.

<sup>756</sup> Giddens, A. *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2007), p. 131.

<sup>757</sup> Giddens, A. *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Shaping Our Lives* (Profile Books, London, 2002), p. 65.

<sup>758</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 59-66.

<sup>759</sup> *Ibid*, p. 51.

<sup>760</sup> Giddens, A. *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*, p. 131.

<sup>761</sup> Illouz, E., 'Who Will Care for the Caretaker's Daughter? Toward a Sociology of Happiness in the Era of Reflexive Modernity', pp. 52- 55.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid*, p. 53.

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid*, p. 59.

self has amassed to constitute, perform and change its social and personal identity'<sup>765</sup> or following Bourdieu much more closely, 'the set of dispositions of mind and body we use to ascertain our social identity, compete with others, [...] make practical choices [and] play with to achieve socially situated forms of eudaimonia'<sup>766</sup>. Indeed, for Illouz, 'the therapeutic model of intimacy [fundamentally] constructs love [and friendship] in a [psychologised] narrative of self-improvement, of overcoming oneself, in which emotions and relations are things to be worked at, fashioned according to a master plan of oneself, and following a clear model of self-realisation'<sup>767</sup>. It in short asks us all to become psychologised strivers, seeking to grow and nurture ourselves within our relationships with others, and positions intimacy and the quality of those relationships as hallmarks of the success of our self-actualisation and the imperative to live as if making a *project* of ourselves.<sup>768</sup>

It thus follows that judgements about 'skills in human relations, [the] ability to attend to one's emotions, [and the] ability to negotiate with others'<sup>769</sup> carry greater meaning and judgements about others (notably as private individuals) are increasingly based upon a cultural benchmark of reflexive selfhood.<sup>770</sup> Vulnerabilities, inadequacies and deficiencies are increasingly assessed and determined against these standards of 'communicative interaction'<sup>771</sup>, and as Illouz argues, 'the therapeutic ethos may be viewed as one of the master cultural codes organising new forms of inequalities and exclusions'<sup>772</sup> on this very basis. Building on the work of Fred Twine, who argued that 'democracy and rights should be discussed not only in terms of material welfare, but also in terms of the kinds of persons and citizens we are able to be in a given society'<sup>773</sup>, Illouz is clearly keen to contend that Western therapeutic sensibilities articulate and delineate a specific identity of psychologised personhood (and even citizenship) that shuts down, excludes and derides other ways of being.<sup>774</sup> As a rallying call, she suggests that any forthcoming study of Western therapeutic culture and its psychologising logics 'ought to draw [...] attention to the new forms of hierarchies it fashions and reifies, most notably hierarchies

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<sup>765</sup> *Ibid*, p. 55

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>768</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 157.

<sup>769</sup> *Ibid*, p. 59.

<sup>770</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>771</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 103.

<sup>772</sup> Illouz, E., 'Who Will Care for the Caretaker's Daughter? Toward a Sociology of Happiness in the Era of Reflexive Modernity', p. 60.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61. See also: Twine, F. *Citizenship and Social Rights: The Interdependence of Society and Self* (Sage Publications Ltd, London, New York & New Delhi, 1994).

<sup>774</sup> Illouz, E., 'Who Will Care for the Caretaker's Daughter? Toward a Sociology of Happiness in the Era of Reflexive Modernity', p. 60.

of private [emotional style], personal identity and well-being'<sup>775</sup> that she feels are increasingly the subject of both public interest and regulation by external authority.

#### *Conclusions & Implications for Understanding Development's Perceived Therapeutic Turn*

Such a study lies far beyond the scope of this thesis; but nonetheless, Illouz's call to consider how 'hierarchies of private [emotional style], personal identity and well-being'<sup>776</sup> are fashioned chimes with this chapter's own ambitions to highlight how a type of psychologised personhood has itself been reified. In summary, this chapter has specifically set out to locate and contextualise the making of the modern psychologised subject and to understand why a type of psychologised personhood, which expects the subject to practice its 'subjectivity, freedom and autonomy'<sup>777</sup> through 'endless immersion in the depths of [its] psychological self'<sup>778</sup>, has taken hold in contemporary Western culture. To do that, it has introduced *psychologisation* as a useful organising concept that can preface with renewed currency the changing form of contemporary subjectivity; and subsequently highlighted a series of socio-cultural changes in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries which have arguably sustained the 'sociocultural flow of psychologising logics'<sup>779</sup> and enabled (as well as concealed)'the naturalisation of [psychology's] knowledge, practices and social orders [within the wider social body]'<sup>780</sup>. All in all, this chapter has tried to explain how a cultural benchmark of psychologised personhood, which prioritises the 'personal life of the individual as locus of both problem and responsibility for change'<sup>781</sup>, has taken hold alongside the 'widespread acceptance and adoption of a therapeutic consciousness'<sup>782</sup> within modern Western society.

More than that though, this chapter set out to locate the creeping *psychologisation* of the development subject identified earlier in this thesis within broad sociological debates about the making of the modern psychologised subject.<sup>783</sup> In fact, it set out to champion *psychologisation* as a surprisingly useful concept which could illuminate the source of contemporary Western therapeutic sensibilities as well as the influences that may have induced development's own therapeutic turn. As prefaced from the outset, *psychologisation* remains a largely unknown concept to development and political theorists alike; let alone anyone interested in community-based approaches to participatory development. This thesis has however already talked about the creeping *psychologisation* of the development subject to

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<sup>775</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>777</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 187.

<sup>778</sup> Álvarez-Uría, F., Varela, J., & Gordo, Á., & Parra, P., 'Psychologised Life and Thought Styles', p. 11.

<sup>779</sup> Gordo, Á., & De Vos, J., 'Editorial: Psychologism, Psychologising and De-Psychologisation', p. 4.

<sup>780</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>781</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1.

<sup>782</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable', p. 63.

<sup>783</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 187.

denote the expression of REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject in a mixture of political *and* psychological terms. To recap, that chapter noticed that testimonies of REFLECT's anticipated impact upon the development subject featured a series of modest assertions that appeared to imagine increased personal confidence and self-esteem as indicators of the participant empowerment it seeks to realise. The preceding chapter felt sure that this represented the creeping *psychologisation* of the development subject but this label was causally applied with little in the way of explanation or concrete definition. In the first instance, this chapter has now hopefully brought some descriptive, definitional clarity to that usage following explanation here that psychologisation in part denotes the haemorrhaging of psychological vocabulary into everyday life.

Of course, psychologisation signifies much more than that and as outlined earlier in this chapter, the haemorrhaging of psychological 'vocabulary, [...] grammars of conduct, [and] styles of judgement'<sup>784</sup> into popular culture has arguably naturalised 'therapeutic categorisations and ways of thinking'<sup>785</sup> and fostered a tendency to interpret 'social and existential problems [through] a therapeutic prism'<sup>786</sup>. This has subsequently served to transform 'social problems into individual problems and personal dilemmas'<sup>787</sup> and through a series of turns rendered 'the individual [...] the object of political intervention'<sup>788</sup>. Again, the preceding chapter sensed that REFLECT's ingrained *will to improve* which, amongst other ambitions, appeared to transmit a faintly detectable vision of improvement that proposes and expects a measure of psychosocial change for its own vision of social transformation to stick replicated some of these same tendencies. In fact, it felt that statements heralding the importance of 'the confidence to assert [...] rights in decision making'<sup>789</sup> or 'the confidence [...] to address larger structural change'<sup>790</sup>, which leant on the rhetoric of personal development to bring alive a vision of transformatory empowerment predicated on improvements in participants' confidence and self-esteem, in part conflated social transformation with individual, personal transformation. This, as well as other similar observations, again led that chapter to talk about – albeit loosely and once more with little explanation or concrete definition – the perceptible *psychologisation* of the development subject.

This chapter's synopsis of the socio-cultural changes which plausibly enabled and concealed the naturalisation of psychological explanatory frameworks within contemporary Western

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<sup>784</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 264.

<sup>785</sup> McLaughlin, K., 'Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable', p. 65.

<sup>786</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>787</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work, the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 45.

<sup>788</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>789</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 187.

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

culture was consequently included in the hope that its observations might yield universal, and readily transferable, gauges of that creeping *psychologisation*. It was of course initially designed to compensate for a gap in the critical psychological literature and its failure to contextualise this therapeutic turn in sufficient politically and socially informed detail. In fact, on that basis, this chapter set out to explain the cultural currency, through which that therapeutic consciousness and concomitant expectations of how the subject should practice his or her subjectivity, actually took hold.<sup>791</sup> Along the way however, it also tried to pinpoint how a cultural benchmark of psychologised personhood, which imbued changing expectations of the subject or more to the point changing expectations of how the subject should practice his or her subjectivity, became the hallmark of our recent psychologised times. Having already noted that ‘modernity’s development along individualised and psychologised lines’<sup>792</sup> had fostered an expectation that the modern subject should practice its ‘subjectivity, freedom and autonomy’<sup>793</sup> through ‘endless immersion in the depths of [its] psychological self’<sup>794</sup>; this synopsis also sought to explore that expectancy in more detail, identify some of its determining characteristics, and in doing so, illuminate a better understanding of the potential markers of the development subject’s own *psychologisation* as well.

All things considered, this synopsis confirmed that the *decline of tradition*, the *decline of religion*, the *demise of politics*, the *institutionalisation of permissiveness*, the *professionalisation of everyday life* and the *disorganisation of the private sphere* in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries precipitated the emergence of something akin to a cultural benchmark of psychologised personhood which encourages the modern psychologised subject to practice a highly ‘individualised [form] of subjectivity’<sup>795</sup> and asks it to ‘choose [and practice] a life of responsible selfhood’<sup>796</sup>. In brief summary, the *decline of tradition* arguably seeded the acceleration of individualisation processes and affirmed ‘an ontological concept [of] the [autonomous] individual’<sup>797</sup>. The *decline of religion* arguably gave way to the rise of a new secular code of inward looking self-realisation and self-improvement.<sup>798</sup> The *demise of politics* conceivably made the growth of narcissistic politics possible and surreptitiously encouraged the pursuit of personal, psychosocial change at the expense of social and political activism.<sup>799</sup> The *institutionalisation of permissiveness* further encouraged acquiescence to political

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<sup>791</sup> McLaughlin, K., ‘Psychologisation and the Construction of the Political Subject as Vulnerable’, p. 73.

<sup>792</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., ‘The Disappearance of Psychologisation’, p. 187.

<sup>793</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>794</sup> Álvarez-Uría, F., Varela, J., & Gordo, Á., & Parra, P., ‘Psychologised Life and Thought Styles’, p. 11.

<sup>795</sup> Gordo-Lopez, Á.J., ‘On the Psychologisation of Critical Psychology’, p. 57.

<sup>796</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 168.

<sup>797</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 56.

<sup>798</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 156.

<sup>799</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1.

intervention and politicised the imperative to live as if making a *project* of ourselves.<sup>800</sup> The *professionalisation of everyday life* turned mundane matters of daily life into psychologised domains of mastery to overcome. Whilst the *disorganisation of the private sphere* arguably encouraged the adoption of new forms of habitus and new forms of competence in order to successfully practice a life of responsible, reflexive selfhood.

By way of a conclusion, all of this has precipitated the cultural endorsement of an ethic of psychologised responsabilised personhood. As such, this chapter would like to suggest that this ethic - which expects the subject to '[psychologise its] relationship to the world'<sup>801</sup>, to 'live as if making a *project* of [itself]'<sup>802</sup>, to acquiesce to an ethic of 'self-improvement [in accordance with] a master plan of [itself]'<sup>803</sup> and to ultimately inculcate 'a socio-political demand [...] to become responsible for [itself]'<sup>804</sup> - underpins the contemporary imagination of the modern psychologised subject. What is more, as the determining characteristics of a cultural benchmark of psychologised personhood, each of these hallmarks are universal, but specific enough, to acts as gauges of the creeping *psychologisation* of the development subject. In fact, just as this chapter is intended to preface a critical review of Vanessa Pupavac's frontier work on therapeutic governance in the chapter to follow; the identification of these hallmarks - which neatly denote psychologisation's influence on the changing form of subjectivity - can even preface that chapter's accompanying scrutiny of development's own therapeutic turn. Indeed, they arguably provide another layer of clarity and conceptual articulation to address the question of whether REFLECT's vision of the empowered development subject might, like the forms of therapeutic governance due to be discussed in the next chapter, replicate similar demands for a type of psychologised personhood and '[open] up the [private] sphere of [...] life to therapeutic management'<sup>805</sup>.

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<sup>800</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 157.

<sup>801</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 197.

<sup>802</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 157.

<sup>803</sup> Illouz, E., 'Who Will Care for the Caretaker's Daughter? Toward a Sociology of Happiness in the Era of Reflexive Modernity', p. 58.

<sup>804</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 44.

<sup>805</sup> Furedi, F. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*, p. 22.

## Chapter Five

### Therapeutic Governance

#### *Introduction*

This chapter will present a critical review of Vanessa Pupavac's work, together with other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance to suggest that expectations of the development subject are increasingly influenced by something akin to the cultural benchmark of psychologised personhood identified in the preceding chapter. In short, it will use Pupavac's work to highlight that development is not immune to psychologisation and that it too has begun to replicate demands for a kind of psychologised personhood that asks the development subject to psychologise its relationship to the world and its own development. As already argued within chapter two, Pupavac's work on therapeutic governance offers a fresh perspective on this thesis' understanding of REFLECT and its imagination of the empowered development subject in a mixture of political and psychological terms. More than that though, her work is invaluable because it draws attention to a new-found interest in the emotional subjectivity of the poor which this thesis increasingly sees as the manifestation of a prevailing Western social-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice. What this chapter therefore hopes to add to this thesis is a greater sense of the conditions that have, to Pupavac at least, precipitated a therapeutic turn within recent macro-level development policy and rendered an individual's emotional state an acceptable 'aspect of good governance rather than a private matter of personal concern'<sup>806</sup>.

Beyond that though, this chapter will lay out, scrutinise and unpick Pupavac's work in much more detail than this thesis has hitherto done in order to justify asking whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance itself. As intimated in chapter two, her work should heed a watchfulness to development interventions which appear to conceive 'social transformation in terms of psychosocial change'<sup>807</sup> and which extend 'new parameters of external intervention'<sup>808</sup> into formerly 'private matter[s] of personal concern'<sup>809</sup>. Let it not be forgotten though that the term denotes the 'promotion of emotional management strategies [by external, international actors] to tackle a whole range of global issues from war to population control [...] to poverty'<sup>810</sup> and is predicated on a belief that 'emotionally secure

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<sup>806</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.

<sup>807</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 173.

<sup>808</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 150.

<sup>809</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.

<sup>810</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 150.

individuals are likely to make better citizens [and that] an individual's emotional state is no longer merely of personal concern but [...] an aspect of good governance and the duties of citizenship'<sup>811</sup>. Notwithstanding chapter two's eagerness to introduce and champion her work, this more extensive definition has up until now received next to no attention and again, whilst this thesis stands by its defining research question, it cannot possibly hope to answer the question of whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance itself without fully addressing what therapeutic governance actually signifies in much greater detail.

In this respect, this chapter hopes to fulfil two clear functions. On the one hand, it will use Pupavac's conceptualisation of therapeutic governance and her persuasive narration of the transference of Western therapeutic sensibilities onto the international political stage to demonstrate how macro-level development policy has begun to render an individual's emotional state an acceptable aspect of good governance rather than a private matter of personal concern.<sup>812</sup> In addition, it will critically appraise her arguments about the *securitisation of development* and the increasing 'trauma talk, or *traumatology*'<sup>813</sup> of humanitarian discourses to suggest that development increasingly prioritises the 'personal life of the individual as locus of both problem and responsibility for change'<sup>814</sup>. In doing so, it will attest that the development subject's emotional state has become a permissible and politically salient site or space for external intervention; and what is more, that fostering personalities capable of taking responsibility for themselves in a way that then politically connects their sense of self to the welfare and security of their environment falls within the parameters of the modes of international therapeutic governance she decries.<sup>815</sup> This, the chapter will attest, means that individual efforts to continually *make and re-make the self*, or in other words psychologised efforts to continually work upon one's own self-improvement - to essentially be a *self-reflexive subject-in-process* - are increasingly beginning to underpin expectations of the development subject.

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<sup>811</sup> *Ibid*, p. 152.

<sup>812</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.

<sup>813</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2012), p. 189.

<sup>814</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1.

<sup>815</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the 'constructivist concept of personhood which opens up an alternative sense of subjectivity in terms better suited to appreciating how people's sense of themselves is mediated by the routinised actions and interactions in which they are implicated' see:

Barnett, C., Clarke, N., Cloke, P., & Malpass, A., 'The Elusive Subjects of Neo-liberalism', *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (2008), pp. 623-653.



On the other hand, it will outline how Pupavac's work draws attention to a 'deeply conservative mode of thinking [and an altogether] superficial humanitarianism'<sup>816</sup> which harnesses pathologies of vulnerability, pathologies of unresilience and conservative schemes of interventionist therapeutic responses to 'performatively produce [...] subjects'<sup>817</sup> in need of saving from themselves. In other words, the chapter will highlight that the underlying beliefs which render an individual's emotional state an acceptable 'aspect of good governance rather than a private matter of personal concern'<sup>818</sup> ostensibly *pathologise the personal* before they seek to *responsibilise the self* in the manner alluded to above. Pupavac's work might spotlight how certain development interventions appear to call upon the development subject to take responsibility for its own personal development in a way that then politically connects its sense of self to the welfare and security of its environment; but as this chapter will go on to argue, the *pathologisation of the personal*, together with the *responsibilisation of the self*, prevail as the defining hallmarks of her highly securitised notion of therapeutic governance. The chapter will conclude that in order to determine whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a comparable form of therapeutic governance, the remainder of the thesis needs to look for signs of both the *pathologisation of the personal*, together with the *responsibilisation of the self*, within REFLECT's own epistemic and normative frameworks.

### *Therapeutic Governance*

The first thing to say about Pupavac's work on therapeutic governance is that it initially sprang from observations about war-affected refugees and how they 'were invariably presented as [...] traumatised, psychologically scarred, indelibly marked, emotionally damaged, hopeless, overwhelmed by grief and so forth'<sup>819</sup>. In her scrutiny of donor aid policy and psychosocial intervention programmes in Kosovo in the late 1990s, Pupavac wrote of an 'international therapeutic model'<sup>820</sup> that constructed 'war [and disaster] affected populations as traumatised and subject to psychosocial dysfunctionality'<sup>821</sup>. This therapeutic model, she suggested, put forward that within these populations, 'traumatic experiences [caused] trauma symptoms producing low self-esteem and dysfunctionality [...] requiring external intervention'<sup>822</sup>. For Pupavac, 'the international projection of [war and disaster affected populations] as

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<sup>816</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 189.

<sup>817</sup> Brassett, J., & Vaughan-Williams, N., 'Governing Traumatic Events', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2012), p. 184.

<sup>818</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.

<sup>819</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Pathologising Populations and Colonising Minds: International Psychosocial Programs in Kosovo', *Alternatives*, Vol. 27 (2002), p. 489.

<sup>820</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 489-490.

<sup>821</sup> *Ibid*, p. 490.

<sup>822</sup> *Ibid*.

traumatised'<sup>823</sup> and the emergence of 'psychosocial intervention as a new mode of external therapeutic governance'<sup>824</sup> was 'not necessarily [...] a positive development'<sup>825</sup> and in many ways represented a 'form of cultural imperialism [through] the imposition of a Western therapeutic model on other societies'<sup>826</sup>. Therapeutic governance, as defined through a discrete body of her research, embodied the 'promotion of emotional management strategies [by external, international actors] to tackle a whole range of global issues from war to population control [...] to poverty'<sup>827</sup> and was predicated on a belief that 'an individual's emotional state [was] no longer a matter of personal concern, but [...] an aspect of good governance'<sup>828</sup>.

Practically speaking, Pupavac's work classifies a variety of activities, including trauma counselling, peace education programmes and self-esteem building initiatives, as psychosocial interventions and identifies a plethora of humanitarian aid agencies providing comparable psychosocial support in settings characterised by war or natural disaster.<sup>829</sup> However, she particularly laments an upsurge in the use of trauma counselling programmes in conflict situations and singles out the Kosovan crisis as an instance in which the international humanitarian response was greatly dominated by the provision of psychosocial support in this form.<sup>830</sup> In fact, citing one aid worker's observations, she writes that 'international [aid agencies in Kosovan refugee camps] were tripping over each other demanding to *do* psychosocial work'<sup>831</sup> in response to the perceived 'sequelae of psychological trauma experienced by civilians during and after [the] war'<sup>832</sup>. For Pupavac however, there is little benevolence in this eagerness to 'help individuals and communities to overcome and deal with [assumed] psychosocial problems that may have arisen from the shock and effects'<sup>833</sup> of the Kosovan war. The provision of psychosocial support there, was to her, deeply disquieting and stood as evidence of an international humanitarian community automatically pathologising the emotional state of refugees fleeing the conflict.<sup>834</sup> Perturbed by this sweeping invalidation of their psychology, she took the systematic promotion of a psychosocial model of trauma and

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<sup>823</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>825</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>826</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>827</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 150.

<sup>828</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>829</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Therapeutic Governance: the Politics of Psychosocial Intervention and Trauma Risk Management', *Disasters*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (2005), p. 359.

<sup>830</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Pathologising Populations and Colonising Minds: International Psychosocial Programmes in Kosovo', p. 497.

<sup>831</sup> Own *italic* emphasis. *Ibid.*, p. 499.

<sup>832</sup> Morina, N., & Ford, J.D., 'Complex Sequelae of Psychological Trauma Among Kosovar Civilian War Victims', *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, Vol. 54 (2008), p. 426.

<sup>833</sup> Hansen, P., & Ager, W (Eds). *Psychosocial Interventions: A Handbook* (The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support, Denmark, 2009), p. 26.

<sup>834</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Pathologising Populations and Colonising Minds: International Psychosocial Programmes in Kosovo', p. 497.

therapy within that population as a starting point for her critical conceptualisation of therapeutic governance, its origins and its effects.<sup>835</sup>

Now it is probably quite clear that this thesis admires Pupavac's work on therapeutic governance and seeks to capitalise on some of the best aspects of her research as it sees them. Indeed, this thesis believes that the very best of Pupavac can be taken to add something fresh to its own subject matter and help question whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance itself. In the interests of simplicity, three aspects of her work are useful and each will be covered within specific sections of this chapter as part of a fuller appraisal of her critical conceptualisation of therapeutic governance, its origins and its effects. These include her persuasive narration of the transference of Western therapeutic sensibilities onto the international political stage; her advancement of a provocative argument about the contraction and reorientation of the ambitions of international development itself; and finally, her explanation of how the psychology and political subjectivity of the poor, the displaced, the marginalised and the war-affected can be positioned and pathologised to feed 'the development of a new mode of international therapeutic governance entailing new parameters of external intervention'<sup>836</sup>. Beyond these three aspects of her work, she also makes a considerable contribution to understandings of how the making of the self has come to determine the accepted features of the development subject's subjectivity and for this reason as well, all admiration is duly deserved.<sup>837</sup>

Indeed, through a series of articles, her research into the pathologising undertones of international psychosocial programmes evolves into a decisive critical intellectual attack on the *emotionology* (or in other words, the specific 'attitudes or standards [...] towards basic emotions and their appropriate expression [and] which reflects and encourages these attitudes in human conduct'<sup>838</sup>) of an emerging international security paradigm and the apparent demoralisation and securitisation of humanitarianism and development per se.<sup>839</sup> As an

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<sup>835</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>836</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 150.

<sup>837</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, p. 105.

<sup>838</sup> For a wider discussion of emotionology as a useful term with which to distinguish the collective emotional standards of a society from the emotional experiences of individuals and groups see: Stearns, P.N., & Stearns, C.Z., 'Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (1985), pp. 813-836.

<sup>839</sup> See: Hughes, C., & Pupavac, V., 'Framing Post-Conflict Societies: International Pathologisation of Cambodia and Post-Yugoslav States', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 6 (2005), pp. 873-899; Pupavac, M., & Pupavac, V., 'Trauma Advocacy, Veteran Politics and the Croatian Therapeutic State', pp. 199-213; Pupavac, V., 'Global Disaster Management and Therapeutic Governance of Communities', *Development Dialogue*, Vol. 58 (2012), pp. 81-97; Pupavac, V., 'Hamlet's Crisis of Meaning, Mental Wellbeing and Meaningless in the War on Terror', online; Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', pp. 161-181; Pupavac, V., 'Pathologising Populations and Colonising Minds: International Psychosocial Programmes in Kosovo', pp. 489-511; Pupavac, V., 'Psychosocial Interventions and the Demoralization of Humanitarianism', *Journal of Biosocial Science*, Vol. 36 (2004), pp. 491-504; Pupavac, V., 'Refugee Advocacy, Traumatic Representations and Political

international relations specialist, her research might eschew some of the micro matters of development policy and practice that this principally thesis concerns itself with, but what it does offer is a critical insight into matters at the macro level which might just help it along. With this in mind, this chapter will use Pupavac's work to explore how these particular macro level matters have rendered an individual's emotional state an acceptable 'aspect of good governance rather than a private matter of personal concern'<sup>840</sup>. To do so, it will explore Pupavac's conceptualisation of therapeutic governance, its origins and its effects in greater detail through separate discussions of the securitisation of development and the increasing 'trauma talk, or traumatology'<sup>841</sup> of humanitarian discourses. In doing so, this chapter will slowly start to bridge what feels like a qualitative gap between her work and what this thesis perceives to be a growing interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within other aspects of development policy and practice.

### *The Securitisation of Development*

As intimated, Pupavac's background as an international relations specialist is helpful and enables this chapter to briefly touch upon her interpretation of how Western therapeutic norms were projected into the ideological vacuum of the late twentieth century and some of her more provocative arguments about the displacement of universal prosperity as the goal of international development policy.<sup>842</sup> Indeed, for Pupavac, 'the triumph of the therapeutic in international policy-making [was] bound up with [arising] insecurities at the end of the Cold War [and] the moral, social and political stasis [that] now characterises Western societies'<sup>843</sup>. Social atomisation domestically; state collapse internationally; unrest, disobedience and violence as modernisation for economic development and security faltered; the fusing of *the personal* with *the political* in radical politics; as well as insights from the peace movement all coalesced to heighten a sense that the trauma of psychologised alienation and demoralisation led to unrest and conflict.<sup>844</sup> The challenge of managing expectations and frustrations within a climate and culture that perpetually raised material expectations that it increasingly could not fulfil, was also for Pupavac, decisive. As such, she suggests that international policy-makers

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Disenchantment', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (2008), pp. 270-292; Pupavac, V., 'Therapeutic Governance: the Politics of Psychosocial Intervention and Trauma Risk Management', pp. 358-372; and Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', pp. 149-170.

<sup>840</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.

<sup>841</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 189.

<sup>842</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', pp. 150-155.

<sup>843</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 150-151.

<sup>844</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 151-156.

called for the moderation of material desires and expectations to neuter the probable (and perhaps even inevitable) insecurity and rage, inequality and injustice would bring.<sup>845</sup>

Turning away from redistribution, she argues that social psychological insights were capitalised upon to define a range of therapeutic responses as a way of 'getting inside the head to stay the hand'<sup>846</sup>. This arguably reflected one aspect of an emergent 'anticipatory, probabilistic and preventive intervention'<sup>847</sup> ethos in international affairs skewed towards managing the risk of 'grievance factors'<sup>848</sup> escalating undesirably.<sup>849</sup> Further still, the reframing of needs in 'psychological rather than material terms'<sup>850</sup> was, she subsequently argues, a symptom of the emergence of a bleaker and pessimistic 'developmental human security framework'<sup>851</sup>, or 'humanitarian-development-security nexus'<sup>852</sup>, geared towards promoting survival and security in the absence of a developed state and/or national economic development.<sup>853</sup> Here her arguments run parallel to Mark Duffield's sentiments about the reframing of 'security as a development problem'<sup>854</sup>, essentially the *securitisation of development*, and Jens Stilhoff Sørensen and Fredrik Söderbaum's observations of a 'development-security nexus [...] which in taking human life and populations as its referents [became] *biopolitical*'<sup>855</sup>; meaning in short that development adopted a form of power that systematically structured the desires, properties, and possibilities of all aspects of human life, including its definition and composition, through a pervasive, complex and heterogeneous network of practices designed to interpellate and mobilise people individually and collectively around the problematic of security.<sup>856</sup>

In light of this, Pupavac's assertion that 'development [became] a form of therapeutic governance [when it began to focus] on enhancing people's capacities, motivation and sense of well-being'<sup>857</sup>, or in other words 'reforming their subjectivity'<sup>858</sup>, is really very potent. In reality, Pupavac's conception of therapeutic governance is inescapably tied to a securitised notion of subjectivity intervention and its underlying conflict containment function should not

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<sup>845</sup> *Ibid*, p. 154.

<sup>846</sup> Duffield, M., 'Governing the Borderlands: Decoding the Power of Aid', *Disasters*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (2001), p. 312.

<sup>847</sup> *Ibid*, p. 313.

<sup>848</sup> *Ibid*, p. 314.

<sup>849</sup> *Ibid*, p. 313.

<sup>850</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 155.

<sup>851</sup> Duffield, M., 'Governing the Borderlands: Decoding the Power of Aid', p. 311.

<sup>852</sup> Melber, H., 'Preface: The End of the Development Security Nexus?', *Development Dialogue*, Vol. 58 (2012), p. 5.

<sup>853</sup> Duffield, M., 'Governing the Borderlands: Decoding the Power of Aid', p. 311.

<sup>854</sup> *Ibid*, p. 312.

<sup>855</sup> Sørensen, JS., & Söderbaum, F., 'Introduction: The End of the Development Security Nexus?', *Development Dialogue*, Vol. 58 (2012), p. 7.

<sup>856</sup> Dillon, M., & Reid, J., 'Global Liberal Governance: Biopolitics, Security and War', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2001), pp. 48-49.

<sup>857</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 173.

<sup>858</sup> Pupavac, M., & Pupavac, V., 'Trauma Advocacy, Veteran Politics and the Croatian Therapeutic State', p. 203.

be forgotten. That said, her accompanying arguments about the contraction and reorientation of the ambitions of development itself, including the alleged displacement of 'universal prosperity as the goal of international development policy'<sup>859</sup>, should perhaps be read more cautiously. In fact, it might be better to read her work here through the lens of what Sørensen and Söderbaum describe as the '*developmentalisation of security*'<sup>860</sup> rather than follow aggressive arguments about the *securitisation of development*, and the presumed demoralisation of the whole development project, to their natural endpoint. This is because Sørensen and Söderbaum sense a genuine 'retraction from the ambition to plan, mobilise and engineer development [...] in relation to security'<sup>861</sup>; in part due to the pervasiveness of emerging neoliberal discourses of resilience which require everyone to 'practice the virtue of securing themselves'<sup>862</sup>. Together with Julian Reid, they feel that 'changing [expectations] of the subject under liberalism'<sup>863</sup> alter the 'correlation of development with security'<sup>864</sup> and actually reinvigorate and reinforce a 'neoliberal framing of the problematic of development'<sup>865</sup>.

In fact, unquestionably accepting arguments about the *securitisation of development* and the presumed demoralisation of the whole development project might actually serve to obscure the ways in which other development subjectivities are mobilised and maintained.<sup>866</sup> Indeed, the argument that 'development [seeks to produce] appropriate self-sustaining subjectivities [...] amenable to [...] insertion in the global economy [and is therefore concerned with] changing behaviour [...] and producing entrepreneurs who can trade their way out of poverty'<sup>867</sup> should not be ignored. These 'entrepreneurial practices of subjectivity'<sup>868</sup> require mention here because in contrast to purely securitised practices of subjectivity, which advocate 'disciplining the poor to give up on states as sources [of security and] practise the virtue of securing themselves'<sup>869</sup>, they value increased economic development, profitability and prosperity just as much as security.<sup>870</sup> Since this thesis seriously wants to consider whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance, it seems sensible to consider how a neoliberal economic model of development might value and encourage the promotion of

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<sup>859</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 174.

<sup>860</sup> Sørensen, JS., & Söderbaum, F., 'Introduction: The End of the Development Security Nexus?', p. 13.

<sup>861</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>862</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', *Development Dialogue*, Vol. 58 (2012), p. 67.

<sup>863</sup> Sørensen, JS., & Söderbaum, F., 'Introduction: The End of the Development Security Nexus?', p. 15.

<sup>864</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', *Development Dialogue*, p. 74.

<sup>865</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.

<sup>866</sup> Micro-credit loans for example are posited as a means to develop self-sustaining entrepreneurial development subjectivities and are arguably used to produce entrepreneurs who can trade their way out of poverty and in doing so, contribute to the functioning of a market economy. See: Biccum, A. *Global Citizenship and the Legacy of Empire: Marketing Development* (Routledge, Oxon, 2012), p. 7; and Shani, G., 'Empowering the Disposable? Biopolitics, Race and Human Development', *Development Dialogue*, Vol. 58 (2012), p. 101.

<sup>867</sup> Biccum, A. *Global Citizenship and the Legacy of Empire: Marketing Development*, p. 7.

<sup>868</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 69.

<sup>869</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.

<sup>870</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 68- 70.

emotional management strategies to seed and support the development of the self-reliant, entrepreneurial subject as well. Indeed, beyond all other things, this chapter is keen to understand how and why the making of the self has come to underpin changing expectations of the development subject and it stands to reason that a political economy perspective might have something to say on the matter too.

Either way, the conflation of development with security sustaining Pupavac's highly securitised conceptualisation of therapeutic governance appears to expose a responsabilisation dynamic which disciplines the development subject to believe in the necessity of securing itself and to then prove itself by bettering its self-reliance.<sup>871</sup> Echoing Pupavac's thoughts that development has turned to focus on 'reforming [the development subject's] subjectivity'<sup>872</sup>, Reid acknowledges that this imperative to produce 'self-securing subjects'<sup>873</sup> is predicated on an assumption that 'subjects [who] are capable of securing themselves are less of a threat to themselves and in being so are not a threat to the governance capacities of their states nor to the governance of the global order either'<sup>874</sup>. In fact, he goes further to claim that 'the correlation of development with security feeds upon the political imaginary of liberalism predicated as it became upon the belief that a global order of self-securing objects would in turn deliver a more secure form of world order'<sup>875</sup>. He proceeds to ask what this can tell us 'about the nature of the subject that development is now aimed at producing'<sup>876</sup> and in light of everything just said, it would seem that development is noticeably turning to focus on fostering personalities capable of taking responsibility for themselves in a way that then politically connects their sense of self to the welfare and security of their environment.<sup>877</sup>

### *Traumatology*

These points will be returned to later but for now, it warrants reiterating that the increasing 'trauma talk, or traumatology'<sup>878</sup> of humanitarian discourses also feature heavily in Pupavac's discussions of the triumph of the therapeutic in international policy-making. Indeed, her chastisement of the political framing of trauma, or the ways in which psychological dysfunction and aggravated violence are framed as the natural by products of experienced trauma within war or disaster-affected populations, is unequivocal. As mentioned earlier, she laments the problematisation and pathologisation of war or disaster-affected populations 'as

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<sup>871</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67 & 69.

<sup>872</sup> Pupavac, M., & Pupavac, V., 'Trauma Advocacy, Veteran Politics and the Croatian Therapeutic State', p. 203.

<sup>873</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 74.

<sup>874</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>875</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>876</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>877</sup> Barnett, C., Clarke, N., Cloke, P., & Malpass, A., 'The Elusive Subjects of Neo-liberalism', pp. 623-653.

<sup>878</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2012), p. 189.

[...] traumatised, psychologically scarred, indelibly marked, emotionally damaged, hopeless, overwhelmed by grief and so forth<sup>879</sup>; as well as the dualistic presentation of war-affected populations in particular as the ‘perpetrators [of violence] or as [meek and docile] victims at risk of [further] trauma and dysfunction in the absence of expert interventions’<sup>880</sup>. Whereas her arguments about the conflation of development and security pinpoint the emergence of a responsabilisation dynamic; her thoughts on the indiscriminate problematisation of affected populations and communities reveal a further pathologisation dynamic at the core of her conceptualisation of therapeutic governance. Indeed, the following short summary of what the concept of trauma appears to be doing politically can help this chapter distinguish how the therapeutic governance of experienced trauma, as well as the therapeutic governance of possible trauma to come, ostensibly pathologises the personal and responsabilises the self.<sup>881</sup>

In summary, increasing ‘stories of [humanitarian] crisis, emergency and catastrophe’<sup>882</sup> have contributed to the emergence of ‘a hypertrophied concept of trauma’<sup>883</sup> to such an extent that the idea now acts ‘a paradigmatic lens through which the dynamics of contemporary international politics are framed, understood and responded to’<sup>884</sup>. As James Brassett and Nick Vaughan-Williams acknowledge, the ‘invention [...] of post-traumatic stress disorder’<sup>885</sup> and its subsequent classification as a psychiatric disorder ‘in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)’<sup>886</sup> marked a watershed in the conceptual development of trauma ‘as a grid of intelligibility around which a range of practices, discourses, perceptions and interventions [were] structured and organised’<sup>887</sup>. For many, including Alison Howell, this classification contributed to the ‘psychologisation of both security and development’<sup>888</sup> as ‘the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder came to be harnessed [in a profoundly political] logic of intervention which saw [and pathologised] recipients of aid and subjects of humanitarian interventions as victims, caught in a vicious or negative cycle [of repeated trauma and violence], who, without intervention, would be bound to suffer or commit violence again’<sup>889</sup>. It thus followed that complex humanitarian emergencies were conceptualised as cycles of poverty and dependency, trauma and violence, in which traumatised victims were

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<sup>879</sup> Pupavac, V., ‘Pathologising Populations and Colonising Minds: International Psychosocial Programs in Kosovo’, p. 489.

<sup>880</sup> Pupavac, V., ‘Global Disaster Management and Therapeutic Governance of Communities’, p. 95

<sup>881</sup> Neocleous, M., ‘Don’t Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience’, p. 188.

<sup>882</sup> Brassett, J., & Vaughan-Williams, N., ‘Governing Traumatic Events’, p. 183.

<sup>883</sup> Neocleous, M., ‘Don’t Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience’, p. 189.

<sup>884</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>885</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>886</sup> Brassett, J., & Vaughan-Williams, N., ‘Governing Traumatic Events’, p. 185.

<sup>887</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>888</sup> Howell, A., ‘The Demise of PTSD: From Governing through Trauma to Governing Resilience’, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2012), p. 217.

<sup>889</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.



deemed at risk of psychological dysfunction and in danger of becoming the perpetrators of future violence without the provision of external psycho-social assistance.<sup>890</sup>

Here Pupavac's observations of trauma counselling and the proliferation of psychosocial rehabilitation programmes in Kosovo in the late 1990s skip back into relevance; most notably because she talks in great, disparaging detail about their concealed ambitions to foster new subjectivities able to overcome the experience of trauma and traumatic events.<sup>891</sup> Drawing most noticeably upon the work of psychiatrist Derek Summerfield, she argues that international psychosocial policy at the time presumed that hidden scars, invisible wounds, undiagnosed trauma and a shared sense of felt meaningless, dislocation, anxiety and vulnerability were universal to the Kosovan refugee population following their experiences of war.<sup>892</sup> Far from casting humanitarian efforts there in a positive light, she suggested that the 'issue of the emotional well-being of [that] population'<sup>893</sup> was approached from a 'notion that the sources of insecurity and violence [were to be] found within the self'<sup>894</sup>. Taking her argument one step further, she suggested that 'the automatic provision of mass trauma counselling in the wake of [the Kosovan war exemplified] the cultural projection of individuals as universally vulnerable and in need of emotional processing to mediate psychosocial dysfunctionality'<sup>895</sup>. The politics at work, she claimed, was not only culturally ignorant but predicated on 'pessimistic [...] models of human pathology'<sup>896</sup> which expected 'dysfunctional or antisocial responses'<sup>897</sup> to the experience of externally perceived trauma and arrogantly presumed a need for external psychosocial treatment.

That said, a slightly different dynamic concerned with fostering resilience has since begun to erode the authority of interventions which cling to the authority of the projection of vulnerability and dysfunctionality in the event of experienced trauma. This 'new resilience model'<sup>898</sup>, which despondently imagines a future dominated by endless risk and insecurity, instead focuses on 'the making of the self in preparation for [...] trauma to come'<sup>899</sup> rather than 'the remaking [or rehabilitation] of the self in light of past trauma'<sup>900</sup>. This imagination of

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<sup>890</sup> This briefly captures the logic of the trauma and violence thesis which claims that felt trauma is an indicator of the future perpetration of previously encountered violence and that untreated trauma may have a multigenerational impact and foster repeated reactionary violence. See: Pupavac, V., 'Global Disaster Management and Therapeutic Governance of Communities', p. 95 and Pupavac, V., 'Pathologising Populations and Colonising Minds: International Psychosocial Programs in Kosovo', p. 500.

<sup>891</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 155.

<sup>892</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Psychosocial Interventions and the Demoralization of Humanitarianism', pp. 492-494.

<sup>893</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 501.

<sup>894</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 168.

<sup>895</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Psychosocial Interventions and the Demoralization of Humanitarianism', p. 494.

<sup>896</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Global Disaster Management and Therapeutic Governance of Communities', p. 81.

<sup>897</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>898</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>899</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 195.

<sup>900</sup> *Ibid.*

*trauma to come* is pivotal, not least because it signifies the pessimistic entrenchment of the idea that security and stability (and perhaps even material development) might never come. Indeed, building on the work of Jacques Derrida, Mark Neocleous argues that thinking of 'trauma in terms of a remaking of the self in light of the past, as unclaimed experience, as the redemptive authority of history, as forgetfulness and forgiveness, as struggles over representations of the past, [and ultimately] as healing'<sup>901</sup> has in part given way to an anxiety and fear of 'the trauma of a future which is unknowable [and ostensibly] imaginable [...] as traumatic'<sup>902</sup>. This about turn has pushed resilience 'to the fore in the context of an anxious political psyche'<sup>903</sup> and made an issue out of preparing the self and shaping a particular type of subjectivity to negotiate this uncertain, insecure future.<sup>904</sup>

Its logic is simple in that it aims 'to foster personalities able to *cope* with poverty, risk and insecurity without resorting to violence'<sup>905</sup> and to do so by supporting individuals 'to achieve balance, confidence and personal strength or [...] find inner strength [so they can] overcome life's hurdles, or better still, just bounce back from whatever life throws'<sup>906</sup> their way. In practice, resilience building humanitarianism operates under many guises but in essence, interventions strive 'to make [individuals] responsible for their own mental well-being, by demanding in the face of [difficult or] traumatic events [that individuals] think positively [and] avoid negative thinking traps in order to seize an opportunity for personal growth'<sup>907</sup>. However, whilst these approaches 'might not pin a disorder on individuals'<sup>908</sup>, they still retain pessimistic 'expectations of individual pathology without external governance'<sup>909</sup> and surreptitiously authorise external actors to intervene to 'responsibilise individuals [to be more] resilient in the face of [uncertainty or] traumatic events'<sup>910</sup>. This means that an individual's resilience is likewise 'not simply a matter of personal concern but [...] an aspect of good governance'<sup>911</sup> and as such, the 'political development of resilient citizenship'<sup>912</sup> arguably represents an extension of the aspiration to foster personalities capable of taking responsibility for themselves in a way that then politically connects their sense of self to the future welfare and security of their environment.<sup>913</sup>

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<sup>901</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>902</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>903</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>904</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>905</sup> Pupavac, M., & Pupavac, V., 'Trauma Advocacy, Veteran Politics and the Croatian Therapeutic State', p. 205.

<sup>906</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 192.

<sup>907</sup> Howell, A., 'The Demise of PTSD: From Governing through Trauma to Governing Resilience', p. 222.

<sup>908</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>909</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Global Disaster Management and Therapeutic Governance of Communities', p. 91.

<sup>910</sup> Howell, A., 'The Demise of PTSD: From Governing through Trauma to Governing Resilience', p. 224.

<sup>911</sup> Pupavac, M., & Pupavac, V., 'Trauma Advocacy, Veteran Politics and the Croatian Therapeutic State', p. 203.

<sup>912</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>913</sup> Barnett, C., Clarke, N., Cloke, P., & Malpass, A., 'The Elusive Subjects of Neo-liberalism', pp. 623-653.

What is more, it implies that the development subject is expected to practice an adaptive subjectivity, or in other words to become what this chapter would like to call a *self-reflexive subject-in-process*, that requires it to continually work upon its resilience, its fortitude and all manner of other psychologised virtues in order to cope within a world characterised by endless risk and insecurity. This aspirational subjectivity is adaptive 'in the sense that [the subject] is capable of making the [kind of] adjustments to itself which [will] enable it to survive the hazards encountered in its exposure to the world'<sup>914</sup>. By comparison however this is not a subject that simply acquiesces to the need to secure itself; and is instead a subject which 'accepts the disastrousness of the world it lives in as a condition for partaking of that world and [in doing so also] accepts the necessity of the injunction to change itself in correspondence with [its endemic] threats and dangers'<sup>915</sup>. For Reid, this is not a subject than can steadfastly secure itself within the world but one which much continually shift and change in order to accommodate and secure itself to the world. In short, this resilient subject is a subject that must psychologise itself to the world and for Reid in particular, to forgo any hope of 'changing the world, its structure [or the] conditions of [its] possibility'<sup>916</sup>.

All things considered, this brief summary of the 'trauma talk, or traumatology'<sup>917</sup> of humanitarian discourses which features heavily in Pupavac's discussions of the triumph of the therapeutic in international policy-making reveals that worrying expectations of pathology without external governance are embedded in forecasts of how the development subject might respond to felt or experienced trauma and its preparedness for probable trauma to come.<sup>918</sup> Alongside the previous discussion of the securitisation of development, this short little précis of the impact of the political reframing of trauma clearly shows that the *pathologisation of the personal* and the *responsibilisation of the self* prevail as defining characteristics of both the therapeutic governance of experienced trauma and the therapeutic governance of trauma to come. What is more, it has made it possible for this chapter to claim that these two defining logics of Pupavac's highly securitised conceptualisation of therapeutic governance repeatedly intertwine to discipline the development subject to accept the necessity to continually adapt and accommodate itself to an uncertain and threatening world in order to secure itself.<sup>919</sup> For Pupavac, Neocleous, Reid and other critical commentators, this raises uncomfortable questions about the depoliticisation of the development subject and as such the political consequences

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<sup>914</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 74.

<sup>915</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>916</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>917</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 189.

<sup>918</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Global Disaster Management and Therapeutic Governance of Communities', p. 91.

<sup>919</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', pp. 69 & 74.

of the *pathologisation of the personal* and the *responsibilisation of the self* warrant further scrutiny in the remainder of the chapter to ascertain the possible politics of their effects.

### *Pathologising the Personal & Responsibilising the Self*

What follows firstly acknowledges that Pupavac's work, as well as other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance spotlights a 'deeply conservative mode of thinking [and an altogether] superficial humanitarianism'<sup>920</sup> that harnesses pathologies of vulnerability, pathologies of unresilience and conservative schemes of interventionist therapeutic responses to 'performatively produce [...] subjects'<sup>921</sup> in need of saving from themselves. Indeed, at its worst, this kind of thinking skews 'understandings of subjectivity [...] and normality'<sup>922</sup> in such a way that the development subject is effectively responsibilised through external governance to overcome deficiencies of the self and maintain its own well-being and security in the face of events and circumstances beyond its control. This is why this chapter's opening introduction claimed that a thorough critical appraisal of Pupavac's arguments about the *securitisation of development* and the increasing *trauma talk* of humanitarian discourses would allow it to contend that fostering personalities capable of taking responsibility for themselves in a way that then politically connects their sense of self to the welfare and security of their environment falls within the parameters of the modes of international therapeutic governance she decries. Indeed, as established within that introduction, it would allow this chapter to categorically confirm that this kind of conservative thinking and superficial humanitarianism renders the subject's inner personal life an acceptable 'aspect of good governance rather than a private matter of personal concern'<sup>923</sup>.

Moving on though, it also allows this chapter to endorse Neocleous' view that anything which skews the personal life of the individual as 'locus of both problem and responsibility for change'<sup>924</sup> effectively functions as 'a means of cutting off political alternatives'<sup>925</sup>. Indeed, building on Reid's observation that an adaptive, resilient subject is a subject that must forgo any hope of 'changing the world, its structure [or the] conditions of [its] possibility'<sup>926</sup> as it shifts and changes in order to accommodate itself to that world is profound inasmuch that it highlights the general political effects of the Pupavac's highly securitised conceptualisation of therapeutic governance. For this chapter, and in fact for the wider thesis, this conservatism

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<sup>920</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 189.

<sup>921</sup> Brassett, J., & Vaughan-Williams, N., 'Governing Traumatic Events', p. 184.

<sup>922</sup> *Ibid*, p. 186.

<sup>923</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.

<sup>924</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1.

<sup>925</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 189.

<sup>926</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 74.

cannot be overlooked; particularly when this chapter's introduction declared that in order to determine whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a comparable form of therapeutic governance, the remainder of the thesis needs to look for signs of both the *pathologisation of the personal*, together with the *responsibilisation of the self*, within REFLECT's own epistemic and normative frameworks. To do this well, this chapter would subsequently like to assert that it cannot afford to brush over the politics of their effects and as such, the remainder of the chapter will proceed to reveal the full implications of turning the subject's psyche into a permissible and politically salient site or space for external intervention.

*Pathologising the Personal & Responsibilising the Self: The Politics of Their Effects*

For starters, Pupavac's highly securitised conceptualisation of therapeutic governance should arguably stir a watchfulness to the coupling of psychological pathologies to 'the denial of capacities for autonomy'<sup>927</sup>. Indeed, the projection of vulnerability and dysfunctionality in the event of experienced trauma very much frames and positions individuals and populations in the type of *sick role* discussed in the previous chapter. In fact the 'screening out of factors that might render the causes of humanitarian crises understandable leaves damaged individuals, communally comprising a sick society, firmly in the frame'<sup>928</sup>. It seems bad enough that sophisticated 'questions of political or economic structure'<sup>929</sup> and 'the complexity of inter relations between the state, society, and international or transnational forces in a globalising world'<sup>930</sup> are marginalised and excised from analyses of war or disaster related humanitarian crises, yet representations of the psychologically pathologising kind do even further damage. As Pupavac herself acknowledges, 'affirming vulnerability [and dysfunction] carries [...] associations of [...] impaired capacity'<sup>931</sup> and establishes a dynamic of 'permissive empathy, [that] unlike political solidarity, is not based on a relationship between equals, but one of dependency, in which those with impaired capacity are released from normal responsibilities'<sup>932</sup>. Sick individuals are not expected to contribute to society, sick societies are not expected to contribute to their future security or development, and at once 'their interests risk becoming determined for them'<sup>933, 934</sup>.

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<sup>927</sup> Hughes, C., & Pupavac, V., 'Framing Post-Conflict Societies: International Pathologisation of Cambodia and Post-Yugoslav States', p. 874.

<sup>928</sup> *Ibid*, p. 879.

<sup>929</sup> *Ibid*, p. 874.

<sup>930</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>931</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Refugee Advocacy, Traumatic Representations and Political Disenchantment', p. 285.

<sup>932</sup> *Ibid*, p. 280.

<sup>933</sup> *Ibid*, p. 282.

<sup>934</sup> *Ibid*, p. 291.

Ask what this might imply and from Pupavac herself, comments about the invalidation of political agency and the right to self-determination come back.<sup>935</sup> Indeed the pathological representations she identifies deny populations 'their moral personality and unity of the self'<sup>936</sup> and do nothing but infer a sense of moral and political impairment and incapacity.<sup>937</sup> Indeed, one of the strongest things to take away from Pupavac's work on therapeutic governance therefore is a sensitivity to the psychologised processes of *Othering* that sustain the characterisation of 'the pathological state of the dependent subject'<sup>938</sup> and a sensitivity to the fact that the psychology and selfhood of *Others* can be framed and positioned to legitimate 'new parameters of external intervention'<sup>939</sup>. Indeed, with the subject reduced by the 'trauma and violence thesis'<sup>940</sup> to 'the idea of the vulnerable depoliticized inner child and its flipside of primordial violence'<sup>941</sup>, the edict that the inner savage must be tamed, before the inner child can be fed becomes highly worrisome; particularly in contexts where 'material priorities or [...] expectations of [...] material [provision] rather than therapeutic [enablement]'<sup>942</sup> are in all likelihood much higher.<sup>943</sup> As both Pupavac and Duffield separately concur, this has led to the proliferation of psychosocial programmes at the expense of increased material aid and would seem to pinpoint an example of the moderation of material desires and expectations discussed earlier.

Ultimately however, the *pathologisation of the personal* pushes a distorted and misplaced 'conceptualisation of social justice [that] stresses normative/psychological causations and therapeutic interventions'<sup>944</sup>. Worryingly, such a conceptualisation would also appear to embrace 'a misanthropic view of humanity'<sup>945</sup> reliant upon degraded 'representations of ordinary people'<sup>946</sup>. For Pupavac, a loss of faith 'in ordinary humanity'<sup>947</sup> is a hallmark of 'vulnerability models'<sup>948</sup> and underpins the dependency dynamic, lacking in solidarity or even compassion, alluded to above. If this sounds familiar, then earlier comments in chapter two

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<sup>935</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Pathologising Populations and Colonising Minds: International Psychosocial Programs in Kosovo', pp. 503-507.

<sup>936</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Therapeutic Governance: the Politics of Psychosocial Intervention and Trauma Risk Management', p. 369.

<sup>937</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Pathologising Populations and Colonising Minds: International Psychosocial Programs in Kosovo', pp. 506-507.

<sup>938</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Therapeutic Governance: the Politics of Psychosocial Intervention and Trauma Risk Management', p. 367.

<sup>939</sup> Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 150.

<sup>940</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Pathologising Populations and Colonising Minds: International Psychosocial Programs in Kosovo', p. 500.

<sup>941</sup> *Ibid*, p. 503.

<sup>942</sup> *Ibid*, p. 205.

<sup>943</sup> *Ibid*, p. 504.

<sup>944</sup> Grugel, J., & Piper, N. *Critical Perspectives on Global Governance: Rights and Regulations in Governing Regimes*, p. 107.

<sup>945</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Hamlet's Crisis of Meaning, Mental Wellbeing and Meaningless in the War on Terror', online.

<sup>946</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>947</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>948</sup> *Ibid*.

about trusteeship and a darker side of *will to improve* imperatives must have made an impact. As such, it is important to remember Tania Li's comments about 'the many ways that practices [of power] position people'<sup>949</sup>, including the positioning 'of [the] deficient subject whose conduct is to be conducted'<sup>950</sup> and whose deficiency is 'defined by [a trustee's] claim to know how others should live, to know what is best for them, to know what they need'<sup>951</sup>. In 'suspecting everybody of being frail'<sup>952</sup> and doubting their ability to cope in situations marred by war or disaster, a dynamic which justifies and legitimates the appropriation of 'characteristic deficiencies [rather than material need] as points of entry for corrective interventions'<sup>953</sup> is readily established. For Pupavac, this is how therapeutic governance operates and in short, it rests unnervingly on perceived deficits of trust, confidence and faith in people per se.

This is also unequivocally true of newer resilience models in view of the fact that they fail to restore trust in people by retaining 'expectations of individual pathology without external governance'<sup>954</sup> and advocating 'top-down approaches relying on professional interventions to make people resilient'<sup>955</sup>. Such approaches arguably pile calculation on top of misanthropy because they harness a *pathologisation for intervention* dynamic to a *strategy of responsabilisation* in a bid to foster personalities that can administer stillness to their own internal, psychological unrest and instability. Against the backdrop of an 'anticipatory, probabilistic and preventive intervention'<sup>956</sup> ethos, such approaches hypothetically become a cost-effective way of providing humanitarian support because they supposedly lessen the need for repeated rehabilitative relief in the event of future crises by focusing on what people can do for themselves before, during and after perceived trauma. That said, by responsabilising the individual to take care of his or her needs, newer resilience models imbue a degree of 'regulatory authority [in that they aspire] to modulate [individual] behaviour by encouraging or supporting those potentialities or practices that have good or desirable consequences'<sup>957</sup>. Indeed, self-governing disciplined individuals capable of administering their own self-care in the event of a humanitarian crisis, be that war or disaster related, are supposedly less of a burden and less of a threat politically.

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<sup>949</sup> Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>950</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.

<sup>951</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>952</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Hamlet's Crisis of Meaning, Mental Wellbeing and Meaningless in the War on Terror', online.

<sup>953</sup> Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, p. 6.

<sup>954</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Global Disaster Management and Therapeutic Governance of Communities', p. 91.

<sup>955</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>956</sup> Duffield, M., 'Governing the Borderlands: Decoding the Power of Aid', p. 313.

<sup>957</sup> *Ibid*.

With that in mind, the 'increased prominence of resilience [as a concept] during the rise of neoliberalism'<sup>958</sup> probably needs to be taken into account to understand more about the politics of this specific ethics of responsibility. Moving beyond Pupavac's work, Neocleous is particularly animated on the subject of 'the relationship between the economic development of neoliberal subjectivity and the political development of resilient citizenship'<sup>959</sup>, arguing that 'neoliberal citizenship is nothing if not *a training in resilience*'<sup>960</sup>. To understand the concept of neoliberal subjectivity (or citizenship) better, Neocleous temporarily sidesteps his examination of the politics of trauma to draw upon Marx to argue that 'capital, as a system rooted objectively in permanent change and the constant revolutionising of production, promotes feelings of everlasting uncertainty in the subjectivity it generates'<sup>961</sup>. He continues by saying that the 'neoliberal intensification of this process [...] has been compounded [by the presentation of] resilience [...] as a key way of *subjectively* working through the uncertainty and instability of contemporary capital'<sup>962</sup> and as part of the creation of the neoliberal subject, 'the anxious subject is acknowledged as the resilient subject is championed'<sup>963</sup>. This is a crucially important insight because it implies that the anxious subject can be contained and managed by packaging and peddling resilience as personal safeguard against the insecurities of contemporary capital.

Neocleous presents this theory to account for the reasons behind resilience's handling by securitised humanitarian discourses and argues that the pairing of trauma with resilience has been mobilised for security governance as much as capital and largely orchestrated to bind personal anxieties to anticipated political dangers to secure the global capitalist order.<sup>964</sup> The trauma of an uncertain future is both a trauma for the individual and a trauma for state and capital and as such, a concept like resilient citizenship demands 'that [individuals] use [their] actions to accommodate [themselves] to capital and the state, and the secure future of both, rather than resist them'<sup>965</sup>. It uses 'the future as an endemic terrain of catastrophe [and] the conditions of their vulnerability'<sup>966</sup> to encourage them to improve themselves in order 'to withstand whatever crisis capital undergoes and whatever political measures the state carries out to save it'<sup>967</sup>. It is therefore more a means of safeguarding 'the resilience [and longevity] of

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<sup>958</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 191.

<sup>959</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>960</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>961</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>962</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>963</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>964</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>965</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Resisting Resilience', *Radical Philosophy*, Vol. 178 (March/April 2013), p. 7.

<sup>966</sup> Evans, B., & Reid, J., 'Dangerously Exposed: The Life and Death of the Resilient Subject', *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2013), p. 95-96.

<sup>967</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Resisting Resilience', p. 5.



[...] state and capital'<sup>968</sup> and 'involves [disabling and replacing individuals'] political habits, tendencies and capacities [with] adaptive ones'<sup>969</sup> because 'adaptability [fundamentally makes them] less of a threat [to either] politically'<sup>970</sup>. All in all, this implies that the development of resilient citizenship embodies a planned defence against political challenge and establishes resilience as an aptitude for little other than keeping things exactly as they are.<sup>971</sup>

As an observation raised earlier in the chapter, this is why emerging discourses of resilience altered the 'correlation of development with security'<sup>972</sup> and actually reinvigorated and reinforced a 'neoliberal framing of the problematic of development'<sup>973</sup>. Indeed, what has just been described, fully echoes what Sørensen, Söderbaum and Reid all felt about the 'changing [expectations] of *the subject* under liberalism'<sup>974</sup> and the emergence of 'a new form of subjectivity [that needed to be] adaptive, flexible, and resilient, in the face of [...] a shift away from protection and security towards resilience and adaptation to risk'<sup>975</sup>. For this reason, the development of resilient citizenship needs to be contextualised within a framework of deepening neoliberal governance and ultimately viewed as a tactic to further augment and enhance the adaptive capacities of the self-reliant, entrepreneurial neoliberal subject. As such, 'the shift in the correlation of development with security to resilience'<sup>976</sup> needs to be heeded because 'it tells us [something profound] about the nature of the subject that development is now aimed at producing'<sup>977</sup>. This is ultimately why a political economy perspective matters because all things considered, it reveals that the development of resilient citizenship is essentially tilted towards the sustenance of a political subjectivity capable of adapting to, rather than resisting, the conditions of capital and ultimately securing the longevity of neoliberal capitalism itself.

In effect, if 'the resilient subject is a subject which must permanently struggle to accommodate itself to the world'<sup>978</sup>, it is 'not a subject which can conceive of changing the world, its structure [or the] conditions of [its] possibility'<sup>979</sup>. Being resilient and taking 'care of the self'<sup>980</sup> is thus bound up in an 'ethics of responsibility'<sup>981</sup> designed to manage subjects in their unquestioning

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<sup>968</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>969</sup> Evans, B., & Reid, J., 'Dangerously Exposed: The Life and Death of the Resilient Subject', p. 85.

<sup>970</sup> *Ibid*, p. 95.

<sup>971</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 196.

<sup>972</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 74.

<sup>973</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.

<sup>974</sup> Sørensen, JS., & Söderbaum, F., 'Introduction: The End of the Development Security Nexus?', p. 15.

<sup>975</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>976</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 74.

<sup>977</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>978</sup> Evans, B., & Reid, J., 'Dangerously Exposed: The Life and Death of the Resilient Subject', p. 85.

<sup>979</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>980</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>981</sup> *Ibid*, p. 85

acceptance that life cannot be made better.<sup>982</sup> In fact by accepting the instability and insecurity of ‘the world [that] it lives in as a condition of [participating in] that world’<sup>983</sup>, the resilient subject ‘accepts the necessity [...] to change itself in correspondence with threats now presupposed as endemic’<sup>984</sup>. As such, the imperative for the subject to adapt to its environment, and indeed to keep on adapting, becomes a matter of individual responsibility and a choice stripped of all political defiance.<sup>985</sup> For Brad Evans and Julian Reid, ‘accepting the imperative to become resilience [ultimately] means sacrificing any political vision of a [better] world’<sup>986</sup> and this entails bending to a ‘reasoning that is not objective, but fully compatible with the neoliberal model of economy, its perception of risk and its emphasis on care for the self’<sup>987</sup>. The *responsibilisation of the self* is thus confirmed as a strategy of depoliticisation built on pathologies of vulnerability and conservative schemes of interventionist therapeutic responses.

Indeed, Evans and Reid are resolutely critical of the way pathologies of vulnerability and pathologies of unresilience are used to endorse the view that ‘the constitution of inner strength requires certain forms of intervention’<sup>988</sup>. To them, ‘intervention is always *the political* expressed as force [and whilst] such force [can] resonate solely within expressive realms of ideas or translate into the expressive realm of action’<sup>989</sup>, therapeutic forms of ‘intervention always [seem to require] acting upon life to change a particular predisposition [and] *violate* the [psyche] of the living in one way or another’<sup>990</sup>. In all sorts of ways, the therapeutic governance of vulnerability in the face of *experienced trauma* and the nascent therapeutic governance of resilient citizenship in the face of *trauma to come* simply do not accept life as it is.<sup>991</sup> The latter in particular attempts to manipulate life beyond life by ‘demanding open access to the soul of the living on account of the fact that continual manipulation is the only guarantee of survivability’<sup>992</sup>. As much as this ‘demands a strategic logic, which promotes continual adaptation and change in the subject’s ontological and epistemological status, [...] the interventionary premise of thinking about life beyond life still operates within a politically allegiant framework’<sup>993</sup>. It offers no enduring emancipatory opportunity and is - as touched

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<sup>982</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>983</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>984</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>985</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>986</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>987</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>988</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>989</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>990</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>991</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>993</sup> *Ibid.*

upon earlier - earthed in a 'deeply conservative mode of thinking [and an altogether] superficial humanitarianism'<sup>994</sup>.

### *Conclusions & Implications for the Remainder of the Thesis*

In summary, this chapter presents an overview of the conditions that have, to Pupavac at least, precipitated a therapeutic turn within recent macro-level development policy and rendered an individual's emotional state an acceptable aspect of good governance rather than a private matter of personal concern.<sup>995</sup> In doing so, it has sought to impress that Pupavac's work is invaluable to this thesis because it draws attention to the ways in which macro-development policy has noticeably begun to call upon the development subject to take responsibility for its own personal development in a way that then politically connects its sense of self to the welfare and security of its environment. The chapter's critical appraisal of the *securitisation of development* and the increasing *trauma talk* of humanitarian discourses has likewise shown that this extends to prioritising the personal life of the individual as locus of both problem and responsibility for change.<sup>996</sup> What is more, the chapter has sought to argue that the *pathologisation of the personal* and the *responsibilisation of the self* prevail as defining hallmarks of Pupavac's highly securitised conceptualisation of therapeutic governance and having pinpointed them, they have allowed this chapter to fully illuminate the existence of a 'deeply conservative mode of thinking'<sup>997</sup> that harnesses pathologies of vulnerability, pathologies of unresilience and conservative schemes of interventionist therapeutic responses to 'performatively produce [...] subjects'<sup>998</sup> in need of saving from themselves.

In short, all of this has revealed that Pupavac's highly securitised conceptualisation of therapeutic governance denotes the sweeping pathologisation of the development subject as vulnerable, unresilient and in need of external support to regulate its own emotions.<sup>999</sup> That said, this chapter has also tried to show that both the therapeutic governance of vulnerability in the face of *experienced trauma* and the nascent therapeutic governance of resilient citizenship in the face of *trauma to come* aggressively depoliticise the circumstances of peoples' lives and render psychological functionalism, or in other words the active adaptation to one's environment, a necessary requirement of life and being.<sup>1000</sup> This is a salient point because it

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<sup>994</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 189.

<sup>995</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.

<sup>996</sup> Cloud, DL. *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy*, p. 1 and Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 189.

<sup>997</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 189.

<sup>998</sup> Brassett, J., & Vaughan-Williams, N., 'Governing Traumatic Events', p. 184.

<sup>999</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Psychosocial Interventions and the Demoralization of Humanitarianism', p. 494.

<sup>1000</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Therapeutic Governance: the Politics of Psychosocial Intervention and Trauma Risk Management', p. 369.

implies that the development subject must become what this chapter would like to call a *self-reflexive subject-in-process* and practice an adaptive subjectivity that requires it to continually work upon its resilience, its fortitude and all manner of other psychologised virtues in circumstances of experienced or expected trauma.<sup>1001</sup> In practice, this means that the therapeutic governance of vulnerability in the face of *experienced trauma* and the nascent therapeutic governance of resilient citizenship in the face of *trauma to come* - in seeking to enact a kind of adaptive endeavouring and enduring state of becoming within those it deems in need of saving from themselves - replicates demands for a type of psychologised personhood similar to that identified in the previous chapter.

In many respects, this is why this chapter was so certain that it could use Pupavac's work to show that development is not immune to psychologisation and that it too has begun to ask the development subject to psychologise its relationship to the world and its own development. Beyond some very cursory remarks made earlier in this chapter about the psychologisation of security and development, this push to refashion the development subject into an adaptive, self-securing, resilient subject speaks to the production of self-governing citizen-subjects and the emergence of novel forms of prudentialism that encourage the subject to administer psychologised actuarial techniques upon itself as an everyday practice of its subjectivity.<sup>1002</sup> Interestingly, this chimes with something alluded to in this thesis' opening introduction where it was suggested that our modern hyper psychologised world now appears to value a very different kind of being that manifests itself in the endorsement of new kinds of habitus which turn all manner of psychological characteristics into matters of endeavour and enterprise. To put it briefly, it loosely speaks to something this thesis would like to call the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* which arguably transforms the subject's psyche into a 'site of enterprise'<sup>1003</sup> and which consequently expects it to practice a similar kind of prudentialism by administering highly personal therapeutic techniques of self-care to itself as an everyday practice of its subjectivity.<sup>1004</sup>

All in all, it seems that Pupavac's work, as well as other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance spotlights the emergence of a new kind of prudentialism that pushes responsibility back onto the development subject for events and circumstances far beyond its control. This chapter always set out to identify the best of Pupavac to invigorate this thesis' wider ambitions and whilst her highly securitised conceptualisation of therapeutic governance denotes the

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<sup>1001</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 195.

<sup>1002</sup> Sparke, MB., 'A Neoliberal Nexus: Economy, Security and Biopolitics on the Border', *Political Geography*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2006), p. 157 and Peters, M., 'Education, Enterprise Culture and the Entrepreneurial Self: A Foucauldian Perspective', *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2001), p. 60.

<sup>1003</sup> Gane, M., 'Foucault on Governmentality and Liberalism', *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 25, No. 7-8 (2008), p. 358.

<sup>1004</sup> Peters, M., 'Education, Enterprise Culture and the Entrepreneurial Self: A Foucauldian Perspective', p. 61.

sweeping pathologisation of the development subject as vulnerable, unresilient and in need of external support to regulate its own emotions; her thoughts on the displacement of a vision for a better world by a form of conservative interventionism that violates the psyche of the development subject so that it might then unquestionably absorb that responsibility is the insight this chapter wants to champion the most. Without doubt, this is why her work should be used to scrutinise development interventions which appear to conceive social transformation in terms of psychosocial change and which appear to extend new parameters of external intervention into formerly private matters of personal concern.<sup>1005</sup> The simple reason being that her work, together with that of others cited throughout this chapter, raises pertinent questions about the value our modern hyper psychologised world places in a kind of being that endorses new kinds of habitus which turn all manner of psychological characteristics into matters of endeavour and enterprise.

The implications of all of this are profound but at present they do not alter the ambitions this thesis has for the chapter to follow. For one, this chapter's introduction established that in order to determine whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance, the remainder of the thesis needed to look for signs of both the *pathologisation of the personal*, together with the *responsibilisation of the self*, within REFLECT's own epistemic and normative frameworks. That counsel remains unchanged but needless to say, the *therapeutic responsibilisation of personhood* which this chapter has since cautiously identified should further attune what is left of this thesis to the possibility that more is now being asked of the development subject in the spirit just described and that new kinds of habitus which turn all manner of psychological characteristics into matters of endeavour and enterprise might just be bringing new expectations to bear upon that subject. This chapter's critical review of Pupavac's work, and other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance has tentatively shown that it is beginning to do just that and the task that remains for the rest of this thesis is to build upon the ideas fleshed out here to assess what REFLECT is actually trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms.

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<sup>1005</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 173; Pupavac, V., 'War on the Couch: The Emotionology of the New International Security Paradigm', p. 150; and Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.



## Chapter Six

### The Psychologised Development Subject

#### *Introduction*

This chapter will draw upon the preceding two chapters to argue that something akin to the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* just described, which turns the development subject's psyche into a 'site of enterprise'<sup>1006</sup> and which asks that same subject to subsequently psychologise its relationship to the world and its development, is manifest within and even ratified by REFLECT. In the first instance, the chapter will assert that REFLECT draws upon eudaimonic understandings of well-being, together with a vision of socially transformative empowerment that imagines personal self-transformation as the conduit of broader social change, to articulate and validate its potential. In doing so, it will argue that a proclivity towards the kinds of habitus which turn psychological characteristics into matters of endeavour and enterprise is noticeable within the conceptual tensions and contradictions that define them as development concepts and that by virtue of their assimilation within REFLECT's epistemic and normative frameworks, it naturally follows that to some degree REFLECT psychologises the development subject and expects it to take responsibility for his or her own personal development in a way that then politically connects its sense of self to the development of its communities. The chapter does however stop short of categorically labelling REFLECT as a form of therapeutic governance and instead suggests that its conclusions should stand as an initial, but incomplete, assessment of what REFLECT appears to represent.

In the wake of the previous two chapters, it is certainly this thesis' contention that a prevailing Western social-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life has begun to manifest itself within development policy and practice. Building on that, this chapter intends to propose that more is now being asked of the development subject and that individual efforts to continually *make and re-make the self*, or in other words psychologised efforts to continually work upon one's own self-improvement - to essentially be a *self-reflexive subject-in-process* - are starting to determine the required parameters of a psychologised adaptive development subjectivity.<sup>1007</sup> However, contrary to Vanessa Pupavac's assertion that development has embraced a therapeutic turn and become a wholesale form of therapeutic governance focused on enhancing people's capacities, motivation and sense of well-being within their existing material circumstances, this chapter is keen to argue that the effects of this turn is by no means

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<sup>1006</sup> Gane, M., 'Foucault on Governmentality and Liberalism', p. 358.

<sup>1007</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 74.

as pronounced or as totalising as she suggests.<sup>1008</sup> Whilst this chapter certainly feels that recipients of development support are increasingly being asked to take responsibility for their own personal development in a way that then politically connects their sense of themselves to the development of their communities, it is not convinced that turning the development subject's psyche into a 'site of enterprise'<sup>1009</sup> justifies labelling specific development interventions or development per se as forms of therapeutic governance so decisively just yet.

This is important to acknowledge in light of the all-encompassing ambition to determine whether and to what REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance and should hopefully guard against presupposing anything for definite at this stage. Instead, this chapter would like to assert that a prevailing Western socio-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life is starting to crystallise within strands of development thinking barely touched upon by Pupavac's work, and other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance. By way of an example, it would like to show that some of the psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities described in the previous two chapters are discernable within two very specific conceptualisations of *well-being* and *empowerment* that REFLECT draws upon to validate and articulate its potential. Both, in their own specific way, conceptually enact the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified in the previous chapter and allude to how psychologised efforts to continually work upon one's own self-improvement - to essentially be a *self-reflexive subject-in-process* - are starting to determine the required parameters of a psychologised adaptive development subjectivity. This then is the point in the thesis where its critique of the tensions and contradictions within REFLECT's prevailing knowledge claims really kicks in as it begins to address what REFLECT is trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms.

In doing so, the chapter will make a clear statement about its own understanding of the psychologised development subject before the next chapter presents and discusses the findings of this thesis' supplementary empirical research. Moreover, it will attempt to locate the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* within wider debates about the ambitions of contemporary international development and partially detach it from the securitised notions of subjectivity intervention that Pupavac's conceptualisation of therapeutic governance denotes. To a certain degree, this will build upon and hopefully consolidate efforts begun in the previous chapter to bridge a qualitative gap between Pupavac's work and what this thesis perceives to be a growing interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within

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<sup>1008</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 173.

<sup>1009</sup> Gane, M., 'Foucault on Governmentality and Liberalism', p. 358.



other aspects of development policy and practice. What is more, this thesis is fundamentally interested in the extent to which REFLECT might embody a qualitatively different form of therapeutic governance to the one Pupavac is so resolutely critical of. Interrogating the conceptual tensions and contradictions inherent within the conceptualisations of *well-being* and *empowerment* that REFLECT draws upon to validate and articulate its potential will enable this thesis to question whether it similarly *pathologises the personal* and *responsibilises the self* and ultimately whether this thesis can spotlight an interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within other aspects of development policy and practice a little less pejoratively.

#### *Well-being and the Therapeutic Responsibilisation of Personhood*

Broadly speaking, this chapter is keen to assert that a prevailing Western socio-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life has started to crystallise around the promotion of well-being as a development concept and a new lens through which to attend to the social and economic inequalities that compound and reproduce poverty and underdevelopment. For starters, the concept's increasing prominence within debates about development has served to propel far more affective and subjective concerns, including a focus on emotions and emotional capabilities, into the spotlight and has in some respects delivered a fundamental challenge to the values and aspirations of standard development thinking. As will be discussed shortly, the concept is championed for its ability to 'recognise poverty and development in multidimensional terms'<sup>1010</sup> and for its potential to 'interrogate and challenge pathways of development'<sup>1011</sup> that remain focused, for the most part, on generating and accelerating economic growth. That said the concept is incredibly nebulous, notoriously tricky to define and remains subject to ongoing definitional reflection and scrutiny across a wide spectrum of development thinking, policy and practice. Indeed, if truth be told, efforts to conceptually synthesise the idea struggle to keep pace with the exponential acceleration of its use to – rhetorically at least - endorse and validate the potential of everything from small scale community development initiatives to multi-sectoral strategic aid programmes.<sup>1012</sup>

This is certainly true of REFLECT and in a number of ways, it implicitly and explicitly draws upon notions of well-being to articulate and validate its potential. As highlighted in chapter

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<sup>1010</sup> White, SC., 'Bringing Wellbeing into Development Practice', Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research Group Working Paper 09/50, University of Bath, August 2009, online – available to download at: <http://opus.bath.ac.uk/15944/>, p. 3.

<sup>1011</sup> McGregor, A., 'The Promotion of Global Wellbeing can drive the Development Agenda', article published in The Guardian newspaper on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2011, online – available to download at: <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/aug/08/global-wellbeing-drive-development-agenda>.

<sup>1012</sup> Gough, IJ., McGregor, A., & Camfield, L., 'Wellbeing in Developing Countries: Conceptual Foundations of the WED Programme', ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries Working Paper 19, September 2006, online – available to download at: <http://www.welldev.org.uk/research/workingpaperpdf/wed19.pdf>, p. 2.

two, it purposely draws upon the language of confidence and self-esteem - both common and tacitly supposed indicators of reported *emotional well-being* - to demonstrate how it affords participants a more positive and healthier sense of themselves and their communities, including a stronger sense of their capacity and capabilities as individual and collective actors to speak out, assert their rights, effect meaningful change and ultimately shape their own development. Indeed, the growing confidence of its participants is repeatedly mentioned in the REFLECT Mother Manual to make a statement about its impact and as a whole that document is insistent that 'confidence [...] can itself be transformative'<sup>1013</sup> and that 'people [actually] realise themselves in social transformation [...] not through more knowledge but through more confidence'<sup>1014</sup>. Yet whilst such statements articulate and validate REFLECT's potential, they tap into a particular eudaimonic understanding of well-being that arguably enacts the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified and described in the previous chapter. Somewhat surprisingly though, this eudaimonic understanding of well-being has received relatively little attention in the scrabble to synthesise the broad concept of well-being for the study of international development, most notably due to the comparative prominence of hedonic understandings

In fact, as this chapter will shortly argue, eudaimonic understandings of well-being that focus on 'the cultivation of personal potential, virtue, and meaningful living'<sup>1015</sup> have to a certain extent been eclipsed in development debates by hedonic understandings of well-being that focus on 'the experience of pleasure versus displeasure'<sup>1016</sup>. As much as it can, this chapter would like to redress this imbalance by bringing eudaimonic viewpoints into closer focus. However, beyond that, it wants to accentuate eudaimonic understandings of well-being for the simple reason that it believes that the psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities described in the previous two chapters have really only begun to crystallise around instances of development thinking, policy and practice that employ eudaimonic rather than hedonic interpretations of the idea. Indeed, the forthcoming evaluation of well-being's recent popularity as a development concept is designed, and included here within this chapter, to set out and advance that very argument. As such, the next section of this chapter will contextualise the current fervour for well-being in development thinking, policy and practice and then discuss the ways in which largely overlooked eudaimonic understandings of the idea appear to ask the development subject to immerse itself in the depths of its psychological self and in

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<sup>1013</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 1.

<sup>1014</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.

<sup>1015</sup> Steger, MF., & Samman, E., 'Assessing Meaning in Life on an International Scale: Psychometric Evidence for the Meaning in Life Questionnaire-Short Form among Chilean Households', *International Journal of Well-Being*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2012), p. 182.

<sup>1016</sup> Ryan, RM., & Deci, EL., 'On Happiness and Human Potential: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being', *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 52 (2001), p. 144.

doing so, endorse a subjectivity that psychologises the development subject and makes responsabilising demands of that subject to be a *self-reflexive subject-in-process*.<sup>1017</sup>

### *Well-Being as a Development Concept*

As intimated, well-being's increasing visibility as a development concept seems to reflect an ambition to 'recognise poverty and development in multidimensional terms'<sup>1018</sup> and to push on to 'open a discursive space in which new kinds of questions can be asked and new kinds of answers sought'<sup>1019</sup>. Similarly, for Sarah White, Stanley Gaines and Shreya Jha, the 'momentum [...] bringing well-being into public policy continues to build'<sup>1020</sup> as a post-2015 development framework emerges and as 'new perspectives on what matters and new ways to assess policy outcomes and their impact on people's lives'<sup>1021</sup> are sought. Unsurprisingly however, the concept (philosophically and in conversation with international development) suffers from a hefty dose of definitional multiplicity and a corresponding lack of clarity about what well-being actually is and how it might best be understood; not least because its meaning in everyday language and thought is clouded by ambiguous, tacitly held assumptions about happiness and human fulfilment that for many, including philosophers James Griffin and latterly Neera Badhwar, obscures lucidity and intelligibility.<sup>1022</sup> As James Copestake attests, 'profound differences in [understandings] of well-being as it could be, as it should be and as actually experienced'<sup>1023</sup> exist and suffice to say, his work contributes to a sense that today's debates about well-being's 'practical utility to development policy and practice'<sup>1024</sup> are characterised by a wide range of perspectives talking about fundamentally different understandings of the same concept.<sup>1025</sup>

With that in mind, this chapter's fleeting précis of well-being's recent renaissance as a development concept will try its best to navigate a complexity that in many respects implies a false infancy. In fact, describing well-being's recent emergence as a potent development concept in terms of a renaissance is deliberate. Indeed, like a lot of the ideas and concepts that litter contemporary development speak, their moments of heightened visibility tend to hide a

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<sup>1017</sup>Álvarez-Uria, F., Varela, J., & Gordo, Á., & Parra, P., 'Psychologised Life and Thought Styles', p. 11.

<sup>1018</sup> White, SC., 'Bringing Wellbeing into Development Practice', p. 3.

<sup>1019</sup> White, SC., Gaines, SO., & Jha, S., 'Beyond Subjective Well-Being: A Critical Review of the Stiglitz Report Approach to Subjective Perspectives on Quality of Life', *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (2012), p. 765.

<sup>1020</sup> *Ibid*, p. 763.

<sup>1021</sup> White, SC., Gaines, SO., Jha, S., & Marshall, N., 'Wellbeing Pathways Report: India Round One', June 2012, online – available to download at:

[http://www.wellbeingpathways.org/images/stories/pdfs/working\\_papers/indiatime1report.pdf](http://www.wellbeingpathways.org/images/stories/pdfs/working_papers/indiatime1report.pdf), p. 8.

<sup>1022</sup> Badhwar, NR. *Well-Being: Happiness in a Worthwhile Life* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014), pp. 10-11.

<sup>1023</sup> Copestake, J., 'Well-Being in International Development: What's New?', p. 577.

<sup>1024</sup> White, SC., Gaines, SO., Jha, S., & Marshall, N., 'Wellbeing Pathways Report: India Round One', p. 8.

<sup>1025</sup> Badhwar, NR. *Well-Being: Happiness in a Worthwhile Life*, pp. 10-11.

much older and much more entrenched lineage. To a certain extent, 'international development has always been concerned with human well-being [...] in some form, simply defining it more narrowly as rising income, falling poverty, need satisfaction, increased security or empowerment'<sup>1026</sup> with 'much development activity and analysis [proceeding] quite satisfactorily on the basis of one or other of these specifications'<sup>1027</sup>. More recently however, renascent 'visions and narratives of well-being'<sup>1028</sup>, together with a policy momentum driven by 'top-down discourses of development'<sup>1029</sup>, seem to have aroused fresh interest in what a more coherent conception of 'well-being can offer international development'<sup>1030</sup>. Therefore, whilst 'multilateral agencies striving towards a global post-Washington consensus that reconciles neo-liberal and human development perspectives'<sup>1031</sup> might profiteer from well-being as an idea that refreshes and reenergises international policy agendas, it should not be assumed that development thinking has never engaged with the idea before.

The upshot of this is that well-being is by no means a radically new concept in the study of international development and nor is it a straightforward idea that merely encapsulates a peripheral enthusiasm for making people happier. Its resurgent popularity is, to this thesis at least, politically motivated and much like the *responsibilisation of the self* dynamic talked about in the previous chapter, it might just be part of a highly political strategy to keep things exactly as they are. To demonstrate this, it is worth noting that the more singular idea of *subjective well-being* has in the main energised and led the resurgence of interest in well-being's conceptual and practical utility to development policy and practice.<sup>1032</sup> A definition of subjective well-being will be provided shortly to explore these points more fully but in the interests of advancing this thesis' argument, subjective well-being also deserves further scrutiny because it epitomises a hedonic, rather than a eudaimonic, understanding of well-being and can be used to explain why, as stated earlier, hedonic perspectives tend to dominate development debates at the expense of eudaimonic viewpoints. The next section of this chapter will consequently use subjective well-being as both a starting point for a more detailed review of the current fervour for well-being as a development concept and as a means to highlight and then redress the perceived predilection for hedonic understandings over eudaimonic ones.

### *Subjective Well-Being*

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<sup>1026</sup> Copestake, J., 'Well-Being in International Development: What's New?', p. 577.

<sup>1027</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1028</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 581.

<sup>1029</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1030</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 577.

<sup>1031</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1032</sup> White, SC., Gaines, SO., Jha, S., & Marshall, N., 'Wellbeing Pathways Report: India Round One', p. 8.

Subjective well-being, to convey a basic definition, relates to how a person evaluates his or her own life and according to Ruut Veenhoven is the 'degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his or her life as a whole in a favourable way'<sup>1033</sup> or in other words, 'how well the person likes the life he or she leads'<sup>1034</sup>. For the psychologist Edward Diener, who coined the term, it is solely concerned with the experience of the individual and their holistic, positive and negative, assessment of life rather than a narrow assessment of its separate, discrete parts.<sup>1035</sup> Moreover, it is ultimately based upon an understanding that 'people's experiences and evaluations of their lives are shaped by their perception of their environment and themselves in the context of what they value and aspire to'<sup>1036</sup>. As such, an assessment of one's own subjective well-being involves an affective, hedonic level evaluation of 'the pleasantness minus unpleasantness of one's[...] life'<sup>1037</sup> together with an information based, cognitive appraisal of 'the extent to which [one's] life so far measures up to [one's] expectations [of an] envisioned ideal life'<sup>1038</sup>. It is thus presented as a concept capable of drawing attention to 'the person in their relationships and surroundings'<sup>1039</sup> and one which ultimately assigns priority and credence to measures and narratives that can unpick 'how and why people experience their lives in positive [and negative] ways'<sup>1040</sup>.

Within development thinking, an interest in subjective well-being has been nourished by those keen to establish an 'integrated judgement'<sup>1041</sup> of peoples' lives beyond a surface level assessment of their 'material welfare and standards of living'<sup>1042, 1043</sup>. This, according to White

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<sup>1033</sup> Veenhoven, R. *Conditions of Happiness* (D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht, 1984), p. 22.

<sup>1034</sup> Diener, E., 'Assessing Subjective Well-Being: Progress and Opportunities', *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1994), p. 106.

<sup>1035</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1036</sup> Camfield, L., Crivello, G., & Woodhead, M., 'Wellbeing Research in Developing Countries: Reviewing the Role of Qualitative Methods', *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (2009), p. 8.

<sup>1037</sup> Diener, E., 'Assessing Subjective Well-Being: Progress and Opportunities', p. 108.

<sup>1038</sup> Van Hoorn, A., 'A Short Introduction To Subjective Well-Being: Its Measurement, Correlates And Policy Uses', a paper prepared for the international conference, *Is Happiness Measurable And What Do Those Measures Mean For Policy?*, on the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007, organised by the Bank of Italy, the Centre for Economic and International Studies at the University of Rome and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, online – available to download at: <http://www.oecd.org/site/worldforum06/38331839.pdf>, p. 2.

<sup>1039</sup> Camfield, L., Crivello, G., & Woodhead, M., 'Wellbeing Research in Developing Countries: Reviewing the Role of Qualitative Methods', p. 8.

<sup>1040</sup> Diener, E., 'Subjective Well-Being', *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (1984), p. 542.

<sup>1041</sup> Camfield, L., Crivello, G., & Woodhead, M., 'Wellbeing Research in Developing Countries: Reviewing the Role of Qualitative Methods', p. 8.

<sup>1042</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1043</sup> See for example: Carletto, G., & Zezza, A., 'Being Poor, Feeling Poorer: Objective and Subjective Measures of Welfare in Albania', *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 5 (2006), pp. 739-760; Copstake, J., & Camfield, L., 'Measuring Multidimensional Aspiration Gaps: A Means to Understanding Cultural Aspects of Poverty', *Development Policy Review*, Vol. 28, No. 5 (2010), pp. 617-633; Gough, I., & McGregor, A (Eds). *Wellbeing in Developing Countries: From Theory to Research* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007); Kingdon, GG., & Knight, J., 'Subjective Well-Being Poverty vs. Income Poverty & Capabilities Poverty', *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 7 (2006), pp. 1199-1224; Lokshin, M., Umaphathi, N., & Paternostro, S., 'Robustness of Subjective Welfare Analysis in a Poor Developing Country: Madagascar 2001', *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (2006), pp. 559-591; and McGillivray, M., & Markova, N., 'Global Inequality in Well-Being Dimensions', *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2010), pp. 371-378.

et al, has served to soften 'the boundaries between psychology and development studies in new and exciting ways and [has encouraged] actors in international development to take seriously subjective measures of quality of life'<sup>1044</sup>. For example, the final 2009 report of the *Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* was heralded as a welcome intervention and served to put 'subjective perspectives on the international political agenda'<sup>1045, 1046</sup>. Written by Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, the *Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi* report (as it became known) argued that well-being was much more than an a measure of 'people's economic resources and [equally related to] the non-economic aspects of their lives, including what they do and what they can do, how they feel and the [...] environment they live in'<sup>1047</sup>. It thus follows that instead of focusing 'on what [people] should have or be able to do'<sup>1048</sup>, subjective well-being emphasises the value in 'what people think and feel about what they have or do'<sup>1049</sup> and underscores a utility in trying to understand the 'subjective experiences [of people] in developing countries'<sup>1050</sup>.

Sadly, this interest in a more 'holistic, person-centred and dynamic understanding of people's lives'<sup>1051</sup> appears to have hit a sticking point or blockage around the topic of measurement and has predominantly spawned a technical focus on the selection of appropriate measures and indicators of subjective well-being for policymakers. Subjective well-being might have assumed a popular place within certain subsets of development literature but much of that is peppered with empirical chatter about the relative merits of 'multi-level modelling'<sup>1052</sup>, 'ideographic assessments of values, aspirations'<sup>1053</sup> and 'new statistical methods for examining [the] cross-cultural equivalence of psychological constructs'<sup>1054</sup>. Questions about its measurability almost certainly contribute to 'innovation in the collection and analysis of data [and help to] guide the actions of agencies involved in the delivery of [...] explicit development

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<sup>1044</sup> White, SC., Gaines, SO., & Jha, S., 'Beyond Subjective Well-Being: A Critical Review of the Stiglitz Report Approach to Subjective Perspectives on Quality of Life', p. 773.

<sup>1045</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1046</sup> For a broader analytical summary of the purposes and recommendations of this report, see: Noll, H-H., 'The Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report: Old Wine in New Skins? Views from a Social Indicators Perspective', *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 102 (2011), pp. 111-116, as well as Michalos, AC., 'What Did Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi Get Right and What Did They Get Wrong', *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 102 (2011), pp. 117-129.

<sup>1047</sup> Stiglitz, J., Sen, A., & Fitoussi, J., 'Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress', online – available to download at : [http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport\\_anglais.pdf](http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport_anglais.pdf), p. 11.

<sup>1048</sup> Camfield, L., Crivello, G., & Woodhead, M., 'Wellbeing Research in Developing Countries: Reviewing the Role of Qualitative Methods', p. 8.

<sup>1049</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>1050</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>1051</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1052</sup> Ryan, RM., & Deci, EL., 'On Happiness and Human Potential: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being', p. 143.

<sup>1053</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1054</sup> *Ibid.*

goals'<sup>1055</sup>, but politically speaking it represents a disconcerting kind of uncritical pragmatism. For example, the push to appropriately measure how people experience their lives in positive ways could quite easily invoke a sentiment that 'individuals with greater capacities for enjoyment or greater abilities for achievement in valuable domains of life may be better off even if they command fewer economic resources'<sup>1056</sup>. That then might conceivably legitimate a view that as long as people feel relatively comfortable about what they might not have or might not be able to do, their need for access to greater economic resources and subsequently their need for development assistance decreases.

These are of course hypothetical and quite rudimentary musings and should in no way detract from the fact that in many instances subjective well-being has supplied nutriment for structured interventions that have bettered people's lives.<sup>1057</sup> Nonetheless, they briefly point to the 'political uses to which [well-being] can be put'<sup>1058</sup> and highlight the need for a better grasp of how 'conceptualisations of well-being are [actually] constructed'<sup>1059</sup>. Not least because subjective well-being arguably embodies a retrospective, and politically conservative, empiricism more concerned with knowing, rather than immediately changing, how people feel about their lives. The first of these comments will be developed shortly but, either way, the second leads nicely into an area of well-being research that receives very little explicit attention in the development literature; namely the existence of hedonism and eudaimonism as 'two relatively distinct, yet overlapping, [philosophical and psychological] paradigms'<sup>1060</sup> of well-being.<sup>1061</sup> Returning to an earlier comment about the problem of different perspectives talking about fundamentally different understandings of the same concept, hedonism and eudaimonism can certainly begin to disentangle the opacity that surrounds development specific interpretations of well-being.<sup>1062</sup> Subjective well-being is just one example of

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<sup>1055</sup> Copestake, J., & Camfield, L., 'Measuring Multidimensional Aspiration Gaps: A Means to Understanding Cultural Aspects of Poverty', p. 628.

<sup>1056</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1057</sup> Ryan, RM., & Deci, EL., 'On Happiness and Human Potential: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being', p. 161.

<sup>1058</sup> White, SC., Gaines, SO., & Jha, S., 'Beyond Subjective Well-Being: A Critical Review of the Stiglitz Report Approach to Subjective Perspectives on Quality of Life', p. 769.

<sup>1059</sup> Camfield, L., Crivello, G., & Woodhead, M., 'Wellbeing Research in Developing Countries: Reviewing the Role of Qualitative Methods', p. 7.

<sup>1060</sup> Ryan, RM., & Deci, EL., 'On Happiness and Human Potential: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being', pp. 142-143.

<sup>1061</sup> For additional psychological research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, see: Cowen, EL., 'In Pursuit of Wellness', *American Psychology*, Vol. 46 (1991), pp. 404-408; Deci, EL., & Ryan, RM., 'The What and Why of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behaviour', *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 11 (2000), pp. 227-268; Kahneman, D., Diener, E., & Schwartz, N (Eds). *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology* (Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1999); Ryan, RM., & Deci, EL., 'Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development and Well-Being', *American Psychology*, Vol. 55 (2000), pp. 68-78; Ryff, CD., 'Happiness is Everything, or Is It? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 57 (1989), pp. 1069-1081; and Ryff, CD., & Keyes, CLM., 'The Structure of Psychological Well-Being Revisited', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (1995), pp. 719-727.

<sup>1062</sup> Badhwar, NR. *Well-Being: Happiness in a Worthwhile Life*, pp. 10-11.

development's engagement with the concept and so in the interests of advancing an argument that only eudaimonic understandings of well-being catalyse a development subjectivity that psychologises and makes responsabilising demands of an idealised *self-reflexive subject-in-process*, other understandings warrant equal visibility.

### *Hedonic and Eudaimonic Paradigms of Well-Being*

Building on the work of psychologists Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, the initial thing to settle is that the idea of subjective well-being hinges on a hedonic view of revealed 'pleasure or happiness'<sup>1063</sup> and 'concerns the experience of pleasure versus displeasure broadly construed to include all judgments about the good/bad elements of life'<sup>1064</sup>. On the flip side, a eudaimonic view rejects the experience of pleasure or enjoyment as a measure of well-being and 'places greater emphasis on the cultivation of personal potential, virtue, and meaningful living'<sup>1065</sup>; enlisting 'concepts such as autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, competence and mastery, belongingness and positive relatedness'<sup>1066</sup> as its constituent attributes.<sup>1067</sup> So whereas, hedonism legitimates a concept like subjective well-being that equates well-being with pleasure and happiness, eudaimonism equates well-being with a type of living that enables and represents the realisation of one's true potential and accordingly, tries to specify what it means to actualise the self, how that can be accomplished and moreover how needs like autonomy, competence and relatedness can be fulfilled for psychological growth.<sup>1068</sup> Both remain remarkably underused as explanatory concepts within development specific debates about well-being 'but regardless of what is [not said about them], subjective well-being [philosophically and most definitely in conversation with international development] has reigned as the primary index of well-being [...] with [most employing it] as a major outcome variable'<sup>1069</sup> in their research.<sup>1070</sup>

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<sup>1063</sup> Ryan, RM., & Deci, EL., 'On Happiness and Human Potential: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being', p. 143.

<sup>1064</sup> *Ibid*, p. 144.

<sup>1065</sup> Steger, MF., & Samman, E., 'Assessing Meaning in Life on an International Scale: Psychometric Evidence for the Meaning in Life Questionnaire-Short Form among Chilean Households', p. 182.

<sup>1066</sup> *Ibid*, p. 182-183.

<sup>1067</sup> Here it is important to note that Richard Ryan and Edward Deci 'wholly concur that well-being consists in [...] being fully functioning, rather than simply attaining desires [and agree that] the content of being eudaimonic [involves] being autonomous, competent and related'. They also theorize 'that these contents are the principal factors that foster well-being [and do not] define well-being'. See: Ryan, RM., & Deci, EL., 'On Happiness and Human Potential: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being', pp. 146-147.

<sup>1068</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 144-146.

<sup>1069</sup> *Ibid*, p. 145.

<sup>1070</sup> For a rare example of development specific literature that does touch on both hedonism and eudaimonism, see: Devine, J., Camfield, L., & Gough, I., 'Autonomy or Dependence - Or Both? Perspectives from Bangladesh', Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research Group Working Paper 13, University of Bath, January 2006, online - available to download at: <http://opus.bath.ac.uk/9735/>.



As much as it can, this chapter would like to contribute to redressing this imbalance by accentuating and bringing eudaimonic understandings to the forefront; not least because, as previously stated, it believes that the psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities described in the previous chapter have really only begun to crystallise around instances of development thinking, policy and practice that expressly employ eudaimonic rather than hedonic understandings of well-being. Indeed, it feels that the first tentative signs of a subjectivity that psychologises the development subject and makes responsabilising demands of that subject to be an idealised *self-reflexive subject-in-process* can be found within pockets of development orientated eudaimonic thinking. With that in mind, it needs to be stressed that - perhaps more than anywhere - clear traces of eudaimonism can be found within Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum's 'converged [...] capability ethic'<sup>1071</sup>. Most notably because they each discuss 'well-being in terms of [the] objective conditions that enable individual flourishing [and] facilitate the experience of living a life that is felt to be worthwhile'<sup>1072,1073</sup>. For Sen and later Nussbaum, the 'means to wellbeing'<sup>1074</sup> or the 'actual living that people manage to achieve with the means available to them'<sup>1075</sup> is paramount and much like eudaimonic conceptions of well-being, they focus 'upon the things that people [have and] do in their lives that have the potential to establish and enhance their well-being'<sup>1076</sup>.

Fittingly, both are celebrated for 'constructing a new and important ethic for international development'<sup>1077</sup> concerned with the 'expansion of basic human capabilities and the promotion of valuable human functioning'<sup>1078</sup>. To elaborate, functionings and capabilities, as written about by Sen, are the respective 'beings and doings [an individual] can achieve'<sup>1079</sup> and 'the set of alternative possible [...] functionings open to an individual'<sup>1080</sup> that underpin the material

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<sup>1071</sup> Crocker, DA., 'Functioning and Capability: The Foundations of Sen's and Nussbaum's Development Ethic', *Political Theory*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (1992), p. 585.

<sup>1072</sup> Sointu, E., 'The Rise of an Ideal: Tracing Changing Discourses on Wellbeing', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (2005), p. 256.

<sup>1073</sup> Here Nussbaum is far more prescriptive than Sen and argues that 'every society ought to guarantee its citizens a threshold level of the following capabilities' including: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; and control over one's environment. See: Nussbaum, MC. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007), pp. 416-418.

<sup>1074</sup> King, P., 'The Concept of Wellbeing and its Application in a Study of Ageing in Aotearoa New Zealand', *Enhancing Wellbeing in an Ageing Society Working Paper 8* (a programme of research funded by Foundation for Research Science and Technology; conducted by the Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit and the Population Studies Centre at the University of Waikato, New Zealand), March 2007, available to download here: <http://www.ewas.net.nz/Publications/filesEWAS/Conceptualising%20wellbeing.pdf>, p. 9.

<sup>1075</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>1076</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>1077</sup> Crocker, DA., 'Functioning and Capability: The Foundations of Sen's and Nussbaum's Development Ethic', p. 584.

<sup>1078</sup> *Ibid*, p. 585.

<sup>1079</sup> Clark, DA., 'Sen's Capability Approach and the Many Spaces of Human Well-Being', *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 8 (2005), p. 1343.

<sup>1080</sup> Gasper, D., 'Sen's Capability Approach and Nussbaum's Capabilities Ethic', *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1997), p. 290.

and mental basis of well-being and the 'ability to live well across all spheres of life'<sup>1081</sup>. In slight contrast, Nussbaum's work (often viewed as a thicker, neo-Aristotelian extension of Sen's capability approach) itemises an aspirational threshold of socially guaranteed human capabilities that 'centres on the functioning and [...] flourishing of individuals'<sup>1082</sup> and which, quite strikingly, 'rejects a dichotomy between emotions and reason'<sup>1083</sup> as the basis of this functioning and flourishing. In fact, Nussbaum's own understanding of eudaimonism is clearly set out in her now seminal *Upheavals of Thought* and she writes that the intelligence of emotions and their eudaimonistic significance as 'forms of evaluative judgement that ascribe to certain things and persons [...] great importance for the person's own flourishing'<sup>1084</sup> help 'link us to items that we regard as important for our well-being'<sup>1085</sup>. Suffice to say, Nussbaum's eudaimonism arguably psychologises the subject in clear and profound ways and for this reason alone, her work is of real value to this chapter and the wider thesis.

Beyond that, the clear eudaimonic understanding of well-being that Nussbaum's work invokes would appear to connect, or at the very least align, with some of the rhetoric that this thesis has previously argued typifies our modern hyper psychologised world.<sup>1086</sup> Her theory of central human capabilities for example is often heavily critiqued for its essentialist liberal individualism and is levied by Des Gasper, in his own comparative appraisal of Sen's capability approach and Nussbaum's capability ethics, as a likely philosophy of individualism. Not least because in concentrating on the functioning and flourishing of the individual, Nussbaum locates recognisable humanity in its separate sentience, personality, identity and critical autonomy.<sup>1087</sup> In fact, as Gasper writes, her especially strong insistence on an individual's critical autonomy, namely 'being able to form [and not simply adopt or assimilate] a conception of [a] good [life] and engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life'<sup>1088</sup> attracts controversy from communitarian critics and cultural theorists alike for this very reason.<sup>1089</sup> This is perhaps a crude and unrefined piece of analysis but given all that this thesis has so far said on the changing form of subjectivity, Nussbaum's capability ethics with its

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<sup>1081</sup> Clark, DA., 'Sen's Capability Approach and the Many Spaces of Human Well-Being', p. 1340.

<sup>1082</sup> Gasper, D., 'Sen's Capability Approach and Nussbaum's Capabilities Ethic', p. 298.

<sup>1083</sup> *Ibid*, p. 299.

<sup>1084</sup> Nussbaum, MC. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, p. 22.

<sup>1085</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43.

<sup>1086</sup> See: Vikander, N., 'Kahneman's Objective Happiness and Sen's Capabilities: a Critical Comparison', paper originally written for the Tinbergen MPhil course Recent History of Economic Thought, March 2007, online - available to download at: <http://www.tinbergen.nl/~vikander/KahnemanSen.pdf>, p. 4.

<sup>1087</sup> Gasper, D., 'Sen's Capability Approach and Nussbaum's Capabilities Ethic', p. 298.

<sup>1088</sup> Nussbaum, MC. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, p. 417.

<sup>1089</sup> Gasper, D., 'Sen's Capability Approach and Nussbaum's Capabilities Ethic', p. 292.

eudaimonic promotion of personal potential and a 'sense of competency and mastery'<sup>1090</sup> over life smacks of the 'rise of the self as the primary agent in the creation of personal well-being'<sup>1091</sup>.

Read through Richard Ryan and Edward Deci's or Carol Ryff and Burton Singer's suggested domains for meaningful eudaimonic living for example and it is clear to see that a rhetorical connection lies in the use of words like *autonomy*, *personal growth*, *self-acceptance*, *life purpose*, *competence* and *mastery*.<sup>1092</sup> Pretty quickly, the cultural benchmark of reflexive selfhood and the specific identity of psychologised personhood that chapter four carefully sought to locate and contextualise within recent sociological history appears.<sup>1093</sup> Indeed, much like Nussbaum's work, Ryff and Singer's statement that 'human well-being is ultimately an issue of engagement in living'<sup>1094</sup> speaks to an ontological concept of the individual which is not only autonomous, self-determined, independent and responsible but which also contains within itself the main determinants of his or her behaviour and destiny.<sup>1095</sup> Once more, the psychologised 'narrative of self-improvement, of overcoming oneself, in which emotions and relations are things to be worked at, fashioned according to a master plan of oneself, following a clear model of self-realisation'<sup>1096</sup> emerges as the means to 'achieve socially situated forms of eudaimonia'<sup>1097</sup>. In fact, the preoccupation with the world of the self, the retraction inwards in search of systems of meaning, an ethic of self-actualisation configured with practices of self-improvement and a conception of self that prioritises notions of self-reflexivity are all there and alluded to in the psychologisation of the subject that Nussbaum's work palpably enacts.

In light of what was outlined in the previous chapter, this should really stand as a warning to carefully scrutinise what 'characteristics of contemporary subjectivity [...] are reproduced'<sup>1098</sup> by the notions of well-being that development thinking, policy and practice might champion and adopt; particularly when the humanistic psychology of both Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow infuses conceptions of eudaimonic well-being with ideas about fully functioning

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<sup>1090</sup> See: Ryan, RM., & Deci, EL., 'On Happiness and Human Potential: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being', pp. 141-166; Ryff, CD., & Singer, B., 'The Contours of Positive Human Health', *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 9 (1998), pp. 1-28; and Steger, MF., & Samman, E., 'Assessing Meaning in Life on an International Scale: Psychometric Evidence for the Meaning in Life Questionnaire-Short Form among Chilean Households', p. 183.

<sup>1091</sup> Sointu, E., 'The Rise of an Ideal: Tracing Changing Discourses on Wellbeing', p. 263.

<sup>1092</sup> Or as quoted: 'autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, competence and mastery, belongingness and positive relatedness'. See: Steger, MF., & Samman, E., 'Assessing Meaning in Life on an International Scale: Psychometric Evidence for the Meaning in Life Questionnaire-Short Form among Chilean Households', pp. 182-183.

<sup>1093</sup> Illouz, E., 'Who Will Care for the Caretaker's Daughter? Toward a Sociology of Happiness in the Era of Reflexive Modernity', p. 59.

<sup>1094</sup> Ryff, CD., & Singer, B., 'The Contours of Positive Human Health', p. 2.

<sup>1095</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', pp.46-56.

<sup>1096</sup> Illouz, E., 'Who Will Care for the Caretaker's Daughter? Toward a Sociology of Happiness in the Era of Reflexive Modernity', p. 58.

<sup>1097</sup> *Ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>1098</sup> Sointu, E., 'The Rise of an Ideal: Tracing Changing Discourses on Wellbeing', p. 256.

personhood.<sup>1099</sup> Whilst their separate philosophies of self-actualisation (defined by Rogers as the ‘natural inclination [...] toward engaging in activities consistent with self-fulfilment’<sup>1100</sup> and by Maslow as the ‘ongoing actualisation of potentials, capacities and talents’<sup>1101</sup>) might talk about self-reflexivity as a marker of ‘individuals who are fully functioning’<sup>1102</sup>; their work inadvertently establishes a benchmark of human adequacy that in delineating a specific identity of psychologised personhood effectively shuts down, excludes and derides other ways of being as sub-optimal functioning.<sup>1103</sup> Together this chimes with the supposition that more is now being asked of the development subject and that individual efforts to continually *make and re-make the self*, or in other words psychologised efforts to continually work upon one’s own self-improvement - to essentially be a *self-reflexive subject-in-process* - might be influencing the parameters of an aspirational development subjectivity. As such, it is vitally important to consider what well-being in conversation with development may have come to imply if reflexive self-actualisation, and the valorisation of a constant process of becoming, has surreptitiously become its defining feature.

#### *Implications for Understanding REFLECT*

All in all, this chapter feels that the tentative signs of a subjectivity that psychologises the development subject and which makes responsabilising demands of that subject to be an idealised *self-reflexive subject-in-process* can be found within pockets of development orientated eudaimonic thinking. In terms of understanding REFLECT, this is an important insight because, as a ‘single integrated process [that uses literacy acquisition as a springboard for the development of] sustained capabilities that can be practically used in people’s everyday lives’<sup>1104</sup>, it notably assimilates and employs the eudaimonic philosophy of Sen and Nussbaum’s ‘converged [...] capability ethic’<sup>1105</sup>. Indeed, as discussed in chapter two,

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<sup>1099</sup> See: Fiske, S., Gilbert, D.T., & Lindzey, G (Eds). *Handbook of Social Psychology* (John Wiley & Sons Inc, New Jersey, Fifth Edition 2010), p. 673; and Pawelski, J.O., & Moores, DJ (Eds). *The Eudaimonic Turn: Well-Being in Literary Studies* (Farleigh Dickinson University Press, United Kingdom, 2013), p. 21.

<sup>1100</sup> Waterman, A.S., ‘Eudaimonic Identity Theory: Identity as Self-Discovery’, in Schwartz, S., Luyckz, K., & Vignoles, V.L (Eds). *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research: Structures and Processes* (Springer, New York, Dordrecht, Heidelberg & London, 2011), p. 362.

<sup>1101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1103</sup> For a fuller exploration of Maslow’s conception of self-actualisation as the ongoing actualisation of potentials, capacities and talents, as the fulfilment of mission (or call, fate, destiny or vocation), as a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person’s intrinsic nature, and as an increasing trend toward unity, integration, or synergy within the person see: Maslow, A.H. *Towards a Psychology of Being* (Van Nostrand, Princeton, New Jersey, 1968); whilst for a fuller exploration of Roger’s conception of self-actualisation as the natural inclination on the part of individuals who are fully functioning toward engaging in activities consistent with self-fulfilment see: Rogers, C., ‘A Theory of Therapy, Personality and Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the Client Centred Framework’, in Koch, S (Ed). *Psychology: A Study of a Science/Formulations of the Person and the Social Context* (McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, Toronto & London, 1959), pp. 184-256.

<sup>1104</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 74.

<sup>1105</sup> Crocker, D.A., ‘Functioning and Capability: The Foundations of Sen’s and Nussbaum’s Development Ethic’, p. 585.

REFLECT's promotion of a participatory process of literacy acquisition that seeks to 'generate literacy from within the community itself'<sup>1106</sup> through a 'shared analysis of *their* problems'<sup>1107</sup> clearly strives to enable those communities to shape and determine the kind of life they value.<sup>1108</sup> As described in that earlier chapter, REFLECT's overriding pedagogic philosophy asserts that 'literacy, [if] acquired in context sensitive ways, can be one of the capabilities which enables [people and communities] to challenge and to change constraining social realities and [...] move towards development as freedom'<sup>1109</sup>. It thus looks to the 'objective conditions that [...] facilitate the experience of living a life that is felt to be worthwhile'<sup>1110</sup> for those it engages and sees the type of fluid critical, literacy practice it hopes to enact as a means 'to enhance both capability and agency'<sup>1111</sup> in its participant communities.

Furthermore, it invests significant faith and optimism in its participants' developmental potential and speaks to an agenda of aspiration, improvement and betterment for the realisation of contextually situated, active participatory citizenship. As highlighted repeatedly throughout this thesis, REFLECT's celebration of the transformatory power of confidence and self-esteem is striking; and the Mother Manual's repeated emphasis of participants *growing, gaining, building, and developing* confidence and self-esteem on the way to developing capabilities of the critically autonomous kind, would certainly appear to typify, what Nussbaum would call, the means to 'achieve socially situated forms of eudaimonia'<sup>1112</sup>. By way of a comparison, REFLECT seems to attribute eudaimonic significance to confidence and self-esteem as features of a selfhood that in due course afford participants a stronger sense of their capacity and capabilities as individual and collective actors to speak out, assert their rights, effect meaningful change and ultimately shape their own development.<sup>1113</sup> In many ways, it would appear to seek to supply nutriment for participants to thrive and grow psychologically in congruence with an ideal of 'well-being conceived in terms of healthy, congruent and vital functioning'<sup>1114</sup>. That said, any eudaimonic alignment with a concept of well-being that relies on 'assessments of self-actualisation, vitality, and mental health'<sup>1115</sup> is worrisome if the

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<sup>1106</sup> Waddington, M., & Mohan, G., 'Failing Forward: Going Beyond PRA and Imposed Forms of Participation', p. 223.

<sup>1107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1108</sup> Sen, A. *Development as Freedom* (Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York, 1999), p. 87.

<sup>1109</sup> Robinson, C., 'Introduction', in Aksornkool, N (Ed). *Literacy as Freedom: A UNESCO Roundtable* (UNESCO Literacy and Non-Formal Education Section, Division of Basic Education, Paris, 2003), p. 13.

<sup>1110</sup> Sointu, E., 'The Rise of an Ideal: Tracing Changing Discourses on Wellbeing', p. 256.

<sup>1111</sup> Robinson, C., 'Introduction', p. 11.

<sup>1112</sup> Illouz, E., 'Who Will Care for the Caretaker's Daughter? Toward a Sociology of Happiness in the Era of Reflexive Modernity', p. 54.

<sup>1113</sup> Ryff, CD., & Singer, B., 'The Contours of Positive Human Health', pp. 9- 10.

<sup>1114</sup> Ryan, RM., & Deci, EL., 'On Happiness and Human Potential: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being', p. 147.

<sup>1115</sup> *Ibid.*

expectation for participants to live up to their authentic internal potential and become active *citizen-subjects* stems from the presumption of some specified psychological lack.

Of course, it would be a little premature to conclude that REFLECT pathologises the starting psychology of its participants; let alone psychologises and makes responsabilising demands of the development subject to be an idealised *self-reflexive and self-actualising subject-in-process* on the basis of these suggested eudaimonic leanings alone. This chapter certainly feels that the aforementioned eudaimonic undertones render that supposition credible; but it remains to be seen whether this presumption can actually be authenticated. This is a task for the chapter to follow and one that will need to consider whether REFLECT enacts the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* on the basis of the findings of this thesis' primary research as well. By assimilating a capability approach for the betterment of people's lives, REFLECT is certainly answerable to the charge that it psychologises the subject; however, in light of a similar reliance on a vision of transformatory empowerment to articulate and validate its potential, this arraignment cannot fully be answered without due consideration of the extent to which psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities crystallise around the idea of empowerment too. As intimated earlier, specific conceptualisations of both well-being and empowerment arguably enact the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified in the previous chapter and both need to be considered to help unpick what REFLECT is trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms.

#### *Empowerment and the Therapeutic Responsibilisation of Personhood*

This chapter is confident in its assertion that the psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities identified and described in the previous two chapters have started to crystallise alongside development's growing eudaimonic interest in Sen and Nussbaum's converged capability ethic. In seeking to redress a tendency for development thinking, policy and practice to concentrate on hedonic measures of subjective well-being at the expense of eudaimonic viewpoints, it has endeavoured to animate an alternative understanding of well-being that values psychological growth and a type of living that enables people to realise their personal potential much more visibly. Through this, it has sought to substantiate the claim that psychologised efforts to continually work upon one's own self-improvement are now valued as intrinsic characteristics of an idealised development subjectivity. However, it would be foolhardy to deduce that this alone explains why the *making of the self* and with it the creation of the *self-reflexive and self-actualising subject in process* is ever increasingly prized without remark or reference to the concept of empowerment as well. If truth be told, this chapter's

argument that development increasingly speaks to a practice of personhood that calls upon the development subject to take responsibility for its own personal development in a way that then politically connects its sense of self to the economic and social development of its environment would be much the poorer for it.

Comparatively, this chapter is insistent that comparable psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities have also started to crystallise around the ongoing promotion of empowerment as the theoretical foundation for a much more decentralised and bottom up approach to development.<sup>1116</sup> All the same, such a statement probably says very little given that empowerment - lamented by Rosalind Eyben and Rebecca Napier-Moore as a 'development fuzzword'<sup>1117</sup> - is quite possibly one of the most commonly cited and loved concepts in the study of international development and consequently employed to endorse countless numbers of practices designed to challenge and supposedly transform the way development is done.<sup>1118</sup> As Eleanor Jupp concedes, this fuzzy ubiquity nonetheless means that empowerment's meaning is frequently interpreted and mobilised in 'very different and often contradictory [ways]' <sup>1119</sup> ; leading to what Eyben and Napier-Moore discern as tensions between 'instrumental meanings of empowerment associated with efficiency and growth [and] more socially transformative meanings associated with rights and collective action' <sup>1120</sup>. In fact, having looked upon empowerment's conceptual fuzziness with a critical eye, Eyben and Napier-Moore relay a sensitivity to the crowding out of socially transformative meanings of empowerment that aspire to empower people to become agents of social change through 'their involvement in socially and politically relevant actions'<sup>1121</sup> by more instrumentalist notions that aspire to empower people to be 'more effective wealth producers'<sup>1122</sup> for the benefit of the 'hegemonic [growth efficiency] interests of [...] state and [...] market'<sup>1123</sup>.

Given these contradictory meanings, it is important to affirm that this chapter is predominantly interested in the extent to which a focus on emotions and emotional capabilities are drawn upon to empower people and communities to become agents of social change

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<sup>1116</sup> See: Friedmann, J. *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development* (Blackwell, Cambridge MA & Oxford UK, 1992).

<sup>1117</sup> Eyben, R., & Napier-Moore, R., 'Choosing Words with Care? Shifting Meanings of Women's Empowerment in International Development', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2009), p. 287.

<sup>1118</sup> The Pathways of Women's Empowerment Research Programme Consortium, 'Empowerment: A Journey Not a Destination', online - available to download at: <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/SynthesisReport12DecR.pdf>, p. 6.

<sup>1119</sup> Jupp, E., 'Participation, Local Knowledge and Empowerment: Researching Public Space with Young People', *Environment & Planning A*, Vol. 39 (2007), p. 2833.

<sup>1120</sup> Eyben, R., & Napier-Moore, R., 'Choosing Words with Care? Shifting Meanings of Women's Empowerment in International Development', p. 285.

<sup>1121</sup> Friedmann, J. *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*, p. 33.

<sup>1122</sup> Eyben, R., & Napier-Moore, R., 'Choosing Words with Care? Shifting Meanings of Women's Empowerment in International Development', p. 298.

<sup>1123</sup> Mohan, G., & Stokke, K., 'Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism', p. 249.

themselves. Unlike instrumentalist meanings of empowerment, socially transformative notions conceive 'social justice in terms of people developing the ability to organise and influence the direction of social change'<sup>1124</sup> and attach importance to empowering people to assert their rights, exercise their own decision making powers and ultimately define their own development.<sup>1125</sup> Beyond this, socially transformative meanings tend to see empowerment as a process of evolving personal, interpersonal and political consciousness that is realised, in part, by the self and accordingly has both internal, psychic and external, social dimensions.<sup>1126</sup> Picking up on this latter point, the remainder of this chapter is keen to reveal and animate a suspicion that socially transformative meanings of empowerment celebrate personal change as a necessary condition of transformatory empowerment and in doing so levy self-transformation as the well-spring of broader social change.<sup>1127</sup> This, to this chapter at least, lends credence to the recurring idea that psychologised efforts to continually work upon one's own self-improvement - to essentially be a *self-reflexive and even self-actualising subject-in-process* - are starting to determine the required parameters of a psychologised adaptive development subjectivity.

With that in mind, the remainder of this chapter will highlight how demands of the psychologising, self-transformatory kind are increasingly being made of the *empowerable subject* by socially transformative visions of empowerment. To this chapter, this is unmistakable evidence of the crystallisation of psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities within an aspect of development thinking, policy and practice that commands 'almost unimpeachable moral authority'<sup>1128</sup>. Furthermore, in the interests of analysing what REFLECT is trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms, this exploration of socially transformative meanings of empowerment is crucially important. REFLECT itself draws upon a socially transformatory conceptualisation of empowerment to articulate and validate its potential and his thesis has from the very beginning sensed that it correlates psychosocial change with broader social transformation. By implication, this intimates that socially transformative meanings of empowerment enact a practice of personhood that calls upon the

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<sup>1124</sup> Eyben, R., & Napier-Moore, R., 'Choosing Words with Care? Shifting Meanings of Women's Empowerment in International Development', p. 285.

<sup>1125</sup> Waddington, M., & Mohan, G., 'Failing Forward: Going Beyond PRA and Imposed Forms of Participation', pp. 220-221.

<sup>1126</sup> See: Gutiérrez, LM., 'Understanding the Empowerment Process: Does Consciousness Make a Difference?', *Social Work Research*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1995), pp. 229-230; and Nawaz, F., 'Power, Empowerment and Participatory Development: Conceptual Linkages', *Open Journal of Social Science Research*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2013), p. 29.

<sup>1127</sup> See: Williams, G., 'Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and (Re)Politicisation', p. 92; and Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', *Geoforum*, Vol. 36 (2005), p. 320.

<sup>1128</sup> Cornwall, A., & Brock, K., 'What Do Buzzwords do for Development Policy? A Critical Look at Participation, Empowerment and Poverty Reduction', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 7 (2005), p. 1043.



subject to take responsibility for its own personal development in a way that then politically connects its sense of self to the development of its environment. This subsequently warrants the same level of scrutiny applied to the concept of well-being and in doing so, will help this chapter determine if it too endorses a subjectivity that psychologises the development subject and makes responsabilising demands of that subject to be a *self-reflexive subject-in-process*.

#### *Empowerment as a Development Concept*

In the first instance, it is perhaps worth reiterating that empowerment is increasingly referred to as a tired, and heavily abused, colloquial buzzword that has become a victim of its own popularity as a development concept.<sup>1129</sup> It is notorious for its ubiquity but in light of persistently positive social connotations, it still commands significant moral authority as an idea that pertains to a 'mechanism by which people, organisations and communities gain mastery over their affairs'<sup>1130</sup> or in greater detail, a 'developmental process through which marginalised or oppressed individuals and groups [can] gain greater control over their lives and environment, acquire valued resources and basic rights, and achieve important life goals and reduced societal marginalisation'<sup>1131</sup>. As Kenneth Maton writes, this latter definition is useful because it 'includes both process and outcome components'<sup>1132</sup>; since one the one hand, it 'views empowerment as a participatory-developmental process occurring over time, involving active and sustained engagement, and resulting in growth in awareness and capacity'<sup>1133</sup> whilst on the other, it alludes to 'various empowerment outcomes [...] including political, economic and psychological empowerment [and the possibility] of enhanced control, influence and capacity in one or more of these domains [at] both [an] individual and collective'<sup>1134</sup> level. In fact, much like eudaimonic understandings of empowerment, it alludes to the fact that the possibility and potential for development resides within both individuals and communities themselves.

To return to Eyben and Napier-Moore's disparagement of empowerment as a 'development fuzzword'<sup>1135</sup> however, this meaning is by no means stable and as Cornwall and Brock lament, it frequently 'appears in diluted form neutralising [this] original emphasis on building

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<sup>1129</sup> Toomey, AH., 'Empowerment and Disempowerment in Community Development Practice: Eight Roles Practitioners Play', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2011), pp. 182-183; and Christens, BJ., 'Targeting Empowerment in Community Development: A Community Psychology Approach to Enhancing Local Power and Well-Being', p. 541.

<sup>1130</sup> *Ibid*, p. 542.

<sup>1131</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1132</sup> Maton, KL., 'Empowering Community Settings: Agents of Individual Development, Community Betterment and Positive Social Change', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 41, Nos. 1-2 (2008), p. 5.

<sup>1133</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1134</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1135</sup> Eyben, R., & Napier-Moore, R., 'Choosing Words with Care? Shifting Meanings of Women's Empowerment in International Development', p. 287.

personal and collective power in the struggle for a more just and equitable world'<sup>1136</sup>. This is probably because empowerment is something of a 'warmly persuasive and fulsomely positive'<sup>1137</sup> idea that confers upon its users the 'goodness and rightness that development [actors] need to assert [a] legitimacy to intervene in the lives of others'<sup>1138</sup>. As Anne Toomey writes, this goodness might lend '[assurances] to the rest of the world that [these actors' efforts] are on the right track'<sup>1139</sup> but it is illusory and as such, 'it is vital that development scholars and critics make a continual effort to take [its meaning] apart [and] put [it] back together again'<sup>1140</sup>. Put another way, empowerment as a development concept harbours an incredibly expansive semantic range of meaning which much like participation's own normativity, shelters a multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings which continue to be contested as they are put to use.<sup>1141</sup> It is therefore yet another 'essentially contested concept'<sup>1142</sup> which necessitates continual scrutiny to ascertain the contexts in which 'contestation over [its] meaning take place'<sup>1143</sup>.

As Toomey furthermore adds, 'empowerment and community development are irrevocably connected'<sup>1144</sup> and need to be understood as 'terms not only by themselves but also in [relation to each other and] the different ways [in which] they are linked [in both] rhetoric [and] concrete practice'<sup>1145</sup>. This statement leads nicely into a point this chapter would like to make about the natural alignment of socially transformative visions of empowerment, which as mentioned aspire to empower people to become agents of social change through 'their involvement in socially and politically relevant actions'<sup>1146</sup>, with community-level participatory approaches to international development. The two are - to reuse Toomey's phrase - irrevocably connected and as Mike Kesby attests 'empowered agency is the achieved effect of powerful [participatory] practices'<sup>1147</sup>. These participatory processes he suggests 'build ordinary people's capacity to [...] transform their lives and thus provide [a] means to facilitate empowerment'<sup>1148</sup> and for Caitlin Cahill, offer the means through which 'they [might] shift and

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<sup>1136</sup> Cornwall, A., & Brock, K., 'What Do Buzzwords do for Development Policy? A Critical Look at Participation, Empowerment and Poverty Reduction', p. 1046.

<sup>1137</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1043.

<sup>1138</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1045.

<sup>1139</sup> Toomey, AH., 'Empowerment and Disempowerment in Community Development Practice: Eight Roles Practitioners Play', p. 183.

<sup>1140</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1141</sup> Cornwall, A., & Brock, K., 'What Do Buzzwords do for Development Policy? A Critical Look at Participation, Empowerment and Poverty Reduction', p. 1046.

<sup>1142</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1143</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1144</sup> Toomey, AH., 'Empowerment and Disempowerment in Community Development Practice: Eight Roles Practitioners Play', p. 183.

<sup>1145</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1146</sup> Friedmann, J. *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*, p. 33.

<sup>1147</sup> Kesby, M., 'Re-Theorising Empowerment through Participation as a Performance in Space: Beyond Tyranny to Transformation', *Signs: Journal of Feminist Theory*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (2005), p. 2052.

<sup>1148</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2037.

create new identities for themselves despite the seemingly hegemonic power of dominant discourses and [...] practices'<sup>1149</sup>. At once, these statements reveal and animate a supposition that in rhetoric at least, socially transformative meanings of empowerment see participatory processes as the natural catalysts of across-the-board political, economic and psychological empowerment and thus in part, they would appear to celebrate personal change and self-transformation as the well-spring of broader social change.<sup>1150</sup>

#### *Self-Transformation and Socially Transformative Meanings of Empowerment*

In fact, this chapter feels quite strongly that the type of empowerment that participatory community development efforts, like REFLECT, seek to spark is heavily influenced by a powerful meta-narrative that casts 'the micro-politics of self-transformation as an important part of [...] larger social change'<sup>1151</sup>. Building here on Ella Myers' scrutiny of the ethics of self-care (namely, purposeful efforts to create and transform oneself) found within the work of both Michel Foucault and William Connolly, this meta-narrative arguably 'rests on the belief that each individual's [self-transformatory] actions will additively amount to something greater [and produce] transformation on a larger scale'<sup>1152</sup>. As Myers recounts, working on oneself is presented as the contemporary conduit of social change; with the single self designated as the source of broader transformation.<sup>1153</sup> In fact, her efforts to identify 'the personal qualities that [might] equip an individual to participate deeply in democratic politics and to do so with a certain spirit'<sup>1154</sup> illuminates a sense that participating in one's own personal empowerment and 'transforming oneself [has become] the most important and even the most politically significant project a person can undertake'<sup>1155</sup>. Moreover, as Myer's interpretation of Foucault and Connolly's work bears out, this meta-narrative coupling of self-transformation to social change would appear to treat the self's reflexive relationship with itself as the fundamental basis, and even necessary precondition, of engagement in collaborative democratic action.<sup>1156</sup>

This latter point is striking and for the most part based on an assumption that 'the self who practices reflexive arts [will] be more inclined to participate, passionately and respectfully, in

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<sup>1149</sup> Cahill, C., 'The Personal Is Political: Developing New Subjectivities through Participatory Action Research', *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2007), p. 270.

<sup>1150</sup> Williams, G., 'Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and (Re)Politicisation', p. 92; and Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', p. 320.

<sup>1151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1152</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World* (Duke University Press, Durham & London, 2013), pp. 46-47.

<sup>1153</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 46.

<sup>1154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>1155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>1156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

collective action animated by a commitment to pluralisation'<sup>1157</sup>. According to Michael Edwards and Gita Sen, this is because 'if people are not caring and compassionate in their personal behaviour they are unlikely to work effectively for a caring and compassionate society. Resisting these feelings, and developing the inner security required for a lifetime of co-operative endeavour, requires a disciplined process of self-reflection and contemplation about the values and purposes of our lives, and the desire and willingness to change ourselves. Undertaking this inner journey with courage can reward one with inner peace, greater energy and more effectiveness in one's actions, an expansive compassion in our attitudes towards others, and a tenderness of the heart that, on a mass scale, can have profound social implications'<sup>1158</sup>. For Edwards and Sen, 'personal or inner change and social or outer change are inseparably linked'<sup>1159</sup>; and for that reason, the reflexive arts of personal (and often critical) self-reflection are triumphantly (and somewhat evangelically) fêted for their potential to 'challenge reigning ways of being and [...] transform individuals in ways that enable them to engage more effectively in collective projects, including critical and oppositional endeavours that aim to alter status quo arrangements'<sup>1160</sup>.

Taking this into account, it is by no means coincidental that those who endorse socially transformative visions of empowerment often refuse to see empowerment as just a matter of 'group struggle'<sup>1161</sup> and a means to alter 'the rules and institutions that govern [people's] lives'<sup>1162</sup>. Given the aforesaid meta-narrative privileging of the self's reflexive relationship with itself, a preference to instead to see empowerment as a 'coming together of personal consciousness'<sup>1163</sup> that unleashes an amalgam of 'transformative cognitive and affective processes'<sup>1164</sup> capable of 'raising people's political consciousness and generating collective political action'<sup>1165</sup> prevails. Indeed, such a conception of empowerment blends the individual with the institutional and prioritises personal change as 'the well-spring of change in all other areas'<sup>1166</sup>. This in turn serves to endorse 'a new politics of becoming'<sup>1167</sup> which accentuates the socially expedient benefits of a reflexive self, eudaimonically striving to transform and better

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<sup>1157</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43.

<sup>1158</sup> Edwards, M., & Sen, G., 'NGOs, Social Change and the Transformation of Human Relationships: A 21st-Century Civic Agenda', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (2000), p. 610.

<sup>1159</sup> *Ibid*, p. 606.

<sup>1160</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 47.

<sup>1161</sup> Waddington, M., & Mohan, G., 'Failing Forward: Going Beyond PRA and Imposed Forms of Participation', p. 222.

<sup>1162</sup> Edwards, M., & Sen, G., 'NGOs, Social Change and the Transformation of Human Relationships: A 21st-Century Civic Agenda', p. 609.

<sup>1163</sup> Waddington, M., & Mohan, G., 'Failing Forward: Going Beyond PRA and Imposed Forms of Participation', p. 226.

<sup>1164</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 110.

<sup>1165</sup> Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', p. 320.

<sup>1166</sup> Edwards, M., & Sen, G., 'NGOs, Social Change and the Transformation of Human Relationships: A 21st-Century Civic Agenda', p. 609.

<sup>1167</sup> Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', p. 320.

itself, as part of a broader strategy for reshaping power relations.<sup>1168</sup> This, to this chapter at least, epitomises some of the hallmarks of the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified in the previous chapter and lends ever increasing credence to this thesis' recurring sense that psychologised efforts to continually work upon one's inner strength, to strive to be a *self-reflexive and self-actualising subject-in-process*, really do to shape the parameters of a psychologised adaptive development subjectivity that purports to offer an enabling future.<sup>1169</sup>

To this chapter, this is unmistakable evidence of the crystallisation of psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities within a conception of empowerment that REFLECT draws upon to articulate and validate its potential. In support of this assertion, Myers herself is keen to counsel that the meta-narrative coupling of self-transformation to broader social change adopted by socially transformative visions of empowerment would appear to stem from a therapeutic ethic that, much like turning an individual's emotional state into an acceptable 'aspect of good governance rather than a private matter of personal concern'<sup>1170</sup>, renders 'tending to the self [...] synonymous with politics'<sup>1171</sup>. What is more, Myers expresses concern that this underlying therapeutic ethic negates and masks the fact that 'any movement between the micro-politics of self-constitution and the macro politics of [transformative social change] is decidedly more complicated than [the] framing [actually] indicates'<sup>1172</sup>. Not least because real transformative social change, she writes, 'demands a turn away from [the self] as the object of attention [towards] a different and shared object of concern that serves as a site of mutual energy and advocacy'<sup>1173</sup>. Without doubt, this raises plenty of questions about the authenticity of what socially transformative visions of empowerment are trying to achieve when they endorse 'a [...] politics of becoming'<sup>1174</sup> that accentuates the socially expedient benefits of a reflexive self eudaimonically striving to transform and better themselves.

Indeed, if insights from the previous chapter are anything to go by, this should really stir a judicious watchfulness to the types of subjectivities that socially transformative visions of empowerment aspire to cultivate; not least because Edwards and Sen's call for individuals to develop 'the inner security required for a lifetime of co-operative endeavour'<sup>1175</sup> would seem to chime with what the preceding chapter sought to identify as the nascent therapeutic governance of resilient citizenship and its demands for 'continual adaptation and change in

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<sup>1168</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 159.

<sup>1169</sup> Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', p. 328.

<sup>1170</sup> Rehberg, K., 'Revisiting Therapeutic Governance: The Politics of Mental Health and Psychosocial Programmes in Humanitarian Settings', p. 7.

<sup>1171</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 49.

<sup>1172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>1173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1174</sup> Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', p. 320.

<sup>1175</sup> Edwards, M., & Sen, G., 'NGOs, Social Change and the Transformation of Human Relationships: A 21st-Century Civic Agenda', p. 610.

the subject's ontological and epistemological status'<sup>1176</sup>. Once more, the pursuit of inner security and strength are put forward as the abiding qualities of a 'resilient subject [...] that must permanently struggle to accommodate itself to the world'<sup>1177</sup> and all over again, the imperative for the subject to change and to adapt to its environment, and indeed to keep on changing and adapting as a matter of individual responsibility surfaces.<sup>1178</sup> As many like Peter Triantafyllou and Mikkel Risbjerg Nielsen have claimed before, this would suggest that empowerment is actually seen as a means for creating 'self-governing and responsible individuals'<sup>1179</sup> that will become agents of their own social change in accordance with the idea that 'those [...] who appreciate themselves and have a sense of personal empowerment will cultivate their own personal responsibility and [...] attend to the tasks that are necessary for the welfare of the community and society'<sup>1180</sup>.

The upshot of this is that *how the subject is* and *how the subject should be* is imagined in such a way that a type of empowerment that calls upon the development subject to take responsibility for its own personal development in a way that then politically connects its sense of self to the development of its environment becomes the most politically expedient solution for its transformation. All in all, the subject is set up to be *empowerable* and, through what Barbara Cruikshank terms as a *will to empower*, encouraged to transform itself into an active agent of social change capable of self-government.<sup>1181</sup> Much like Tania Li's work on governmentality and the *will to improve* introduced in chapter two, Cruikshank's *will to empower* relates to 'the many ways that practices [of power] position people'<sup>1182</sup> and render certain types of actions, interventions and policies acceptable. Arguably, the meta-narrative coupling of self-transformation to broader social change that this chapter feels influences and underpins socially transformative visions of empowerment represents a very clear manifestation of this *will to empower*. By default, this would suggest that the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified in the previous chapter might be an even broader manifestation of this same dynamic and as such, a deeper understanding of this *will to empower* should help illuminate and present an account for the meta-narrative coupling of self-transformation to social change still further here.

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<sup>1176</sup> Evans, B., & Reid, J., 'Dangerously Exposed: The Life and Death of the Resilient Subject', p. 85.

<sup>1177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>1179</sup> Triantafyllou, P., & Nielsen, MR., 'Policing Empowerment: Making Capable Subjects', *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2001), p. 63.

<sup>1180</sup> Smelser, NJ., 'Self-Esteem and Social Problems: An Introduction', in Mecca, AM., Smelser, NJ., & Vasconcellos, J. *The Social Importance of Self-Esteem* (University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 1989), p. 1.

<sup>1181</sup> Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1999), pp. 1-3.

<sup>1182</sup> Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, pp. 25-26.

Indeed, Cruikshank's take on a *will to empower* which sweeps up and turns self-transformation and personal change into a social obligation is vital to round off this chapter.<sup>1183</sup> Although 'deeply sympathetic to the project of radical or participatory democracy'<sup>1184</sup>, her work resolutely seeks to 'challenge the readiness with which [...] empowerment [is used] to signify an unquestionably noble or radical political strategy'<sup>1185</sup>. In fact, against this readiness, she identifies a 'political logic of empowerment'<sup>1186</sup> stemming from 'a way of thinking [...] that is forever blinded by what is not there'<sup>1187</sup>. Pointing to the fact that 'the analytical and normative vocabularies of democratic theory are replete with formulations expressing'<sup>1188</sup> deficiencies such as *powerlessness*, Cruikshank argues that empowerment is 'regarded as [a solution] to the lack of something, [be that] a lack of power, of self-esteem, of coherent self-interest, or of political consciousness'<sup>1189</sup>. What is more, she subsequently contends that, through these classifications of deficiency, this political logic of empowerment produces *the powerless* as objects to be empowered. Isolating, organising and transforming 'them into a calculable, knowable grouping and [making them] available for government by forming a category that [...] could be used in political arguments and administrative decisions'<sup>1190</sup> to endorse 'techniques, programmes, and strategies for governing, shaping and guiding those who are held up to exhibit some specified lack'<sup>1191</sup>.

What Cruikshank reveals is that 'empowerment is a power relationship, a relationship of government'<sup>1192</sup> and ostensibly, a 'democratically unaccountable exercise of power [...] typically initiated by one party seeking to empower another'<sup>1193</sup> on the basis of what the former perceives the latter to lack. As such, she is suspicious of anything which aspires to empower the powerless; likening specific techniques, programmes and strategies to 'technologies of citizenship, [which] however well intentioned, [function] as modes of constituting, [...] regulating [and] governing the very subjects whose problems they seek to address'<sup>1194</sup>. She attributes these technologies of citizenship to the aforementioned idea of governmentality and suggests that schemes which seek to empower through exogenous means fall under the rubric

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<sup>1183</sup> Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, p. 89.

<sup>1184</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>1185</sup> *Ibid*, p. 68.

<sup>1186</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 70-72

<sup>1187</sup> *Ibid*, p. 122.

<sup>1188</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>1189</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1190</sup> *Ibid*, p. 76.

<sup>1191</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>1192</sup> *Ibid*, p. 86.

<sup>1193</sup> *Ibid*, p. 72.

<sup>1194</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

of 'forms of action and relations of power that aim to guide and shape (rather than force, control, or dominate) the actions of others'<sup>1195</sup>. They 'operate according to a political rationality for governing people in ways that promote their autonomy, self-sufficiency, and political engagement'<sup>1196</sup> and embody 'modes of governance that work upon and through the capacities of citizens to act on their own'<sup>1197</sup>. In effect, 'the actions of citizens are regulated but only after the capacity to act as a certain kind of citizen with certain aims is instilled'<sup>1198</sup> and once their voluntary compliance for 'their autonomy, wills and interests [to be] shaped as well as enlisted'<sup>1199</sup> is secured.<sup>1200</sup>

To Cruikshank, this signifies that the subject is prescribed and predetermined by means overtly political. That said, she is careful not to be too disparaging of schemes that seek to empower and keenly intimates that whilst the subject is 'fully political, indeed, perhaps most political at the point in which it is claimed to be prior to politics itself'<sup>1201</sup>, relations of empowerment 'can be used well or badly'<sup>1202</sup>. Indeed her ambition to 'hold the will to empower to the fire, not to destroy or discount it, but to bring both its promise and its dangers to light'<sup>1203</sup> hinges more on a want to 'promote a political awareness of how [...] subjects are made'<sup>1204</sup> and 'constituted by politics and power'<sup>1205</sup> than to scrutinise the actual liberatory or repressive qualities of relations of empowerment per se.<sup>1206</sup> For this chapter at least, Cruikshank's missive to 'never presuppose [the] subject but [to] persistently inquire into [its] constitution'<sup>1207</sup> is worthy of consideration; especially because the subject of socially transformative visions of empowerment is often initially portrayed as lacking in consciousness, confidence and self-esteem and in need of some vague and indeterminate level of these qualities to fully realise itself as an agent of its own social change. What Cruikshank's work hopefully demonstrates is that the *will to empower* engenders the manipulation of these qualities into 'practical [technologies] for the production of certain kinds of selves'<sup>1208</sup>.

For this very reason, she talks regrettably about the metamorphosis of personal transformation into a social obligation and uses the example of the modern manipulation of a lack of self-

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<sup>1195</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>1196</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1197</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1198</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1199</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1200</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1201</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>1202</sup> *Ibid*, p. 86.

<sup>1203</sup> *Ibid*, p. 125.

<sup>1204</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.

<sup>1205</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>1206</sup> *Ibid*, p. 72.

<sup>1207</sup> *Ibid*, p. 18.

<sup>1208</sup> *Ibid*, p. 89.



esteem into a socio-political problem to emphasise the transformation of 'the relationship of self-to-self into a relationship that is governable'<sup>1209</sup>. Without mirroring herself in descriptions of the 'structure or essence of self-esteem'<sup>1210</sup> itself, she laments the power-laden psychologising processes introduced in chapter four that transform moral, political and social matters into issues of psychological causation and link their resolution to individual practices of personal self-improvement in such a way that 'achieving freedom becomes a matter not of slogans nor of political revolution, but of slow, painstaking, and detailed work on [...] subjective and personal realities'<sup>1211,1212</sup>. For Cruikshank, as well as Nikolas Rose, these are emblematic of a manner of governance that for socio-political ends manipulates 'each individual's desire to govern their own conduct freely in the service of the maximisation of a version of their happiness and fulfilment that they take to be their own'<sup>1213</sup> and ultimately 'binds the subject to a subjection that is [all the] more profound because it appears to emanate from our autonomous quest for ourselves'<sup>1214</sup>. This ultimately belies the presentation of the practice of personal self-improvement as 'a matter of freedom'<sup>1215</sup> and all in all, exposes a dynamic which disguises subjection to power behind a promise of autonomy from power.<sup>1216</sup>

As Graham Burchell explains, this represents a politically motivated encroachment 'upon individuals in their very individuality [and] in the conduct of their lives'<sup>1217</sup> that 'concerns them at the very heart of themselves by making its rationality the condition of their active freedom'<sup>1218</sup>. He attributes this to liberalism, although predominantly its modern form of neoliberalism, and argues that neoliberal political ideology has served to '[construct] a relationship between [the governing] and the governed that increasingly depends upon [...] individuals [...] being subjects of their lives, upon the ways in which they fashion themselves as certain kinds of subjects [and] upon the ways in which they practice their freedom'<sup>1219</sup>. What is more, it 'confers obligations and duties'<sup>1220</sup> upon them to participate in projects of personal

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<sup>1209</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1210</sup> Mruk, C. *Self-Esteem: Research, Theory and Practice* (Free Association Books, London, 1999), p. 3.

<sup>1211</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 260.

<sup>1212</sup> Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, p. 92.

<sup>1213</sup> Rose, N., 'Governing Advanced Liberal Democracies', in Barry, A., Osborne, T., & Rose, N. *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996), pp.58-59.

<sup>1214</sup> Rose, N. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, p. 260.

<sup>1215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1216</sup> As Nikolas Rose writes, this is because 'the regulation of conduct becomes a matter of each individual's desire to govern their own conduct freely in the service of the maximisation of a version of their happiness and fulfilment that they take to be their own, but such lifestyle maximisation entails a relation to authority in the very moment it pronounces itself the outcome of free choice'. Possibly add in comment in relation to Sam Brinkley's *Happiness and Neoliberal Life*. See: Rose, N., 'Governing Advanced Liberal Democracies', pp.58-59.

<sup>1217</sup> Burchell, G., 'Liberal Government and Techniques of the Self', in Barry, A., Osborne, T., & Rose, N. *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996), p. 30.

<sup>1218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1219</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>1220</sup> Rose, N., 'Governing Advanced Liberal Democracies', p.58.

self-mastery that align with political aspirations for a greater good and ultimately, asks them to transform themselves into 'self-governing and responsible individuals'<sup>1221</sup> capable of 'fulfilling [a] social obligation of responsible citizenship'<sup>1222</sup>. For Burchell, this 'ethical *a priori* of [...] active citizenship in an active society, [or] respecification of the ethics of personhood, is perhaps the most fundamental, and most generalisable, characteristic of [this] new [rationality] of government'<sup>1223</sup>. All things considered, it renders the 'ability of a citizen to generate a politically able self [dependent] upon technologies of subjectivity and citizenship that link personal goals and desires to [a particular specification of the] social [good]'<sup>1224</sup>.

In the interests of understanding the meta-narrative coupling of self-transformation to broader social change as a facet of socially transformative visions of empowerment, a couple of things can be taken away from Cruikshank's synopsis of the *will to empower*. Perhaps the most sweeping of these being an overriding sense that empowerment is 'certainly no simple liberation of subjects from their dreary confinement by the shackles of political power into the sunny uplands of liberty and community'<sup>1225</sup>. Relatively little stock was placed by this chapter in that idea anyhow, but Cruikshank's take on the *will to empower* undoubtedly corroborates the earlier volunteered theory that in proclaiming the socially expedient potential of personal change, socially transformative visions of empowerment are actually seeking to cultivate a certain kind of self in the mould of an autonomous, self-governing and responsible citizen-subject. Indeed through a process akin to what the previous chapter identified as the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood*, individuals are encouraged to 'estimate, calculate, measure, evaluate, discipline and judge'<sup>1226</sup> themselves against a vision of capable political selfhood. However, much like eudaimonic conceptions of well-being which promote similar configurations of critical autonomy, self-reflexivity, and self-actualisation with practices of self-improvement; these supposedly socially transformative visions of empowerment would appear to promise an enticing vision of freedom and autonomy from power that actually, paradoxically, imposes the demands of a specific power laden pedagogy of personhood upon the subject to secure it.

The practice of empowerment is thus heavily circumscribed by an ethic of *responsibilisation* that the preceding chapter identified within the therapeutic governance of experienced trauma and perhaps even more so, the nascent therapeutic governance of trauma to come. Both hang on the idea that 'those [...] who appreciate themselves and have a sense of personal empowerment

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<sup>1221</sup> Triantafillou, P., & Nielsen, MR., 'Policing Empowerment: Making Capable Subjects', p. 63.

<sup>1222</sup> Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, p. 92.

<sup>1223</sup> Rose, N., 'Governing Advanced Liberal Democracies', p. 60.

<sup>1224</sup> Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, p. 92.

<sup>1225</sup> Rose, N., 'Governing Advanced Liberal Democracies', p. 61.

<sup>1226</sup> Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, p. 89.

will cultivate their own personal responsibility and [...] attend to the tasks that are necessary for the welfare of the community and society'<sup>1227</sup>; and by comparison, empowerment much like the attainment of ever greater resilience, is presented by Cruikshank as a parallel twofold practice of (however simulated) freedom and responsibility. In the previous chapter it was well documented that 'the active citizen [was encouraged to] add to his or her obligations the need to adopt a calculative prudent personal relation to fate'<sup>1228</sup> in the face of an unknowable future and here, it feels as if the *will to empower* encourages that same active citizen to adopt a further calculative and prudent personal relationship with itself as part of its obligations and duties to wider society. That chapter, and the wider thesis as a whole, is concerned that evermore is being asked of the development subject and through socially transformative visions of empowerment, this chapter is keen to argue that as it transpires, this includes prescriptions for a much more earnest and intimate self-reflexive relationship with itself.

In summary, Cruikshank's work on the *will to empower* certainly helps to illuminate how a vision of socially transformatory empowerment conceptualised in terms of personal change and self-transformation might have come about.<sup>1229</sup> What is more, it lends greater authority and weight to the earlier assertion that a *will to empower* which accentuates the socially expedient benefits of a reflexive self, eudaimonically striving to transform and better itself, as part of a broader strategy for reshaping power relations carries some of the hallmarks of the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified in the previous chapter. Moreover, the political logic of empowerment that Cruikshank's work highlights convincingly dismantles the notion of empowerment as a measure of autonomy from power; and if read without question, insinuates that the meta-narrative coupling of self-transformation to broader social change, and with it the recurring sense that psychologised efforts to continually work upon one's own self-improvement, to essentially be a *self-reflexive and self-actualising subject-in-process*, are starting to determine the required parameters of an aspirational development subjectivity, is wrapped up in a very particular practice of politics. In fact, as both Rose and Burchell's complementary perspectives make plain, the reverence of 'the micro-politics of self-transformation as an important part of [...] larger social change'<sup>1230</sup> may well be emblematic of neoliberal political ideology at work and undoubtedly brings into question the underlying motivations of any *will to empower* because of it.

#### *Implications for Understanding REFLECT*

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<sup>1227</sup> Smelser, NJ., 'Self-Esteem and Social Problems: An Introduction', p. 1.

<sup>1228</sup> Rose, N., 'Governing Advanced Liberal Democracies', p. 58.

<sup>1229</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 174.

<sup>1230</sup> Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', p. 320.

All in all, the second half of this chapter feels that the tentative signs of a subjectivity that psychologises the development subject and which makes responsabilising demands of that subject to be an idealised *self-reflexive and self-actualising subject-in-process* can be found within the socially transformative vision of empowerment that REFLECT draws upon to articulate and validate its potential. Here however, it is vital to remember that REFLECT's vision of socially transformative empowerment is heavily indebted to Freire's theory of *conscientization* and a politics of liberation which, in aspiring 'to address the problems of [the] powerless'<sup>1231</sup>, is tilted towards creating political subjectivities capable of resisting and overcoming the conditions that perpetuate their powerlessness. This is an important insight to reiterate; not least because in seeking 'to interweave a process of empowerment with a process of [critical] literacy learning'<sup>1232</sup>, REFLECT arguably 'confers obligations and duties'<sup>1233</sup> upon its participants to take up literacy learning as a project of personal, self-mastery that aligns their personal educational goals with an inherently Freirian specification of the social good. In keeping with Cruickshank's missive that any *will to empower* acts as a mode of governance that demarcates acceptable standards of citizenship, this chapter feels that REFLECT establishes a vision of capable, confident political selfhood which certainly values (if not prioritises) the self's eudaimonic reflexive relationship with itself (and its community) as part of a broader strategy for reshaping power relations along distinctly Freirian lines.<sup>1234</sup>

This is probably a contentious point because Freire's critical pedagogy values the 'active [endogenous] transformation of the community by the community'<sup>1235</sup> and draws upon community as opposed to individual understandings of empowerment. However, in the interests of trying to understand what REFLECT is trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms, this chapter strongly senses that, in part at least, REFLECT values individual empowerment and personal self-transformation as a necessary prerequisite of broader community empowerment and social transformation. Indeed, it feels that REFLECT subtly endorses 'a [...] politics of [psychologised] becoming'<sup>1236</sup> that attaches importance to personal change as 'the well-spring of change in all other areas'<sup>1237</sup> by virtue of the fact that it venerates the potential of inherently personal, 'transformative cognitive and affective processes'<sup>1238</sup> to

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<sup>1231</sup> Gutiérrez, L.M., 'Understanding the Empowerment Process: Does Consciousness Make a Difference?', p. 229

<sup>1232</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 70.

<sup>1233</sup> Rose, N., 'Governing Advanced Liberal Democracies', p.58.

<sup>1234</sup> Cruickshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, p. 4.

<sup>1235</sup> Montenegro, M., 'Ideology and Community Social Psychology: Theoretical Considerations and Practical Implications', p. 513.

<sup>1236</sup> Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', p. 320.

<sup>1237</sup> Edwards, M., & Sen, G., 'NGOs, Social Change and the Transformation of Human Relationships: A 21st-Century Civic Agenda', p. 609.

<sup>1238</sup> Morrow, R.A., & Torres, C.A. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 110.

'[raise] people's political consciousness and [generate] collective political action'<sup>1239</sup>. This may be a delicate theory but in accordance with Edwards and Sen's stirring sentiment that 'energies unleashed by serious and deep-rooted personal transformation can fuel the search for more humane social and economic systems as little else can'<sup>1240</sup>, it is by no means wildly implausible to suggest that REFLECT treats the self's reflexive relationship with itself (albeit grounded in a process of community dialogue) as the catalyst for its vision of collaborative democratic action.<sup>1241</sup>

Granted, Freire would have undoubtedly perceived the 'belief that each individual's [self-transformatory] actions will additively amount to something greater [and produce] transformation on a larger scale'<sup>1242</sup> as far too simplistic and politically naive; yet as Myers writes, 'if self-transformation is [...] guided from the start [...] by a publicly articulated claim regarding shared conditions that resonates with [the] individual, sparking reflection, examination and transformation'<sup>1243</sup> it could certainly 'move in a direction that enriches [...] subjectivity'<sup>1244</sup>. Here, within a statement that affirms that 'reflexive practices of self-transformation are dependent on [...] processes of politicisation for their activation and subsequent direction'<sup>1245</sup>, the importance of the underlying motivations of any *will to empower* for both their activation and eventual ends materialises.<sup>1246</sup> In terms of understanding REFLECT, this might suggest that unlike the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified in the previous chapter, it treats the self's reflexive relationship with itself as a catalyst for creating political subjectivities capable of resisting and changing, rather than simply adapting to, the conditions that perpetuate their powerlessness. Indeed, by virtue of REFLECT's ability to present participants with opportunities to critically 'look with new eyes on their way of life'<sup>1247</sup>; it certainly seems to use matters of common concern to nourish politicised self-reflexivity and ready individuals for the demands of much more resistant association and struggle.<sup>1248</sup>

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<sup>1239</sup> Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', p. 320.

<sup>1240</sup> Edwards, M., & Sen, G., 'NGOs, Social Change and the Transformation of Human Relationships: A 21st-Century Civic Agenda', p. 609.

<sup>1241</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 46.

<sup>1242</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>1243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>1244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51

<sup>1246</sup> As Myers corroborates, without any sense of 'activation or effects', the presentation of a 'reflexive, [self-transformatory] relationship [with oneself] as the starting point or origin of macro-political endeavours' is hardly likely to 'result in the styles of subjectivity that are especially well suited to participation in associative projects'. See: *Ibid.*

<sup>1247</sup> Carter, I., 'REFLECT: A PLA Approach to Literacy', p. 11.

<sup>1248</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, pp. 51-52; & Coben, D. *Radical Heroes: Gramsci, Freire and the Politics of Adult Education* (Taylor & Francis, United States of America, 1998), p. 133..

This of course warrants further scrutiny in the chapter to follow, but by fusing literacy learning with critical pedagogic processes of reflective learning and action, REFLECT ostensibly seems to value the 'ethical *a priori* of [...] active citizenship in an active society'<sup>1249</sup> in a way that, unlike the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified in the previous chapter, sidesteps depoliticising the conditions and circumstances of its participants lives and perhaps more importantly, avoids problematising and pathologising their psychology as a result. As such, it seems feasible to propose that REFLECT speaks to a practice of personhood that calls upon the subject to participate in their own personal transformation and conscious political awakening in order to make possible a 'mode of being that can inspire participation in [...] efforts to shape worldly conditions'<sup>1250</sup> for the better. In line with Myers' work on the making of the democratic subject, the question of whether REFLECT enacts the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified in the previous chapter is immediately rendered much less straightforward. Not least because, as Myers argues, 'tending to the self can [sometimes] play a supportive role in readying people for the demands of [...] association and struggle'<sup>1251</sup>; albeit as long as it is 'undertaken in response to and for the sake of collaborative [efforts] that aim to make and remake features of the world'<sup>1252</sup>.

With that in mind, it is important to remember that the preceding chapter demarcated the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* as a dynamic that sprang from two intertwining logics common to the therapeutic governance of vulnerability in the face of *experienced trauma* and the nascent therapeutic governance of resilient citizenship in the face of *trauma to come*. Namely, the *pathologisation of the personal* and the *responsibilisation of the self* which through the mechanisms of therapeutic governance just mentioned, promoted a kind of adaptive endeavouring and enduring state of becoming within those (somewhat derogatively) deemed in need of saving from themselves. Admittedly, this chapter has drawn upon Cruikshank's work to emphasise that empowerment is usually invoked as a means 'for governing, shaping and guiding those who are held up to exhibit some specified lack'<sup>1253</sup>. Yet beyond her comments on the strategic manipulation of a lack of self-esteem into a socio-political problem that makes 'the relationship of self-to-self [...] governable'<sup>1254</sup>, Cruikshank is largely silent on whether this and other specified lacks are imagined as the kind of innate psychological pathologies that stem from a deeply ingrained 'misanthropic view of humanity'<sup>1255</sup>. This might then suggest that the psychologisation of the development subject, brought about as this

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<sup>1249</sup> Rose, N., 'Governing Advanced Liberal Democracies', p. 60.

<sup>1250</sup> *Ibid*, p. 51.

<sup>1251</sup> *Ibid*, p. 52.

<sup>1252</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1253</sup> Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, p. 3.

<sup>1254</sup> *Ibid*, p. 89.

<sup>1255</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Hamlet's Crisis of Meaning, Mental Wellbeing and Meaningless in the War on Terror', online.

chapter is keen to assert by socially transformative visions of empowerment that couple self-transformation to broader social change, is premised on much more forgiving representations of ordinary people.

What is more, the suggestion that REFLECT establishes a vision of capable, confident political selfhood as part of a broader strategy for reshaping power relations along distinctly Freirian lines presents something of a challenge to the perception that 'governmental methods [...] are all unambiguously *bad*'<sup>1256</sup>. This is important to note given that Rose and Burchell's previously cited work makes plain that a *will to empower* which reveres self-transformation as the conduit of broader social change is typically emblematic of neoliberal political ideology at work. As Burchell admits, consideration of the 'complexity of the questions involved in the political evaluation of governmental techniques'<sup>1257</sup> has barely begun and for this reason, this chapter is reluctant to typecast REFLECT as an unmistakable manifestation of neoliberal governmental methods just yet in spite of the fact that it does seem to psychologise and ask its participants to transform themselves into 'self-governing and responsible individuals'<sup>1258</sup> capable of 'fulfilling [a] social obligation of responsible citizenship'<sup>1259</sup>. Almost by default, any association with neoliberal governmental techniques implies that REFLECT aspires to create political subjectivities capable of adapting to the conditions of state and market as opposed to resisting and challenging them; and for the time being, this chapter still feels that it might just illuminate the crystallisation of psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities as well as such governmental techniques within development thinking, policy and practice a little less pejoratively.

### *Conclusion*

By way of a conclusion, it is worth remembering that this chapter set out to make a clear statement about the perceived psychologisation of the development subject in order to determine what it is trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms in the chapter to follow. In respect of the former, this chapter is convinced that development's increasing interest in enhancing people's capacities, motivation and sense of well-being and its subsequent preferment of the self as the primary agent of a particular type of responsabilised personhood is indicative of the increasing psychologisation of the subject of development policy and

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<sup>1256</sup> And according to Burchell, 'by no means obvious that in every case they are clearly either better or worse than the methods they have replaced'. See: Burchell, G., 'Liberal Government and Techniques of the Self', pp. 34-35.

<sup>1257</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>1258</sup> Triantafillou, P., & Nielsen, MR., 'Policing Empowerment: Making Capable Subjects', p. 63.

<sup>1259</sup> Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, p. 92.

practice.<sup>1260</sup> As this chapter has hopefully shown, eudaimonic understandings of well-being, together with visions of socially transformative empowerment that envision personal self-transformation as the conduit of broader social change, both enact pedagogies of responsabilised personhood which replicate aspects of the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood* identified in the preceding chapter. However, in light of the observation that the activation of a pedagogy of responsabilised personhood within REFLECT is aligned to the creation of political subjectivities capable of resisting, rather than simply adapting to, the conditions of state and market, there is reason to suppose that REFLECT might just illuminate the psychologisation of the development within other aspects of development policy and practice a little less pejoratively.

Said with greater clarity, this is why the remainder of this thesis now intends to focus upon, and scrutinise, the extent to which REFLECT might embody a qualitatively different, and less pathologising, form of therapeutic governance to those manifestations highlighted and discussed in the previous chapter. Indeed, whilst this chapter strongly feels that REFLECT hangs its potential on concepts that serve to psychologise the development subject and enact something akin to the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood*; its Freirian heritage presents a barrier to unequivocally denouncing it as something that relies upon psychologised pathologies or which, internalises and intensifies the demands of citizenship as a prerequisite for a life of continual adaptation to the unyielding conditions and demands of an imposed vision of development. Granted, REFLECT's assimilation of a capability approach for the betterment of people's lives and a vision of socially transformative empowerment that advances the contribution of highly personal change and self-transformation to the cause of broader social change, does suggest that a particular ethic of responsabilisation and pedagogy of personhood underpins its vision of the empowered development subject. Nonetheless, this development subject is (on the face of it at least) deemed capable of resisting, challenging and changing, rather than merely adapting to, the conditions of an imposed vision of development and in this respect, a benchmark for judging REFLECT against the manifestations of therapeutic governance described in the previous chapter emerges.

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<sup>1260</sup> Pupavac, V., 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance', p. 173; & Sointu, E., 'The Rise of an Ideal: Tracing Changing Discourses on Wellbeing', p. 263.



## **Agents of Social Change, Agents of their Own Protection**

### *Introduction*

This chapter will present and discuss its analysis of a series of semi-structured qualitative interviews with members of the epistemic community of non-governmental organisation actors who first conceived and then subsequently championed REFLECT as a community-based approach to participatory development.<sup>1261</sup> In summary, it will infer from the findings of this analysis that REFLECT would appear to endorse a *relational therapeutic ethic of responsabilisation* that expects the development subject to politically connect its sense of self to the oscillating protection and improvement of the livelihood platforms that determine the possibilities of its future development. In fact, the chapter will argue that whilst REFLECT's normative foundations do not appear to harbour pessimistic pathologies of the development subject; the normative commitments of those responsible for bringing it into being would appear to want to responsabilise the development subject to become both an agent of social change and an agent of its own protection. The chapter will suggest that this illuminates a nascent interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice a little less pejoratively than Vanessa Pupavac's work, and other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance does; but that nevertheless, striving to establish REFLECT circle participants as agents of social change on the one hand and ever more resilient agents of their own protection on the other raises all too familiar questions about the ambitions of the development project itself.

By way of a reminder, the thesis has set out to utilise the philosophical-hermeneutic method of immanent critique to scrutinise the twofold expectancy that REFLECT circle participation can elicit heightened levels of participant self-esteem, confidence and personal well-being *alongside* political empowerment. To recap, the research interviews just described were undertaken to add to the critical resources available for its immanent critique of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject and to critically interrogate the normative expectations of it that prevail in the social environment in which it was first conceived. They also sought to ask questions of the epistemic community of actors that brought REFLECT into being to generate richer, grounded insights into the normative commitments that might conceivably lie beneath aspirations to improve the poor's psychological capital through induced participatory development practice. In fact, given that many of the interviewed research participants, were also keyed into and attuned to a number

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<sup>1261</sup> Haas, PM., 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', p. 3.

of different sector-wide debates pertaining to the growing prioritisation of ‘psychological empowerment as an orientation and targeted outcome for community development efforts’<sup>1262</sup>; they were also approached to participate in the research in the hope that their involvement might yield further insight into what expectations a growing interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice might be bringing to bear upon the development subject.

The claims this chapter will proceed to make are therefore grounded in an engagement with actors directly involved in shaping its illustrative case study’s prevailing knowledge claims. That said, the chapter is acutely aware of the limitations of these claims and without apology, it is important to reiterate once more that they - together with the wider thesis – should not be read as anything other than a theoretical critique of REFLECT’s normative epistemic foundations. As outlined in its opening introduction, the thesis solely engages with REFLECT as an epistemic body of knowledge and takes a focused interest in some of the tensions and contradictions it has discerned within those prevailing knowledge claims relating to the imagination of the empowered development subject in a mixture of political and psychological terms. It never sought to undertake an in-depth ethnographic study of what REFLECT participation actually does in practice and has instead always sought to determine what these prevailing knowledge claims say about the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject. From this vantage point, it has drawn on Pupavac’s work as a provocation to ask whether and to what extent REFLECT might represent a form of therapeutic governance and as such, this chapter’s claims derive their validity from a methodology that utilises immanent critique, rather than extensive field-based research, to address that overriding research question.

### *Summary of Key Findings*

To help the reader negotiate the detail to come, a quick summary of the analytical claims which that methodology now allows this chapter to make will expose the general structure and form it will take. In short, this thesis’ final chapter will lay out the findings of a critical thematic analysis of the empirical work described above to build upon the preceding chapter’s tentative conclusion that whilst REFLECT might hang its potential on concepts that serve to psychologise the development subject and enact something akin to what chapter five identified as the *therapeutic responsabilisation of personhood*; its Freirian heritage precludes denouncing it as something that relies upon pathologies of vulnerability, pathologies of unresilience and

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<sup>1262</sup> Christens, BJ., ‘Targeting Empowerment in Community Development: A Community Psychology Approach to Enhancing Local Power and Well-Being’, p. 538.

narrow, limited political visions of a better world. In the first instance, it will concede that the epistemic community of non-governmental organisation actors who first conceived and then subsequently championed REFLECT as a community-based approach to participatory development talk about the development subject in generally very optimistic and sanguine ways. In a nutshell, the chapter will contend that unlike Pupavac's highly securitised conceptualisation of therapeutic governance none of the pessimistic expectations of psychological vulnerability or dysfunctionality which, as outlined in chapter five, pathologised the personal, invalidated political agency, established cause for permissive empathy and legitimised the appropriation of character deficiencies as points of entry for therapeutic enablement were explicitly relayed by those who participated in the research.

In fact, on the basis of the empirical research undertaken, the chapter will attest that none of the pathologising undertones, which Pupavac brought to the fore within her decisive critical intellectual attack on the *emotionology* of an emerging international security paradigm and the apparent demoralisation and securitisation of the development project, were immediately discernable. More often than not, the research participants relayed striking levels of confidence and at times even glowing optimism in REFLECT circle participants' potential to effect meaningful change within their respective villages and wider communities. Nevertheless, aspirations to *responsibilise the self* or in other words, to connect REFLECT circle participants' sense of themselves to the realisation of future possibilities within and beyond their immediate circumstances were palpable. That said, in some instances (although not all), some of those interviewed alluded to REFLECT circle discussions leveraging admissions of worry, fear and past distress to encourage participants to reflect upon how they might ready themselves for their futures. On the one hand, the interviewed research participants implied that they invested a huge amount of faith and optimism in REFLECT circle participants' ability to be the driving agents of social change; whilst on the other hand, this alluded to what Pupavac and others might describe as a therapeutic ethos titled towards invigorating those same participants to foster personal resilience and become the agents of their own protection.

Given that one research participant openly acknowledged that 'REFLECT does exactly what psychosocial work does even though it might not necessarily admit to it'<sup>1263</sup>; this twofold aspiration warrants further scrutiny to move this thesis forwards towards an authoritative conclusion. Through an explanation of these and other findings, this chapter will largely focus on how REFLECT's imagination of the development subject would appear to sustain concurrent aspirations to establish REFLECT circle participants as both agents of social

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<sup>1263</sup> See: Interview Transcript 13.

change and agents of their own protection in much further detail. What is more, it will go on to suggest that these twofold aspirations would appear to endorse a *relational therapeutic ethic of responsabilisation* that expects the development subject to politically connect its sense of self to the oscillating protection and improvement of the livelihood platforms that determine the possibilities of its future development. That claim will be refined in this chapter to surmise that whilst REFLECT might not necessarily *pathologise the personal*; it would appear to *responsibilise the self* for both protection and change enabling purposes. Final consideration will be given to how far this *relational therapeutic ethic of responsabilisation* illuminates the prevalence of an interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice a little less pejoratively than Vanessa Pupavac's work, and other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance has hitherto done.

To do this, this chapter will present the findings of a critical thematic analysis of twenty semi-structured qualitative interviews with members of the epistemic community of actors that brought REFLECT into being. As outlined in chapter three, this small empirical study sought to generate conversational narratives of participants' experiences of REFLECT and sought to capture how they came to 'arrive at the cognitions, emotions, and values [relayed within] the conversational [interview]' <sup>1264</sup>. The analytical approach adopted broadly adhered to the conventions of a thematic template analysis which involved working through and interacting with the textual interview transcripts in accordance with a critical analytical strategy that sought 'to [...] segment the data [into] simpler, general categories and [...] to expand and tease out the data in order to formulate new questions and levels of interpretation' <sup>1265</sup>. What materialised from this heuristic process of enquiry was a unique and nuanced sense of how the interviewed research participants represented the development subject and the normative commitments which influenced their sense of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject. In short it will reveal that testimonies of many of the interviewed research participants were blemished by an at times contradictory mixture of exuberant, unbridled idealism and cautious, restrained realism that sheltered normative commitments to responsabilise the development subject to be both an agent of social change and an agent of its own protection.

### *Representations of the Development Subject*

It seems fitting to begin by setting out how the interviewed research participants characterised and represented the development subject. Again to briefly recap, the research that this thesis

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<sup>1264</sup> Miller, WL., & Crabtree, BF., 'Depth Interviewing', p. 106.

<sup>1265</sup> Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*, p. 30.

documents undertook a small scale empirical study to scrutinise what REFLECT might be trying to achieve when its vision of the empowered development subject is expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms. Utilising a qualitative interview method with a range of research participants recruited from the epistemic community which brought REFLECT into being, the study sought to capture their normative expectations of the abstract development subject as well their understanding and perceptions of the developing communities they had come to know and work with through their involvement in REFLECT's conception and early implementation. Beyond that the study was also undertaken to determine whether REFLECT might represent a disquieting form of therapeutic governance and as outlined in the previous chapter invoke empowerment as a means 'for governing, shaping and guiding those who are held up to exhibit some specified lack'<sup>1266</sup>. Ontological primacy was granted to the research participants' 'biographical, experiential, and psychological worlds'<sup>1267</sup> and a 'range of expressive information'<sup>1268</sup> was sought to firstly capture closer felt representations of the development subject and to secondly determine whether those representations pathologised the development subject as vulnerable, unresilient or in need of external support to regulate its own emotions as Pupavac's work on therapeutic governance denotes.

Taken at face value, this chapter can report that none of the deep pathologies of vulnerability that characterised the *therapeutic governance of experienced trauma* discussed in chapter five could be detected in the interviewed research participants' representations of the development subject. They in fact spoke in resoundingly positive and sanguine ways about the REFLECT participants and developing communities they had come to know and quite poignantly, marvelled at their 'incredible resilience'<sup>1269</sup> in spite of the often very difficult life circumstances they faced. In summary, what came across was a deeply held regard for the people and communities who would typically be classed as developing; with many of the research participants disclosing an unmistakable respect for their spirit and ingenuity in spite of the hardships that characterised substantial aspects of their lives. One research participant was particularly jubilant and effervescent in his/her praise of their resilience; describing the people he/she had worked and come into contact with as 'just amazing ... my heroes ... absolutely fantastic ... just astonishing people'<sup>1270</sup>, followed by various other affirmative descriptors that

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<sup>1266</sup> Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, p. 3.

<sup>1267</sup> Talmy, S., 'Qualitative Interviews in Applied Linguistics: From Research Instrument to Social Practice,' *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 30 (2010), p. 131.

<sup>1268</sup> Berkwits, M., & Inui, S., 'Making Use of Qualitative Research Techniques', *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1998), p. 195.

<sup>1269</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1270</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

emphasised their 'strong-mindedness and fortitude'<sup>1271</sup> following experiences that would have made him/her want to 'curl up and die'.<sup>1272</sup> Generally speaking, many of the interviewed research participants reported being humbled time and again by the tenacity and resolve of those they had met and worked alongside.

In view of this, not a single trace of the pessimistic expectations of individual or community dysfunctionality that might pathologise the personal could be found despite repeated analytical readings of the textual interview material. Nevertheless, every affirmative pronouncement of an individual or a community's hardihood was almost always tempered by an earnest acknowledgement of their concurrent unremitting vulnerability. For example, the same exuberant research participant who spoke so enthusiastically about the 'amazing and astonishing people'<sup>1273</sup> he/she and his/her colleagues had worked with also took pains to concede that 'whilst they are resilient, we also recognise that they are vulnerable'<sup>1274</sup>. There was, as another research participant put it, 'a social and not a psychological vulnerability'<sup>1275</sup>; with another keen to impart that 'we feel a lot of the causes of vulnerability, no matter how resilient they are, are because of unsustainable and unviable household livelihood platforms and not a matter of mental functioning'<sup>1276</sup>. The individuals and communities with whom many of the research participants had come into contact with were not, as one firmly pressed, 'the architects of the fragility around them'<sup>1277</sup> and again taken at face value, many were perturbed by the prospect that their social, political and economic fragility might be seen to invalidate their 'ability to make the best of what they have and deal with their problems on their own terms'<sup>1278</sup>.

Instead, most of the interviewed research participants located the origins of the tenacity and resolve of those they had met and worked alongside in this experience of social vulnerability. One in particular noted that whilst the individuals and communities he/she had come into contact with were in one respect 'beneficiaries, the recipients of help'<sup>1279</sup>; their resilience encouraged him/her to actually recognise them as the 'agents of their own development and protection'<sup>1280</sup> irrespective of any external support. In fact, many of the research participants took great pains to stress that the REFLECT participants and developing communities they had come into contact with were 'already developing and actually doing things already,

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<sup>1271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1274</sup> See: Interview Transcript 14.

<sup>1275</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1276</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

<sup>1277</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1278</sup> See: Interview Transcript 6.

<sup>1279</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1280</sup> *Ibid.*

regardless of us making our interventions'<sup>1281</sup>. Here the use of the word *already* is absolutely crucial because it relays clear recognition that these individuals and communities were already investing and participating in their own, albeit perhaps piecemeal, endogenous development and actively pursuing livelihood strategies however volatile. In short, they revealed an understanding of the development subject that swiftly negated any cause to argue that it was marred by character deficiencies which needed rectifying or filling up through external therapeutic enablement. As one research participant brusquely put it, 'eat a little bit of humble pie with it you know ... if we weren't there, they'd still be alive, they'd still be doing stuff, they'd still be developing'<sup>1282</sup>.

Without doubt, nothing in what any of the interviewed research participants said gave cause to think that they were concerned with 'proving individual people'<sup>1283</sup>. These points might mask a bias, a closeness even to the people they were discussing, but what did come across was a sense that 'unfortunately their resilience [was] precarious'<sup>1284</sup> and needed to be nurtured to 'strengthen the remarkability of that resilience'<sup>1285</sup>. At times, some of the research participants talked about finding a balance between recognising individuals and communities as 'active agents of their own lives in the first place and beneficiaries of help second'<sup>1286</sup>; and moreover, spoke about making interventions that 'all together satiated both needs and supported claims to rights'<sup>1287</sup>. In this respect, instead of rehabilitating appreciably helpless people, some of the interviewed research participants talked about investing in 'personal protective behaviours'<sup>1288</sup> and 'social protective mechanisms'<sup>1289</sup> to enable individuals and communities alike to 'participate in the protection response to their situation'<sup>1290</sup>. The use of this kind of language was striking and alongside its use, some talked about building up capabilities by 'giving people support'<sup>1291</sup>, 'investing in them'<sup>1292</sup>, and 'adding value'<sup>1293</sup> to their existing endeavours; making interventions that 'bettered what was already there'<sup>1294</sup> to 'make rights claims realisable'<sup>1295</sup>. This seemed to reveal a steadfast commitment to supporting

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<sup>1281</sup> See: Interview Transcript 6.

<sup>1282</sup> See: Interview Transcript 13.

<sup>1283</sup> See: Interview Transcript 19.

<sup>1284</sup> See: Interview Transcript 13.

<sup>1285</sup> See: Interview Transcript 20.

<sup>1286</sup> See: Interview Transcript 8.

<sup>1287</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1288</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1289</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

<sup>1290</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1291</sup> See: Interview Transcript 11.

<sup>1292</sup> See: Interview Transcript 20.

<sup>1293</sup> See: Interview Transcript 19.

<sup>1294</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

<sup>1295</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

developing communities to be the best possible ‘agents of their own development and protection’<sup>1296</sup> to cite that influential statement again.

This optimism in the development subject’s potential was a striking feature of nearly all of the textual interview transcripts but it sometimes felt overly expectant given that most of the interviewed research participants also recognised the unrelenting force and impact of the social vulnerabilities bearing down upon and limiting the possibilities within peoples’ lives. In fact, upon reflection, the testimonies of many of the interviewed research participants were blemished by an at times contradictory mixture of exuberant, unbridled idealism and cautious, restrained realism which subtly illuminated their expectations of the development subject more fully. For example one of the most cheerful of all of the interviewed research participants, who spoke so sanguinely about the ‘astonishing people’<sup>1297</sup> he/she had come into contact with, still lamented the prospect of these social vulnerabilities actually ‘being overcome within a seventy-five year time span, let alone a twenty five year one’<sup>1298</sup>. Yet somehow his/her expectations of the development subject’s potential to become the architect of its’ own prosperity was hardly tempered by this gloomy admission. Another intimated that these social vulnerabilities ‘might never be overcome in my lifetime’<sup>1299</sup> and read together, they almost seemed to imply that individuals and communities had no choice but to try to develop themselves and that as another interviewed research participant put it ‘their participation in REFLECT would help them to be those agents of change’<sup>1300</sup>.

This mixture of idealism and realism might well be a longstanding development sensibility but together with the representation of the development subject as precariously resilient or in other words, ‘resilient yet vulnerable’<sup>1301</sup>, this chapter is minded to see this as emerging evidence of the imagination of a future dominated by the kind of endless risk, insecurity and precarity alluded to in chapter five. For one, the representation of the development subject as remarkably resilient reads like a celebration of emerging resilient citizenship and an endorsement of a subjectivity that is capable of accommodating itself to its environment as it waits for change to come. Whilst, noticeable expressions of lament about the seeming intransience of social vulnerabilities that characterise and constrain substantial aspects of people’s lives within this thesis’ textual interview material would appear to prefigure a preference for a development subject that is ‘capable of making [...] adjustments to itself [...] to

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<sup>1296</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1297</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1299</sup> See: Interview Transcript 13.

<sup>1300</sup> See: Interview Transcript 20.

<sup>1301</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.



survive the hazards encountered in its exposure to the world'<sup>1302</sup>. All in all, the fact that some of the interviewed research participants entangled pessimistic expectations of social, political and economic fragility with more buoyant talk about the development subject's potential to be an agent of its own development and protection, an endorsement of a political subjectivity capable of coping with and adapting to its own experience of social vulnerability emerged.

What is more, the discernable representation of the development subject as resilient yet vulnerable directly replicates the synchronised recognition of the vulnerability of the subject as its resilience is concurrently championed which according to Mark Neocleous was integral to the presentation of resilience, and the political development of resilient citizenship, as a means to '*subjectively [work] through [...] uncertainty and instability*'.<sup>1303</sup> By consequence, efforts in that chapter to highlight the rise of resilience as a concept which eroded the authority of humanitarian interventions which clung to the authority of the projection of vulnerability and dysfunctionality in the event of experienced trauma provides a supremely useful check on the representation of the development subject as precariously resilient here within this thesis' textual interview material. This discernable emphasis on resilience, together with statements alluding to supporting the development subject to be both an agent of change and an agent of its own protection could, according to the thinking outlined in that chapter, be taken to mean that REFLECT replicates some of the most pronounced aspects of the therapeutic governance of resilient citizenship in the face of trauma to come. Very little was discernable within the textual interview material about how the development subject's resilience might be developed; but sentiments about investing in '*personal protective behaviours*'<sup>1304</sup> and '*social protective mechanisms*'<sup>1305</sup> surely imply that a will to do so might well be a substantive feature of its will to empower.

As such, a more considered appraisal of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject as revealed by the textual interview material is needed to further scrutinise this representation of the development subject as precariously resilient. In summary thus far, this chapter is persuaded that the interviewed research participants did not, on face value at least, appear to shelter pessimistic expectations of the development subject but that on the basis of its critical thematic analysis of the textual interview material, it is attentive to the possibility that they harboured a normative commitment to responsabilise the development subject to be both an agent of social change

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<sup>1302</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 74.

<sup>1303</sup> Neocleous, M., 'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience', p. 192.

<sup>1304</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1305</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

and an agent of its own protection. In light of these observations, this chapter will soon be minded to argue that these twin ambitions can be traced back to this initial representation of the development subject as precariously resilient. Of course, it is important to remember that REFLECT was designed as a framework for adult literacy education and community mobilisation that sought to kick start ‘wider [processes] of positive [transformatory] social change [within] literacy circles’<sup>1306</sup>. What follows next will therefore invariably need to assess whether it holds true to these principles; or whether, as Neocleous’ thinking might ordain, it simply affords its participants with a supplementary ‘training in resilience’<sup>1307</sup> to bolster the precariousness of that resilience.

#### *The Anticipated Consequences of REFLECT Circle Participation*

Like most qualitative research which aspires to capture ‘research participants’ [...] experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and orientations toward a range of phenomena’<sup>1308</sup>, the empirical work undertaken to support this thesis’ research sought to explore what the epistemic community of actors involved in bringing REFLECT into being thought participation could potentially bring to bear upon the development subject. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, which were ‘theorised [...] as a resource for investigating [the research participants’] experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings’<sup>1309</sup>, it also sought to interrogate publicly presented ideas about its potential to empower people and communities to influence or enact processes of change. Ontological status was once again ascribed to the research participants’ ‘biographical, experiential, and psychological worlds’<sup>1310</sup> with interviews chiefly conceptualised as epistemological conduits into these worlds and a means to generate closer, felt approximations of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject as they perceived them.<sup>1311</sup> What follows next should therefore be read as a richer interpretive picture of those anticipated consequences by virtue of the fact that the collection, analysis and representation of these interviews was premised on the belief that it would be possible to unravel a deeper or more essential understanding of them by inducing research participants to reveal their inner, more private, thoughts about its publicly presented potential as well as their own normative commitments.<sup>1312</sup>

#### *The Diversity of REFLECT Practice*

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<sup>1306</sup> Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. *The REFLECT Mother Manual*, p. 70.

<sup>1307</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1308</sup> Talmy, S., ‘Qualitative Interviews in Applied Linguistics: From Research Instrument to Social Practice,’ p. 128.

<sup>1309</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>1310</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1311</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1312</sup> Van den Berg, H., Wetherell, M., & Houtkoop-Steenstra, H. *Analyzing Race Talk: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on the Research Interview* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003), p. 3.

A common theme that emerged during the analysis of the textual interview material was the research participants' eagerness to stress the diversity of REFLECT practice from the very outset. The entire thesis is probably guilty of referring to REFLECT somewhat singularly; as if it was a very prescriptive form of participatory development practice that could be transplanted and utilised in any given context without modification or variation. That simply is not the case and whilst chapter two took pains to describe it as an adaptable approach to adult literacy that fuses the critical pedagogic theory of Paulo Freire with participatory rural appraisal techniques, nearly all of the research participants emphasised 'its strength as an open ended and adaptable'<sup>1313</sup> framework for adult literacy education and community mobilisation. As such, many spoke of their own professional efforts to 'concede a natural authority over it'<sup>1314</sup> or 'forfeit their own personal and institutional sense of possession'<sup>1315</sup> of what they had originally conceived in order to create space for others to 'take on, use and adapt it for practice however they might see fit'<sup>1316</sup>. In terms of interrogating the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development, most of those interviewed therefore spoke from a position of distance from the practice they were now aware of it and as such, the analysis of the textual interview material is tempered by that constraint.

With respect to the validity of any arising conclusions, this is a significant concession that potentially makes it tricky to draw generalisable inferences about the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject. Not least because different and ever changing expectations will undoubtedly exist of, as one research participant put it, a 'continually evolving framework for community mobilisation that anyone could pick up and use'<sup>1317</sup>. That said, repeated heuristic readings of the textual interview material gave rise to a sense that the interviewed research participants shared some common assumptions of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation and which were substantiated by an analytical strategy described in chapter three that helped to reveal these assumptions through the thematic coding of the textual interview material. In summary, this strategy revealed that the epistemic community of non-governmental organisation actors who first conceived and then subsequently championed REFLECT as a community-based approach to participatory development felt that REFLECT circle participation could sensitise the development subject to the possibility of change, enable it to overcome its fears and validate it by bringing it together with others. What follows should therefore be read as an interpretative representation of the

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<sup>1313</sup> See: Interview Transcript 17.

<sup>1314</sup> See: Interview Transcript 4.

<sup>1315</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

<sup>1316</sup> See: Interview Transcript 19.

<sup>1317</sup> See: Interview Transcript 12.

anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject which begins with a comment on the use of a specific metaphor to express that imagined impact.

### *The Journey Metaphor*

Another common theme that emerged during the analysis of the textual interview material was the research participants' repeated use of a journey metaphor to describe the development subject's probable experience of REFLECT circle participation. The word itself appears thirty six times across all twenty interview transcripts with most participants' using it to describe REFLECT as a process of change and development including a 'journey of change'<sup>1318</sup>, 'a journey of realisation'<sup>1319</sup>, a 'journey of self-transformation', a 'journey of critical reflection'<sup>1320</sup>, a 'transformatory journey of sorts'<sup>1321</sup> and a 'personal journey that reveals itself in participatory practice'<sup>1322</sup> to cite a few. As a 'way of speaking in which one thing is expressed in terms of another [and which] throws new light on the character of what is being described'<sup>1323</sup>, the prevalence of the journey metaphor within the textual interview material was interesting. Indeed, as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson might attest, it marks the extension of the research participants' descriptions of the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation 'beyond the range of ordinary literal ways of thinking and talking into [a] range of [...] figurative, poetic, colourful, or fanciful thought and language'<sup>1324</sup>. Without wanting to focus too deeply on conceptual metaphor theory, it effectively permits this chapter to draw inferences about the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation using knowledge typically drawn upon to think about journeys.<sup>1325</sup>

In other words, it establishes a pairing of ontological equivalence that sanctions mapping latent knowledge about travelling between one place and another and/or other commonly held cultural ideas about processes of personal development onto REFLECT's prevailing

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<sup>1318</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

<sup>1319</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

<sup>1320</sup> See: Interview Transcript 10.

<sup>1321</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

<sup>1322</sup> See: Interview Transcript 19.

<sup>1323</sup> Kopp, S. *Guru: Metaphors from a Psychotherapist* (Science & Behaviour Books, California, 1971), p.17.

<sup>1324</sup> Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 2003), p. 13.

<sup>1325</sup> For cognitive linguistic theorists such as Lakoff and Johnson for example, the journey metaphor is an example of a *source path goal image schema* which echoes preconceptual structurings in everyday experience and taps into the notion that every time we move anywhere, there is a place we start from (*source*), a place we end up at (*goal*), places in between, and a direction (*path*). It thus follows, that the prevalence of the journey metaphor within this thesis' textual interview material allows this chapter to tease out a number of inferences about the possible consequences of REFLECT circle participation much more effortlessly than had it not appeared at all; including by way of an example, it makes it possible to infer that REFLECT engages participants in processes of personal change and sets them on a developmental path with designated start and end points. See: Lakoff, G., 'The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor', in Ortony, A (Ed). *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Second Edition 1993), pp. 202-251; Johnson, M., 'The Philosophical Significance of Image Schemas', in Hampe, B., & Grady, JE (Eds). *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schema in Cognitive Linguistics* (Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin & New York, 2005), pp. 15-34; and Turner, J., 'Turns of Phrase and Routes to Learning: The Journey Metaphor in Educational Culture', *Intercultural Communication Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1997-1998), pp. 24-35.

knowledge claims.<sup>1326</sup> For example, building on observations made in chapter two, the prevalence of the journey metaphor undoubtedly strengthens the argument that REFLECT speaks to an agenda of participant transition, change and transformation. Moreover, mapping the kind of knowledge typically associated with journeys onto REFLECT - including knowledge about the value of challenge and coping with difficulty alongside reaching a particular goal, reference point or horizon - draws explicit attention to the nature of the path of disempowerment to empowerment that it seeks to engender. In fact, it gives cause to infer that the path from disempowered marginality to empowered transformative activism is not without trial or tribulation and that *the process* of becoming an active agent of change is just as, if not more, important than simply being so.<sup>1327</sup> All in all, reflecting upon the presence and meaning of the journey metaphor has yielded new ways of interacting with and thinking about the textual interview material as a whole; not least in terms of sensitising its analysis and representation to the ways in which the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation might involve the development subject beginning to engage in a continual process of becoming.

#### *Sensitising the Development Subject to the Possibility of Change*

More substantively however, sensitising the development subject to the possibility of change and making it aware of new possibilities through small, and sometimes even the most basic of, literacy gains emerged during the analysis of the textual interview material as one of three generally felt anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on that subject. Whilst REFLECT's critical pedagogic approach to adult literacy as outlined in chapter two is publicly feted for its ability to nourish people's capacity for critical consciousness and to motivate critical action, this chapter is keen to argue that by consequence it actually tries to engage and inspire its participants in infinitely more subtle and modest ways than its prevailing knowledge claims suggest. In contrast, most of the field practitioners who participated in the research suggested that at a more fundamental level REFLECT simply provides an opportunity for most of its participants to engage with and 'access an education they might never have had'<sup>1328</sup>. In fact, they talked about its achievements in much more modest terms, noting its ability to 'develop basic functional literacy, to strengthen existing familial literacy skills where they existed and to make literacy learning useful'<sup>1329</sup>, and did not defer to some of the more grandiose claims about its potential to overcome the effects of marginality,

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<sup>1326</sup> Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 207.

<sup>1327</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>1328</sup> See: Interview Transcript 7.

<sup>1329</sup> See: Interview Transcript 8.

dependency, domination or whatever else the Freirian theory of critical pedagogy might suggest it could.

For example, supporting participants to learn to write their own name was for one field practitioner about supporting the manifestation of ‘small but remarkably powerful self-identifying processes’<sup>1330</sup> which, based on his own observations, yielded an emotionally loaded ‘sense of pride and achievement’<sup>1331</sup> within REFLECT participants that could steadily be built upon to seed the imagination of future accomplishments. For this experienced field practitioner, the practice and development of new literacy habits gave participants a more accomplished sense of themselves and their potential and marked the first step in ‘strengthening their capacity to communicate and engage with those in power in one way or another’<sup>1332</sup>. In the grand scheme of things, these may not be especially new, profound or revelatory observations but they do intimate that REFLECT actually relies upon very small but often highly personal catalytic realisations of potential and capability to sensitise participants to the possibility of piecemeal change in their lives. It might not immediately encourage the development subject to self-identify as an actor capable of advocating for itself and its rights in the wider, literate world but it would certainly appear to want to encourage that subject to participate in a process of becoming towards that aspiration. All in all, it seems feasible to concur that REFLECT circle participation is expected to connect the development subject to a more effectual sense of itself and its possible future.

This inference however should not be misconstrued and taken to mean that participation is presumed to rehabilitate and connect the development subject to a better sense of itself in accordance with a will to improve, practiced through schemes of aspiration, improvement and betterment, that pathologise and form deficient subject positions of others. For obvious reasons, this thesis is especially vigilant to representations of deficit and dysfunctionality; and whilst, the first part of this chapter has already touched on the research participants’ general representations of that subject in far greater detail, it seems appropriate to address an aspect of that debate here in relation to participants’ illiteracy. Indeed, many of those who participated in the research (including the field practitioner cited above) were keen to stress that REFLECT was not ‘serviced on a deficit model’<sup>1333</sup>. One research participant wanted their dislike of approaches to adult literacy that ‘equated illiteracy with ignorance or other shortcomings for that matter’<sup>1334</sup> and which failed to value the ‘habits that people adopted to

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<sup>1330</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

<sup>1331</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1332</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1333</sup> See: Interview Transcript 7.

<sup>1334</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

survive without reading and writing'<sup>1335</sup> made known. To them and others, participants' literacy gains were representative of the development of 'new kinds of habits and perspectives'<sup>1336</sup> and a 'new capacity to communicate with power'<sup>1337</sup> and as such, the aspiration to connect participants to a 'more effectual and powerful'<sup>1338</sup> sense of themselves was to be understood in terms of an enablement to ultimately 'speak to power'<sup>1339</sup>.

Many of those with direct experience of facilitating REFLECT circles however spoke of the need to 'subvert and challenge the way that people thought about literacy'<sup>1340</sup> in order to sensitise participants to the possibility of change. Whilst one research participant conceded that access to an education motivated most participants to participate in REFLECT circles, one of the interviewed research participants described this as 'both an opportunity and a horrible curse'<sup>1341</sup>. On the one hand, they reported that literacy provided a safe cover for participants, especially women, to 'negotiate space for REFLECT within their lives'<sup>1342</sup>; on the other however, many spoke of the challenges it presented in terms of 'engaging people in the transformation process'<sup>1343</sup>. As one field practitioner surmised, 'having created a space for people to come together and having then framed that space around literacy or a second chance to learn, we also created and inherited a set of problems which we had to systematically work to overcome'<sup>1344</sup>; with another research participant describing having to 'subvert, challenge and change the way that people thought about literacy'<sup>1345</sup> to overcome 'expectations of dependent learning'<sup>1346</sup>. Again these might not be the most novel of observations, but in terms of thinking about the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation, they reveal further subtleties of activity that belie the theoretical expectation that the development subject might quickly move towards empowerment.

Subverting participants' modest expectations of a literacy education nonetheless would appear to chime with a comment made by Ella Myers cited in the previous chapter about 'reflexive practices of self-transformation'<sup>1347</sup> and their dependency 'on [...] processes of politicisation for their activation and subsequent direction'<sup>1348</sup>. By way of an explanation, one of the research

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<sup>1335</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1336</sup> See: Interview Transcript 8.

<sup>1337</sup> See: Interview Transcript 20.

<sup>1338</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

<sup>1339</sup> See: Interview Transcript 7.

<sup>1340</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

<sup>1341</sup> See: Interview Transcript 19.

<sup>1342</sup> See: Interview Transcript 20.

<sup>1343</sup> See: Interview Transcript 18.

<sup>1344</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

<sup>1345</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

<sup>1346</sup> See: Interview Transcript 15.

<sup>1347</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 51.

<sup>1348</sup> *Ibid.*

participants spoke of their belief that alongside ‘knowing how to read and write, people also needed to know how to deal with the power dynamics surrounding day to day literacy practices’<sup>1349</sup>. For them, encouraging REFLECT participants to ‘look and consider how they might address the power dynamics around the actual use of literacy in their own lives’<sup>1350</sup> was very much seen as a way of ‘readying them for the demands of speaking to power’<sup>1351</sup>. Beyond connecting them to a more effectual and powerful sense of themselves, simulating how participants might ‘deal with and change the occurrence of those situations’<sup>1352</sup> in their own lives was cited as the means through which REFLECT facilitators sought to sensitise its participants to the possibility of change. In light of Myers’ comment, it seems reasonable to infer that this reported simulation is part of a strategy to move the development subject’s changing sense of itself and its potential in a direction that motivates it to ‘speak to power’<sup>1353</sup> in the ways that REFLECT anticipates it eventually could.

All things considered, it could be inferred that sensitising the development subject to the possibility of change through small, incremental literacy gains, is indicative of a more overarching expectation that it will eventually become an agent of social change. In trying to represent an analysis of this thesis’ primary research, this chapter is persuaded that the epistemic community of actors responsible for bringing it into being expected REFLECT circle participation to provide participants with a more effectual and powerful sense of themselves through access to an education they might otherwise never have had and the subsequent stimulation of a level of politicised self-reflexivity that might just motivate them to become the change agents of their own lives. However, whilst many research participants repeatedly spoke of motives to enable participants to ‘deal with and change the occurrence of certain situations’<sup>1354</sup> in their lives; more emphasis appeared to be placed on energising participants to recognise the ‘possibility of change within themselves’<sup>1355</sup> and subtly nudging them into new adaptive subject positions. If confirmation were needed, this corroborate the preceding chapter’s supposition that REFLECT circle participation energises a practice of personhood that calls upon the development subject to participate in its own personal transformation and conscious political awakening in order to make possible a ‘mode of being that [might just] inspire participation in [...] efforts to shape [their] worldly conditions’<sup>1356</sup> for the better.

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<sup>1349</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

<sup>1350</sup> See: Interview Transcript 8.

<sup>1351</sup> See: Interview Transcript 7.

<sup>1352</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

<sup>1353</sup> See: Interview Transcript 7.

<sup>1354</sup> See: Interview Transcript 14.

<sup>1355</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

<sup>1356</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 51.



That said sensitising people to the possibility of change in their lives is no guarantee that transformative social change will ever be realised. Indeed, whilst many of the interviewed research participants relayed remarkably admirable hopes for the wholesale transformation of REFLECT circle participants' lives; they more often than not spoke of much more pragmatic motives to better enable them 'to deal and cope with'<sup>1357</sup> the occurrence of certain situations in their lives through a more empowered use and understanding of attained literacy. Coupled with supplementary comments about the need for 'education to be both therapeutic and protective'<sup>1358</sup>, this pragmatism chimes with ambitions to foster resilient personalities better able to cope with poverty, risk and insecurity and the therapeutic governance of resilient citizenship outlined in chapter five. As such, it might be better argued that rather than moving to establish the development subject as an agent of social change, REFLECT circle participation is more realistically imagined as the conduit through which that subject might become an agent of its own protection; better able to speak to power and better able to advocate for and defend itself and its rights in situations that necessitate the need to do so. In light of these comments and observations, this chapter is minded to surmise that the point made earlier about subtly nudging its participants into new adaptive subject positions actually reveals something of a contradiction of ambition and aspiration.

As a matter of fact, it would appear that the analysis and subsequent representation of this thesis' empirical research has perhaps unearthed a contradiction which underpins the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject. Indeed, in direct contrast to the previously identified optimism invested in the development subject's potential by those who participated in the research; a concurrent dynamic which invests cause in enabling that same subject to become a much more pragmatic agent of its own protection reveals itself in the way that many research participants described and discussed their expectations of literacy learning within REFLECT circles. Here at least it is important to stress that these two dynamics are by no means mutually exclusive; with many research participants alluding to the need to enable participants to better 'deal and cope with'<sup>1359</sup> the occurrence of certain situations *in* their lives before they might then be in a position to change their happening completely. Thinking back to the way that many of the interviewed research participants likened REFLECT to a journey, it seems reasonable to suggest that these different ambitions and aspirations might mark consecutive steps of the envisaged journey from disempowered marginality towards empowered activism. This does however begin to stretch

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<sup>1357</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1358</sup> See: Interview Transcript 11.

<sup>1359</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

the possibilities of what can be inferred from the available textual interview material so suffice to say, this twofold expectation stands as the most resonant finding here.

### *Enabling the Development Subject to Overcome its Fears*

These points will be returned to in due course; but in the spirit of moving this chapter along, enabling the development subject to process and overcome its fears and anxieties emerged as the second of three generally felt anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on that subject. As one interviewed research participant noted, encouraging ‘participants to name their biggest fears and concerns’<sup>1360</sup> was on a practical level, an expedient way for facilitators to ‘pinpoint priority concerns and ensure we could tailor discussions’<sup>1361</sup> within any given REFLECT circle to local issues. However, on top of that, getting participants to ‘identify and name their fears’<sup>1362</sup> was presented as a way of ‘enabling participants to think about the type of change they wanted to see’<sup>1363</sup> realised. In the same way that literacy learning appreciably sensitised participants to the possibility of change in their lives, asking participants to identify their biggest fears and concerns challenged them to ‘name the change they hoped to see in their lives and allowed us to identify some of the biggest problems that we perhaps had not realised were causing issues in their families lives’<sup>1364</sup>. This, as another interviewed research participant put it, it ‘gives facilitators something to work with and goes back to the idea of making literacy learning and the discussions that generates meaningful but also useful and real and helpful’<sup>1365</sup>.

In support of that point, another research participant with facilitation experience spoke about his approach to ‘getting REFLECT circles going’<sup>1366</sup> by encouraging participants to begin by ‘actually opening up their fears to themselves’<sup>1367</sup>. Noting an all-female REFLECT circle in Northern Uganda, he/she then proceeded to summarise a REFLECT circle that asked participants ‘to name and identify their fears to themselves’<sup>1368</sup> before introducing and working through them with other participants to collectively establish ‘what might happen and be done to resolve them’<sup>1369</sup>. The research participant described how the participants of this all female REFLECT circle spoke up ‘about the threat of sexual violence against girls’<sup>1370</sup> and a ‘climate of

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<sup>1360</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1361</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1362</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1363</sup> See: Interview Transcript 18.

<sup>1364</sup> See: Interview Transcript 19.

<sup>1365</sup> See: Interview Transcript 17.

<sup>1366</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1367</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1368</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1369</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1370</sup> *Ibid.*

impunity for defilement because of excessively punitive national penalties involving life imprisonment or execution'<sup>1371</sup> that impeded the prosecution of offenders because these were perceived by 'local law enforcers to be too great a punishment for the crime'<sup>1372</sup>. In the midst of this description, he/she honestly conceded that the REFLECT circle participants' power to influence matters would in all likelihood depend on 'later partnerships with other advocacy groups'; but he/she maintained that facilitated discussions within the REFLECT circle enabled participants to 'identify the change they wanted see'<sup>1373</sup>, to 'figure out where the possibility of that change might come from'<sup>1374</sup> and to consider the ways they might then begin to 'challenge law enforcement and criminal justice system failings'<sup>1375</sup> on this matter.

Anyone reading this and hoping for an anecdote that neatly captures swift, decisive movement between this REFLECT circle discussion and broader social change will obviously be disappointed. <sup>1376</sup> As emphasised in chapter six, socially transformative visions of empowerment to which REFLECT subscribes might frame micro-political change as the conduit of macro-political change but any movement between the two is decidedly more complicated than that framing would suggest. <sup>1377</sup> However, the interviewed research participant keenly felt that this REFLECT circle served to exemplify how participants' worries and fears were positively and constructively leveraged to kick-start processes of 'real, meaningful reflection around those girls' real fears'<sup>1378</sup>. In short, he/she felt that getting participants to reveal their worries and fears within the relative safety of a REFLECT circle served to create 'shared [objects] of concern that [yielded] energy and advocacy'<sup>1379</sup> for future change enabling activities. Much like encouraging REFLECT participants to consider how they might address the power dynamics around the use of literacy in their lives was seen as a way of readying them for the demands of speaking to power; getting participants to identify their biggest fears and concerns was in his/her mind a way of stimulating the kind of emotions that might 'turns those fears into something that could change the way those girls felt about what they could do with something that felt unmovable, unchangeable'<sup>1380</sup>.

In other words, this same research participant talked about it as a way of 'trying to create, or to seed, hope'<sup>1381</sup>. Here Martha Nussbaum's previously cited work on eudaimonism and the

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<sup>1371</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1372</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1373</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1374</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1375</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1376</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 50.

<sup>1377</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1378</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1379</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 50.

<sup>1380</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1

<sup>1381</sup> *Ibid.*

nature of emotions as ‘evaluative judgements [...] that ascribe to certain things and persons [...] great importance for [a] person’s own [functioning and] flourishing’<sup>1382</sup> is pivotal; not least because it underscores how the content of people’s emotions can serve to energise their subjectivity. As Nussbaum herself articulates, grappling with the messy material of emotion – be that grief or love, anger or fear - can reveal a great deal about the role these tumultuous feelings play in thought.<sup>1383</sup> For example, ‘in fear one sees oneself or what one loves as seriously threatened [but] in hope one sees oneself or what one loves as in some uncertainty but with a good chance of a good outcome’<sup>1384</sup>. In accordance with this thinking, getting participants to discuss their biggest fears could be interpreted as a tactic to assuage those feelings of threat and through the naming of change, encourage them to form ‘a conception of the good and engage in critical reflection about the planning’<sup>1385</sup> of their lives. Accordingly, this chapter is minded to argue that REFLECT leverages discussions of participants’ worries and fears to seed that semblance of hope and give them a sense ‘that their lives are not as fixed’<sup>1386</sup>.

What is more, as that same interviewed research participant revealed, encouraging and enabling participants to ‘bring those worries and fears into a REFLECT circle ... to talk about their worries and fears with others in and as a group was possibly the catalyst’<sup>1387</sup> that pushed them to ‘change the way they thought and felt about what had made them fearful’<sup>1388</sup>. In this respect, this chapter is minded to infer that REFLECT circles afford participants ‘a context of immediate safety’<sup>1389</sup> to work through and subject their emotions to ‘deliberation and revision in [a space which encourages collective] deliberation about [shared] goals and projects’<sup>1390</sup>. Moreover, it would also imply that ‘deliberative activity’<sup>1391</sup> is valued within REFLECT circles for its ability to nourish personal reflection that, as mentioned in chapter six, is so often fêted by socially transformative visions of empowerment for its potential to ‘challenge reigning ways of being and [...] transform individuals in ways that enable them to engage more effectively in collective projects’<sup>1392</sup>. All things considered, REFLECT would appear to value a small measure of personal change that can serve as ‘the well-spring of change in [...] other areas’<sup>1393</sup> and in doing so, prizes the deliberative process for its ability to set in motion the

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<sup>1382</sup> Nussbaum, MC. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, p. 22.

<sup>1383</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>1384</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>1385</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417.

<sup>1386</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1387</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

<sup>1388</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1389</sup> Nussbaum, MC. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, p. 246.

<sup>1390</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>1391</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1392</sup> Myers, E. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*, p. 47.

<sup>1393</sup> Edwards, M., & Sen, G., ‘NGOs, Social Change and the Transformation of Human Relationships: A 21st-Century Civic Agenda’, p. 609.

'cognitive and affective processes'<sup>1394</sup> necessary to '[raise] people's political consciousness and [generate] collective political action'<sup>1395</sup>.

In view of one interviewed research participant's admission that 'REFLECT does exactly what psychosocial work does even though it might not necessarily admit to it'<sup>1396</sup>; this chapter is minded to interpret this as an example of the crystallisation of psychologising trends and therapeutic sensibilities within development policy and practice. In fact, in light of this research participant's subsequent allegation that 'when you look at all the things that psychosocial work is supposed to do ... REFLECT pretty much does a lot of those things if it is done right'<sup>1397</sup>; encouraging participants to 'open up and talk about things they would not normally talk about'<sup>1398</sup> surely assimilates a therapeutic ethos tilted towards encouraging participants to evaluate their emotions as they deliberate over the type of change they want to see realised. In this respect, it would appear to value 'emotion as a motivating factor to reflexivity'<sup>1399</sup>; something central to the way people monitor 'the social context [they] find themselves in, [and] which they must, as agents of their own personal powers, negotiate'<sup>1400</sup>. Accordingly, this chapter is persuaded that REFLECT prizes a 'socially embedded [...] feeling and reflecting self'<sup>1401</sup> and works to energise a relational and dialogical form of reflection that draws in participants' knowledge of their social world, together with their feelings about it, to overcome those fears.<sup>1402</sup>

Encouraging participants to name and 'identify what they think are their biggest fears and concerns'<sup>1403</sup> could thereby be interpreted as a strategy of responsabilisation that stresses the socially expedient benefits of a feeling and reflecting self deliberating 'over the ranking, patterning and pursuit of its concerns [as] the *modus vivendi* that animates [it] and drives [it] into action'<sup>1404</sup>. That said, asking REFLECT circle participants to collectively name and then reflect upon their biggest fears and worries so that they might then be able to imagine the kind of change they want to see in their lives invariably invites participants to immerse themselves in and then publicly reveal aspects of their psychological selves.<sup>1405</sup> Notwithstanding - although by means guaranteed - good facilitation, this invites participants to risk revealing

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<sup>1394</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 110.

<sup>1395</sup> Cameron, J., & Gibson, K., 'Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein', p. 320.

<sup>1396</sup> See: Interview Transcript 13.

<sup>1397</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1398</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1399</sup> Burkitt, I., 'Emotional Reflexivity: Feeling, Emotion and Imagination in Reflexive Dialogues', *Sociology*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (2012), p. 459.

<sup>1400</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 462.

<sup>1401</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>1402</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 460.

<sup>1403</sup> See: Interview Transcript 7.

<sup>1404</sup> Burkitt, I., 'Emotional Reflexivity: Feeling, Emotion and Imagination in Reflexive Dialogues', p. 462.

<sup>1405</sup> Álvarez-Uría, F., Varela, J., & Gordo, Á., & Parra, P., 'Psychologised Life and Thought Styles', p. 11.

very private and personal aspects of their inner emotional selves as a condition of their possible empowerment within a space that is in all likelihood suffused with subtle, underlying inequalities and power differentials. It naturally raises questions about whether REFLECT circles are appropriate spaces for this kind of emotional expression and whether despite avowals from one of the interviewed research participants that ‘we are bound by the principle to do no harm and are usually pretty quick to check ourselves on that score’<sup>1406</sup>, this chapter is minded to consider what this might actually mean and yield.

Some of the interviewed research participants anticipated these misgivings and one in particular, firmly rejected the proposition that encouraging participants to ‘identify and name their fears’<sup>1407</sup> was in anyway damaging, claiming that ‘it’s not as if we’re asking them to open up or revisit past trauma’<sup>1408</sup>. Instead, he/she proffered that ‘asking them to think about their fears is more or less about asking them to think about their futures, not revisiting the past and certainly not going back over any pain or distress or whatever else might have happened to them, it’s about their futures’<sup>1409</sup>. Nonetheless, another research participant admitted that whilst he/she and his/her colleagues were always careful not to touch on past pain or suffering, it was still ‘a huge challenge trying to make sure you don’t unearth old traumas and then leave participants totally gutted by opening up trauma without support’<sup>1410</sup>. In doing so, he/she presented a reassuring grasp of the potential harm that could be done by inviting participants to talk about things within the space of a REFLECT circle that might in fact require specific therapeutic or even clinical psychological support; acknowledging quite emphatically that ‘when you get involved, if you go there and begin to open up past trauma and you don’t provide the level of support needed to deal with re-visiting that trauma, then you’re doing more damage than good’<sup>1411</sup>.

One interviewed research participant however talked about the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation in terms of enabling participants ‘to overcome things, to come to terms with their experiences and to process internalised suffering’<sup>1412</sup>. This implied that some facilitators failed to stop certain things surfacing during discussions and that by accident or even design, deeply personal aspects of participants’ inner emotional selves did in fact find their way into facilitated discussions designed to support REFLECT circle participants to identify the kind of change they wanted to see realised in their lives. Three other research

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<sup>1406</sup> See: Interview Transcript 20.

<sup>1407</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1408</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1409</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1410</sup> See: Interview Transcript 13.

<sup>1411</sup> See: Interview Transcript 4.

<sup>1412</sup> See: Interview Transcript 5.

participants made similar, but perhaps even more startling, comments about REFLECT circles ‘counselling participants through the surfacing of difficult feelings and memories’<sup>1413</sup>, ‘bearing witness to the emotions of others, providing support, making the threatening non-threatening, boosting protective mechanisms’<sup>1414</sup> and providing ‘space for those in a strong position to talk about their experiences’<sup>1415</sup>. Read altogether, they certainly corroborate their colleague’s supposition that ‘REFLECT does exactly what psychosocial work does even though it might not necessarily admit to it’<sup>1416</sup> and suggest, to this chapter at least, that there might be cause to claim that REFLECT might at times leverage discussions of difficult emotions to stimulate the aforesaid nutriment necessary for participants to grow and thrive as the agents of change it wants them to be in congruence with a eudaimonic understanding of well-being.

That said, in accordance with thinking documented in chapter four which sought to illuminate the essentialisms and ontologies of psychologising processes that have appreciably transformed social, political and economic fragility into matters of personal vulnerability, the accentuation of participants’ fears and worries identified here potentially exposes something striking about the interviewed research participants’ own ontological worldviews.<sup>1417</sup> Thinking back to a number of the interviewed research participants’ comments about the seeming intransience of the social vulnerabilities that characterise and constrain people’s lives, it is possible to surmise that enabling participants to overcome their fears as an anticipated consequence of REFLECT circle participation concerns could be interpreted as the furtive privileging of risk and a subjectivity capable of managing its fear of a future which is unknowable but imaginable as frightful by the interviewed research participants themselves.<sup>1418</sup> In fact, it arguably reveals a latent expectancy that anxiety will feature quite naturally and prominently in the subject’s psyche and that as a basic existential condition of humanity, this anxiety needs to be effectively managed to help REFLECT circle participants deal with the fears that assail them.<sup>1419</sup> What is more, getting them to name and overcome their biggest fears might even represent a strategy of responsabilisation which advocates the kind of prudentialism talked about in chapter five ‘where risk management is forced back onto individuals [as] an everyday practice of the self’<sup>1420</sup>.

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<sup>1413</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1414</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

<sup>1415</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1416</sup> See: Interview Transcript 13.

<sup>1417</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., ‘The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will’, p. 58.

<sup>1418</sup> Neocleous, M., ‘Don’t Be Scared, Be Prepared: Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience’, p. 195.

<sup>1419</sup> Burkitt, I., ‘Emotional Reflexivity: Feeling, Emotion and Imagination in Reflexive Dialogues’, p. 461.

<sup>1420</sup> Peters, M., ‘Education, Enterprise Culture and the Entrepreneurial Self: A Foucauldian Perspective’, p. 61.

All in all, these ontological undertones point to the kind of moves that might want to establish REFLECT circle participants as agents of their own protection. On that basis, this chapter is persuaded that enabling participants to overcome their fears within the space of a REFLECT circle should be judged with the kind of intelligence that avoids assuming complete benevolence. The previously cited statement that 'REFLECT does exactly what psychosocial work does even though it might not necessarily admit to it'<sup>1421</sup> precludes this and by that standard, this chapter remains open to the possibility that the emphasis placed by some of the interviewed research participants on dealing with REFLECT circle participants' underlying worries and fears foretells the placement of the greater burden of responsibility for managing the risk of their intransient social vulnerability within themselves.<sup>1422</sup> As the second of three generally felt anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject, aspirations to help it overcome its fears arguably reveals a contradiction of ambition once more; with talk of empowering the development subject to become the agent of its own named and hoped for change on the one hand intermingling with attitudes which through repeated analytical readings of the thesis' textual interview material would also seem to want to shape it to become the agent of its own protection as well.

#### *Collectively Validating the Development Subject*

Lastly, validating the development subject by bringing it together with others emerged during the analysis of the textual interview material as the last of three generally felt anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on that subject. Indeed, a number of the interviewed research participants talked of 'creating a stimulating environment'<sup>1423</sup> within a REFLECT circle and 'bringing people together'<sup>1424</sup> in that space as a remarkably powerful act that 'conferred political status upon typically marginalised and excluded groups'<sup>1425</sup>. In fact, one in particular spoke of creating a space that elicited an 'experience of change enabling togetherness'<sup>1426</sup>; postulating that drawing people into the defined space of a REFLECT circle 'added a level of physicality to its aspirations of mobilisation'<sup>1427</sup> and played a crucial role in 'making groups feel like a collective'<sup>1428</sup>. A conventional reading of these sentiments might presume that bringing people together for REFLECT was prized for its symbolic assignment of participatory parity to those previously deprived of recognition as social and political

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<sup>1421</sup> See: Interview Transcript 13.

<sup>1422</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>1423</sup> See: Interview Transcript 19.

<sup>1424</sup> See: Interview Transcript 20.

<sup>1425</sup> See: Interview Transcript 13.

<sup>1426</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1427</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

<sup>1428</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.



actors.<sup>1429</sup> Nobody would doubt or question the basis of such an interpretation given all that REFLECT purportedly aspires to achieve; but since one or two of the research participants proceeded to talk about 'bringing people together to validate and find confidence in each other'<sup>1430</sup>, this chapter is more minded to argue that REFLECT actually brings people together to recognise one another.

None of this of course occurs spontaneously and whilst 'bringing people together and guiding them through a process of change'<sup>1431</sup> was credited by one of the interviewed research participants for 'eliciting experiences of interdependent recognition'<sup>1432</sup>, it would be unwise to simply chalk this up to the blanket effectiveness of REFLECT's repertoire of 'counter-cultural participatory methods'<sup>1433</sup> and leave it at that. Granted, each and every interviewed research participant talked at great length about the importance of REFLECT's 'aspirational participatory methods'<sup>1434</sup> and even more so about the value of 'honest, open and authentic facilitation'<sup>1435</sup> for their success. However, many also raised instances within REFLECT circles that they had either observed or facilitated which exposed a different reality behind the ambitious publicly presented teleology of REFLECT's participatory methods. At one level, nearly all conceded that REFLECT relies upon the use of 'participatory tools and processes of facilitation to create a space in which, against all sorts of divisions and tensions and differences in status and power within a group and the situated community where power is frequently based on different things, each participant's voice is given equal weight'<sup>1436</sup>. Yet, quite strikingly, most also afforded equivalent or even greater worth to actually very subtle, often fleeting, but highly charged moments of interpersonal connection brought on by seemingly trivial facilitative techniques as the actual participatory moves that encouraged participants to recognise and esteem one another.

One, for example, talked extensively about the 'opportune use of eye contact to strategically manage silences'<sup>1437</sup> and draw the shyer, the more reserved and the most marginalised group members into facilitated discussions and tasks; whilst another spoke about 'jumbling up seating arrangements to disrupt ingrained social hierarchies'<sup>1438</sup> in a bid to counter the replication of the situated community's existing patterns of exclusion within a REFLECT circle.

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<sup>1429</sup> Olson, K., 'Introduction', in Olson, K (Ed). *Adding Insult to Injury: Nancy Fraser Debates Her Critics*, (Verso, London & New York, 2008), p. 6.

<sup>1430</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1431</sup> See: Interview Transcript 20.

<sup>1432</sup> See: Interview Transcript 7.

<sup>1433</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

<sup>1434</sup> See: Interview Transcript 7

<sup>1435</sup> See: Interview Transcript 7.

<sup>1436</sup> See: Interview Transcript 8.

<sup>1437</sup> See: Interview Transcript 18.

<sup>1438</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

Tangible group tasks, namely getting participants to play a part in activities that required them to move around and work together both physically and cognitively, were also mentioned as ‘convenient counter-cultural tricks’<sup>1439</sup> that got people ‘talking and engaging and feeling that they could say something because they were doing something’<sup>1440</sup>. As one interviewed research participant reflected, ‘these may be subtle moves but they were part of a set of things that gave us the chance to create a different kind of space for people to articulate and contribute something as a new sort of collective power’<sup>1441</sup>. Indeed, beyond giving each participant’s voice equal weight, what these interviewed research participants appeared to be describing were the means to create epiphanic moments where individual participants began to recognise and validate one another at a level of innate human connection and view their immediate togetherness with others within the space of a REFLECT circle as the foundation for a stronger and more empowered sense of themselves as individuals and a collective.

In this respect, this chapter is keen to assert that REFLECT circle participation is expected to confer recognition upon the development subject and transform it into a change agent in two different but mutually fortifying ways. The first approach, as outlined earlier, relies upon fostering highly personal processes of self-identification through literacy learning; whilst the second involves bringing people into a space and process that encourages them to collectively esteem each other and ultimately, move and mobilise together. As one research participant concurred, bringing people together to discuss and debate the issues affecting their individual and collective lives firstly contributed to ‘changing people’s perceptions of others and changing their own perceptions of themselves’<sup>1442</sup>; and secondly fostered a unique ‘interdependent confidence’<sup>1443</sup> within the space of a REFLECT circle by virtue of ‘participants validating each other and moving through change processes together’<sup>1444</sup>. Here, given the number of independently made statements about REFLECT bringing people together ‘to validate and find confidence in each other’<sup>1445</sup>, this implies that within the space of a REFLECT circle, people come to value, esteem and recognise themselves and each other in largely supportive and constructive ways. In fact, following one field practitioner’s remark that REFLECT ‘brings together and reconnects groups of mixed, distrusting participants’<sup>1446</sup>, it might even be bold enough to argue that it brings people together to recognise one another in remedial ways.

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<sup>1439</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

<sup>1440</sup> See: Interview Transcript 8.

<sup>1441</sup> See: Interview Transcript 17.

<sup>1442</sup> See: Interview Transcript 20.

<sup>1443</sup> See: Interview Transcript 18.

<sup>1444</sup> See: Interview Transcript 16.

<sup>1445</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1446</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

For instance, one interviewed research participant with direct experience of facilitating some of the first REFLECT circles spoke of how the ostracisation of a previously respected female member of a village community in Northern Ghana was wholly reversed following a judicious exploration of the community's actions within one. Through a mixture of social drama and facilitated dialogue, he/she conveyed how the presentation of a girl's partially fictionalised life trajectory from 'beautiful hardworking daughter to a beautiful, hardworking, respectable wife, to a valued respected mother to a widowed grandmother who was finally accused of witchcraft and ostracised'<sup>1447</sup> led participants to question what had happened to one of their own when nothing in the presented trajectory appeared to warrant an indictment of witchcraft and the level of ostracisation meted out.<sup>1448</sup> Following a facilitated questioning of the ways in which widows in the community often became easy targets for asset stripping, discussions within the REFLECT circle evolved to expose the use of witchcraft accusations for more duplicitous material ambitions and generated deliberation about the justness of what had happened to this particular widow in the community a few months earlier.<sup>1449</sup> After a discussion of how her ostracisation might be repealed, participants left the REFLECT circle and over time successfully lobbied village elders to rescind the accusation of witchcraft and welcome the widow back into the fold of the community.<sup>1450</sup>

On the surface this would appear to be a redemptive anecdote about individuals and a community re-acknowledging, re-esteeming, and re-connecting with a marginalised other. Considered more critically however, it not only stands as an example of how REFLECT encourages its participants to bestow or esteem others (including, excluded or marginalised others) in remedial ways; but moreover, it exemplifies how 'changing people's perceptions of themselves'<sup>1451</sup> and 'changing people's perceptions of others'<sup>1452</sup> can work symbiotically to activate complex and compound change processes. Pulling the anecdote apart a little further, it is effectively a story about a group of REFLECT participants confronting and coming to terms with its community's prejudices and behaviours, recognising their (partial) complicity in the effects of those prejudices and behaviours, and beginning to recognise the possibility or opportunity to correct the consequences of those prejudices and behaviours within themselves. In terms of understanding the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the development subject, the interviewed research participant who relayed the story pressed that he had always expected REFLECT circle participation to provide participants with an

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<sup>1447</sup> See: Interview Transcript 17.

<sup>1448</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1449</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1450</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1451</sup> See: Interview Transcript 15.

<sup>1452</sup> See: Interview Transcript 8.

opportunity 'to connect with a different sense ...a feeling ...a vision to be grand about it maybe ...of who they are and what they could actually be'<sup>1453</sup>. In this, he surmised that 'we couldn't give them very much really ...but we would always try to give them a sense of possibility within themselves'<sup>1454</sup>.

What is more, he/she also petitioned that this was also a story about 'the collective power of people connecting with and finding confidence in each other'<sup>1455</sup>, or in another research participant's words, 'the collective power of the confidence that comes from bringing people together and guiding them through a process of change'<sup>1456</sup>. As he/she proposed, this one account of a group of REFLECT circle participants rallying around and overturning the injustice of one widow's exclusion from her community was an example of how 'the confidence built in the space of a REFLECT circle'<sup>1457</sup> had the potential to infiltrate and influence what another interviewed research participant described as 'other spaces in which individuals might have previously felt horribly disempowered'<sup>1458</sup>. Talking in terms of its 'bridging potential'<sup>1459</sup>, he/she spoke steadfastly about the way in which participants used the collective validation fostered within the space of their REFLECT circle as a catalyst to organise themselves, engage their village elders, and change something in a sphere of their lives where they had previously had very little say or sway.<sup>1460</sup> In this respect, it is arguably a story about the transformatory potential of an experience of interdependent recognition and validation born out of complex and compound change process that as the interviewed research participant surmised 'gave people the courage, the confidence, you know, to try and make some sort of difference'<sup>1461</sup>.

Thus far, this chapter's interpretation of the textual interview material has in the main corroborated the preceding chapter's sense that individual empowerment and personal self-transformation are valuable pre-requisites for broader community empowerment and social transformation. However, in view of the fact this and other interviewed research participants talked so openly and animatedly about bringing people together to 'validate and find confidence in each other'<sup>1462</sup>, a latent but steadily arising supposition that many of the interviewed research participants valued reflexivity in the relationships REFLECT circle participants had with themselves and their community needs to be taken seriously and

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<sup>1453</sup> See: Interview Transcript 17.

<sup>1454</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1455</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1456</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1457</sup> See: Interview Transcript 17.

<sup>1458</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

<sup>1459</sup> See: Interview Transcript 17.

<sup>1460</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1461</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1462</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

explored. Indeed, whilst some of the hallmarks of a pedagogy of responsabilised personhood reveal themselves in REFLECT's endorsement of literacy learning as a tool to seed individual participants' self-realisation as literate political actors; its vision of collaborative democratic action is, by virtue of this chapter's sense that REFLECT validates the development subject as a change agent by bringing it together with others, is also tied to a symbiotic understanding of the relationship between individual and community change. As such, this chapter is minded to argue the interviewed research participants valued a *relational ethic of therapeutic responsabilisation* which firstly, sets store in the interplay between personal and interpersonal processes of change and transformation and which secondly, attaches importance to a felt togetherness as a means to mobilise and empower individuals and communities alike.

Valuing togetherness as a change enabler could however be interpreted much more cynically. Indeed, the emphasis placed by many of the interviewed research participants on bringing people together 'to validate and find confidence in each other'<sup>1463</sup> could conversely be interpreted as a move to foster and bolster a collective, relational resilience. Given one interviewed research participant's spoke of an expectation that REFLECT 'can provide and facilitate a collective process for people to move together and support one another once we've gone'<sup>1464</sup>, there is cause to wonder whether encouraging participants to recognise and validate one another mirrors the therapeutic governance of resilient citizenship and represents a strategy of responsabilisation that aspires to create more resilient change agents who by virtue of their togetherness are better able to cope with their development challenges and better able to 'take control of their own development themselves'<sup>1465</sup> Coupled with aspirations to 'make groups of participants feel like more of a collective'<sup>1466</sup>, this chapter is minded to wonder whether by conferring recognition, and in particularly encouraging participants to esteem, validate and recognise one another, REFLECT circle participation is rightly or wrongly expected to transform and strengthen the bonds between participants in the hope that these small relational transformations might kindle the 'social protective mechanisms'<sup>1467</sup> noted earlier that enable individuals and communities alike to 'participate in the protection response to their situation'<sup>1468</sup>.

One interviewed research participant's description of a REFLECT circle as 'a communicative space which militates against risk'<sup>1469</sup> is, in this respect, illuminating. Read alongside that same

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<sup>1463</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1464</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1465</sup> See: Interview Transcript 8.

<sup>1466</sup> See: Interview Transcript 15.

<sup>1467</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

<sup>1468</sup> See: Interview Transcript 1.

<sup>1469</sup> See: Interview Transcript 15.

interviewed research participant's description of the 'emotional labour and emotional investment in that communicative space'<sup>1470</sup>, it gives grounds to speculate that this emotional labour was expected to foster a relational resource within and between REFLECT circle participants that builds up and fortifies their future adaptability to risk. What is more, another of the interviewed research participant's talked about bringing people together within the space of a REFLECT circle to 'develop their ability to cope with difficulty or deal with challenge together'<sup>1471</sup>. This, by consequence, turns this chapter's sense that REFLECT circle participation validates the development subject as a change agent by bringing it together with others completely on its head. Coupled with another interviewed research participant's statement about REFLECT circle participation preparing participants 'to cope more effectively with the world'<sup>1472</sup>, this description of a REFLECT circle as a space that might supply participants with an interpersonal, communicative resource to negotiate risk weakens and undermines the authority of that supposition even further. Indeed, this fleeting description of a REFLECT circle as 'a communicative space which militates against risk'<sup>1473</sup> might just illuminate an interest in bringing people together in order to foster protection, as opposed to, change enabling subject positions.

By implication, it certainly gives cause to reconsider what 'the collective power of people connecting with and finding confidence in each other'<sup>1474</sup> and 'the collective power of the confidence that comes from bringing people together'<sup>1475</sup> might instead cultivate. Indeed, this adjustment might well be warranted in light of another research participant's comment that 'bringing people together plays a role in building connectors to balance out dividers, protective mechanisms to combat risk factors, goods to compensate bads so that people can better protect themselves'<sup>1476</sup>. Here, the value placed in togetherness as a change-enabler flips to become something which in 'reconnecting communities, enhances the protective mechanisms they already have or restores those which they have either forgotten or stopped using'<sup>1477</sup>. It is, in short, valued as a 'community protective mechanism'<sup>1478</sup> which arguably places expectation on participants to recognise and validate one another as part of a strategy of responsabilisation that aspires to fashion the development subject within its community as an agent of its own protection. Indeed, if bolstering the relational bonds within communities is intended to kindle collective protection mechanisms, it is hard to see how social change might occur when

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<sup>1470</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1471</sup> See: Interview Transcript 4.

<sup>1472</sup> See: Interview Transcript 19.

<sup>1473</sup> See: Interview Transcript 15.

<sup>1474</sup> See: Interview Transcript 17.

<sup>1475</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1476</sup> See: Interview Transcript 11.

<sup>1477</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1478</sup> *Ibid.*

aspirations to support the development subject 'to cope effectively with the world'<sup>1479</sup> are to all intents and purposes shorthand for coping with and accepting the world as it is.

### *Conclusions*

In summary, this chapter feels that the interviewed research participants' representations of the development subject, together with their revealed thoughts on the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on that subject, would appear to sustain twofold aspirations to empower and responsabilise the development subject to be both an agent of social change and an agent of its own protection. Building on the preceding chapter's conclusion that a particular ethic of responsabilisation and a pedagogy of personhood underpins its vision of the empowered development subject, this chapter has hopefully shown that REFLECT would appear to endorse a *relational therapeutic ethic of responsabilisation* that expects the development subject to '[psychologise its] relationship to the world'<sup>1480</sup>, to even 'live as if making a *project* of [itself]'<sup>1481</sup> and to inculcate 'a socio-political demand [...] to become responsible for [itself]'<sup>1482</sup>, but to do so in a way which connects its sense of self to the oscillating protection and improvement of the livelihood platforms that determine the possibilities of its future development. In this respect, whilst REFLECT might not necessarily *pathologise the personal*; it would appear to want to *responsibilise the self* to foster a protection *and* change enabling subjectivity through which the development subject acts to shore up its protective mechanisms, recognise and capitalise upon its opportunities, but above all else engage in the messy politics of resistance, adaptation, accommodation and survival that pervades its everyday life.<sup>1483</sup>

As has been set out, none of their representations of the development subject were underpinned by pessimistic expectations of that subject's psychological vulnerability or dysfunctionality which, in accordance with Pupavac's highly securitised conceptualisation of the *therapeutic governance of experienced trauma*, pathologised the personal, invalidated political agency, established cause for permissive empathy and legitimised the appropriation of character deficiencies as points of entry for interventionist therapeutic enablement to help the subject manage its emotions. They were in fact remarkably sanguine in their estimations of the development subject's potential and saw REFLECT circle participation as the means through which that subject might connect its sense of itself to the realisation of future possibilities. Small

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<sup>1479</sup> See: Interview Transcript 19.

<sup>1480</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 197.

<sup>1481</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 157.

<sup>1482</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 44.

<sup>1483</sup> Moran, A., 'Indigenous Identities: From Colonialism to Post-Colonialism', in Elliott, A (Ed). *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies* (Routledge, London & New York, 2011), p. 361.

incremental gains in literacy learning, together with the 'small but remarkably powerful self-identifying processes'<sup>1484</sup> which that learning fostered, were expected to connect the development subject to a more effectual sense of itself; whilst these gains as well created opportunities within the space of a REFLECT circle to discuss some of its biggest fears and worries were likewise expected to sensitise that same subject to the possibility of change within and beyond its immediate circumstances. What is more, the power of the collective confidence built up relationally with others within the space of a REFLECT circle was imagined as something which would fortify and consolidate the development subject's sense of itself as a change agent.

One interviewed research participant's comment that REFLECT 'might play a role in building connectors over dividers'<sup>1485</sup> arguably speaks to these aspirations to connect the development subject's sense of itself as a change agent to the possibilities of change within and beyond its circumstances through REFLECT circle participation. That said, these aspirations arguably jar - most notably in terms of their scale - with publicly presented ideas about REFLECT's potential to empower people and communities to influence or enact processes of change, including more grandiose claims about its potential to overcome the effects of marginality, dependency, domination or whatever else the Freirian theory of critical pedagogy might suggest it could. Many of the interviewed research participants' expectations of REFLECT circle participation were resoundingly modest and whilst they relayed remarkably admirable hopes for the wholesale transformation of REFLECT circle participants' lives, they more often than not spoke of much more pragmatic moves within REFLECT circle practice that might nudge participants into change imagining, and not necessarily even change enabling, subject positions which seemed a little removed from publicly feted, and much more politically radical, aspirations to nourish critical consciousness and motivate critical action. To this chapter at least, the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the longer term prospects of the development subject felt decidedly muted and much more modest than its publicly presented ambitions to empower might suggest.

Clear recognition of the intransient social vulnerabilities which ensured the development subject remained enduringly vulnerable in its resilience may have contributed to the interviewed research participants' normative commitments in this respect. Indeed, expectations that these conditions might not be overcome in a lifetime implied that any change the empowered development subject could affect was likely to be piecemeal rather than transformatory. What followed from this was a sense that REFLECT circle participation was

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<sup>1484</sup> See: Interview Transcript 9.

<sup>1485</sup> See: Interview Transcript 11.



expected to equip and empower the development subject to leverage possibilities for change wherever it could but that in light of these unremitting social vulnerabilities, REFLECT participation could also be instructive for shoring up its resilience as well. Encouraging the development subject to identify and utilise the space within a REFLECT circle to process its worries, anxieties and fears also revealed something striking about the interviewed research participants' ontological worldviews and seeded what this chapter can only describe as the foundations of an aspiration to provide the development subject with a supplementary training in resilience to help it better 'deal and cope with' <sup>1486</sup> the unrelenting social vulnerabilities that many of them acknowledged. In short, these and other inconsistencies within the textual interview material which, alluded to investments in 'personal protective behaviours' <sup>1487</sup> and 'social protective mechanisms' <sup>1488</sup>, suggested that REFLECT circle participation was also expected to bolster the development subject as an agent of its own protection as well.

By way of a conclusion, the fact that none of the deep pathologies of vulnerability, dysfunctionality and unresilience that characterised Pupavac's work, and other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance could be found within the representations of the development subject made by the interviewed research participants is a decisive finding which arguably illuminates the prevalence of an interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice a little less pejoratively than some of that work has hitherto done. In this respect, this chapter's finding should really stand as a rebuke to the sense that an interest in enhancing people's capacities, motivation and sense of well-being fundamentally foreshadows the demoralisation of the development project as a whole. <sup>1489</sup> That said, the conclusion that REFLECT enacts a *relational ethic of therapeutic responsabilisation* to empower and responsabilise the development subject to become both an agent of social change and an agent of its own protection still raises one or two tricky questions about the ambitions of the development project itself. Not least because the former aspiration still arguably locates some of the possibilities for change and development within the development subject's own capabilities with little regard for the 'everything [else] outside' <sup>1490</sup> of itself; whilst the latter aspiration comparatively locates a precautionary prudential safeguard against its bankruptcy and full failure within that same subject's fragile but malleable resilience.

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<sup>1486</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1487</sup> See: Interview Transcript 3.

<sup>1488</sup> See: Interview Transcript 2.

<sup>1489</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1490</sup> Elias, N. *What is Sociology?*, p. 118.

What is more, these twofold aspirations seemingly indulge all of the hope for an alternative, bottom up, form of development and yet still retain a slightly more pessimistic outlook that values resilience as a defence against a future marred by piecemeal as opposed to wholesale development gains. One of the residing criticisms of community-based participatory practice which this thesis has perhaps not touched upon as much as it might have done had its focus been a little different is the censure that it fails to connect gains in one sphere of development activity with those in another. In other words, the criticism goes that community-based approaches to international development for all their warmly persuasive and fulsomely positive aspirations can never quite connect *the micro* with *the meso* or *the macro* to affect the kind of wholesale transformatory development they envisage and as such, their successes never quite fulfil the ambitions they set of themselves.<sup>1491</sup> In teasing out the tensions and contradictions within REFLECT's prevailing knowledge claims, these twofold aspirations to empower and responsabilise the development subject to be both an agent of social change and an agent of its own protection possibly point to a tentativeness, a small measure of nervousness and hesitancy perhaps, that might not negate but might certainly cloud the possibilities that community-based approaches to participatory development like REFLECT imagine that participation can yield.

To some, this might be a failing, an admission that community-based participatory development practice is simply a misnomer that might promise an opportunity for people and communities on the margins to shape an alternative, bottom up, form of development but instead simply works to equip those same people and communities with the capabilities to make the best of what they have within their existing material circumstances. For others, it might represent a much more positive, pragmatic, realism which recognises a gradient of possibility and strives for the nearest and the next best possibility in the hope that incremental change and incremental safeguards against the invariable ebbs and flows of life are markedly much more realisable and transformatory than full-blown grand panaceas which tend to linger on the horizon and nearly always promise more than they will ever deliver. On the basis of this chapter's findings, the epistemic community of non-governmental organisation actors who first conceived and then championed REFLECT struck me as the latter; visionary pragmatists who sought to better connect the development subject's sense of itself to the possibilities of its development in a near and possible, rather than a far and aspirational, future but who still recognised that the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on

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<sup>1491</sup> Cornwall, A., & Brock, K., 'What Do Buzzwords do for Development Policy? A Critical Look at Participation, Empowerment and Poverty Reduction', p. 1043.

that subject might not fully connect with their grand, hopeful vision of the possibilities of its development in their lifetimes.

Their twofold aspirations to empower and responsabilise the development subject to be both an agent of change and an agent of its own protection might also mark an acceptance that 'the changing nature of [...] of governance and political economy favour those who [...] are able to adapt to changes and exploit emerging opportunities'<sup>1492</sup>. To some, the retention of a slightly pessimistic outlook that values resilience as a defence against a future marred by piecemeal as opposed to wholesale development gains could be interpreted as something which reveals a proclivity for the sustenance of a political subjectivity capable of simply adapting to, rather than resisting, the conditions of state and market. However, given that REFLECT's Freirian heritage presents a barrier to unequivocally denouncing it as something which imbues demands for the kind of resilient citizenship that necessitates a life of continual adaptation to the unyielding conditions and demands of an imposed vision of development, this argument simply cannot hold. The concurrent aspiration to empower and responsabilise the development subject to become an agent of social change immediately counters it and instead, the two aspirations together, arguably imagine a subject which can conceive of changing the world, its structure and the conditions of its possibility but which also accepts the necessity to sometimes safeguard itself against the social, political and economic fragilities that so often impede the conditions of that possibility.<sup>1493</sup>

In this respect, this chapter is minded to conclude that whilst REFLECT does not denote the kinds of therapeutic governance identified and discussed at length in this thesis even though it calls upon the development subject to take responsibility for itself in a way that then politically connects that sense of itself to the oscillating protection and improvement of the livelihood platforms that determine the possibilities for its future development. It certainly psychologises the development subject and expects that subject to '[immerse itself] in the depths of [its] psychological self'<sup>1494</sup> and '[psychologise its] relationship to the world'<sup>1495</sup> as part of a continual process of becoming that will inevitably validate it as both an agent of social change and an agent of its own protection. However none of this appears to be driven by degraded, misanthropic representations of the development subject and nor does it expect the subject to adopt new kinds of habitus, which turn all manner of psychological characteristics into matters of endeavour and enterprise, to simply adapt and accommodate itself to the

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<sup>1492</sup> Howard, C., 'Individualization', in Elliott, A (Ed). *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies*, p. 118.

<sup>1493</sup> Evans, B., & Reid, J., 'Dangerously Exposed: The Life and Death of the Resilient Subject', p. 85; and Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 74.

<sup>1494</sup> Álvarez-Uría, F., Varela, J., & Gordo, Á., & Parra, P., 'Psychologised Life and Thought Styles', p. 11.

<sup>1495</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 197.

world. Above all else, REFLECT's radical Freirian edge precludes that and in this chapter's opinion, its underlying normative commitments point to an aspiration to support the development subject to engage in and make its marks upon the messy politics of resistance, adaptation, accommodation and survival that will invariably determine the longer term possibilities of its development.<sup>1496</sup>

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<sup>1496</sup> Moran, A., 'Indigenous Identities: From Colonialism to Post-Colonialism', in Elliott, A (Ed). *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies*, p. 361.

## Conclusion

### *Personal Reflections*

Many things have struck me over the course of writing this thesis but as intimated from the start, my sense that the social world is beginning to ask ever more of our psychological selves has never wavered and will in all likelihood stay with me long after this thesis has become a much smaller footnote in my life than it is at present. If truth be told, the research process underpinning everything just documented has above all else consolidated a feeling that we are increasingly asked to utilise 'psychologised individual experience as a theoretical template'<sup>1497</sup> to not only define ourselves to our social world but to also understand, negotiate and find our place within that that world. Much more than that though, it has reinforced my sense that the social world increasingly asks this of us, not necessarily out of genuine concern for our happiness or psychological well-being per se, but because the good of society is thought to depend upon us living a life that makes an ever greater project of our inner emotional and psychological selves. Most of all, it strikes me that the psychologisation processes talked about within this thesis, which transform weighty moral, social and political issues into matters of psychological causation and remedy, contour the texture of everyday life to such an extent that wider societal expectations of psychological self-improvement have been utterly transformed.<sup>1498</sup>

Somebody said something to me shortly before submitting this thesis which upheld this sense of expectation as well as some of the things this thesis has tried to say about the transformation of psychological characteristics into matters of endeavour and enterprise.<sup>1499</sup> That person will remain nameless but their comments about my ostensible lack of self-worth and what they perceived to be a need for me to work on my resilience warrant mention here because in a roundabout way they confirmed what this thesis has added to my understanding of the world. Indeed, having just undertaken a research project which touched on the ways in which perceived psychological lacks are sometimes erroneously claimed and then used as justification for remedial therapeutic management by external actors, they brought a wry smile to my face as the inevitable feelings of hurt that often come with false observations about something so personal subsided. Putting all questions of motive and context to one side, the diagnosis and prescription contained within these comments chimed with ideas buzzing around in my head at the time about the ways in which the social world increasingly expects us to adopt an investigative attitude towards our own psychological functioning and embrace

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<sup>1497</sup> Parker, I. *Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Revolutions in Subjectivity*, p. 64.

<sup>1498</sup> *Ibid*, p. 65.

<sup>1499</sup> Fossas, A., 'The Age of Awareness', online.

new forms of habitus which turn our self-worth and our resilience as just two examples into capabilities that we must work upon to become better, subjectively seen, versions of ourselves.

Without straying too far away from this thesis' substantive subject matter, the research it documents has made me much more aware of the ways in which a prevailing Western socio-cultural interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life manifests itself in our own expectations of how others in particular should conduct themselves in relation to their own psychological functioning. To draw again on Tania Li, it has cautioned me to look out for 'the many ways that [psychologised] practices [of power] position people'<sup>1500</sup>, including the positioning 'of [the] deficient subject whose conduct is to be conducted'<sup>1501</sup> and whose deficiency is 'defined by [a trustee's] claim to know how others should live, to know what is best for them, to know what they need'<sup>1502</sup> in all sorts of areas of my own life. What is more, it has made me a little more attentive to the normative foundations of comments like those mentioned above which rightly or wrongly, wittingly or unwittingly, pathologise the personal and responsabilise the self in ways that almost instantaneously diminish and depoliticise the 'everything [else] outside'<sup>1503</sup> of our psychological selves. It remains to be seen whether this is a positive or negative development but it has certainly encouraged me to reflect upon and question the innocence or benevolence of anything which asks others to prioritise and turn their psychological selves into sites of enterprise.<sup>1504</sup>

### *Substantive Reflections*

My hopes for the research documented in this thesis are very similar in that it too should encourage those involved in developing and implementing community-based approaches to participatory development to reflect upon the innocence of their aspirations, particularly when they harbour undoubtedly good but poor or fuzzily theorised ambitions to bolster people's confidence, self-esteem, resilience, well-being and so on and so forth. As this thesis has hopefully made clear, we do now live in an increasingly hyper psychologised world - one which bears all the hallmarks of psychology's variegated disciplinary imprints upon it - that instinctively attaches huge socio-political significance to our psychological selves and which harbours a propensity to transform all sorts of moral, social and political issues into matters of innate psychological causation. It stands to reason that aspirations to improve people's confidence, self-esteem, well-being and resilience are becoming ever more ubiquitous within public policy and are even starting to underpin all manner of social interventions to such an

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<sup>1500</sup> Li, T. *A Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>1501</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.

<sup>1502</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>1503</sup> Elias, N. *What is Sociology?*, p. 119.

<sup>1504</sup> Gane, M., 'Foucault on Governmentality and Liberalism', p. 358.

extent that it feels as though the social world is itself beginning to ask much more again of our psychological selves. Uncritically accepting all that this entails however is perilous and by consequence, we need to be asking questions of those kinds of aspirations, constructively doubting their innocence and benevolence, in order to ascertain the possible politics of their effects wherever they might manifest.

This is the message this thesis hopes to talk back to those involved in developing and implementing community-based approaches to participatory development. In fact beyond making an academic contribution to development studies and the literature on community-based approaches to international development about the possible effects of the creeping psychologisation of the development subject; it hopes to encourage development practitioners in particular to think through the possible ramifications of their aspirations to improve the poor's psychological capital through induced participatory development practice. As this thesis has hopefully shown, blithely promoting the warm and fuzzy potential of community-based participatory development initiatives like REFLECT may look generous and munificent on paper but in this increasingly, hyper psychologised world, they can conceal more than they reveal. What is more, as Vanessa Pupavac's work, as well as other derivative literature, on therapeutic governance has undoubtedly shown, aspirations to enhance people's capacities, motivation and sense of well-being are starting to draw criticism precisely because these fuzzily theorised aspirations appear to depoliticise the circumstances of peoples' lives and ostensibly seem to value a different kind of being in the world that substitutes political agency for compliant psychological functionalism. If anything, the research documented in this thesis might just make those involved in developing and implementing community-based approaches to international development a little more aware of the criticism that is, and could increasingly be, levied at them.

Nonetheless, my hopes for this research definitely do not involve encouraging those involved in developing and implementing community-based approaches to international development to temper or bridle their aspirations, to turn their attention away from supporting the kind of human flourishing that can facilitate the experience of living a life that is felt to be worthwhile.<sup>1505</sup> Instead, my point is that community-based development practitioners need to step back and think through how their conceptualisations of the confidence, the self-esteem, the well-being and even the resilience that they might want to engender actually harbour the potential to weaken and negate their ambitions to politically empower the development subject. Perhaps instead of constantly seeking to capitalise upon their extrinsic value or worth

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<sup>1505</sup> Sointu, E., 'The Rise of an Ideal: Tracing Changing Discourses on Wellbeing', p. 256.

to the broader socio-political ambitions they seek to realise, the research documented in this thesis might caution them to stop holding store in their catalytic potential and instead just accept the intrinsic value of building people's confidence, boosting their self-esteem, increasing their sense of well-being and fortifying their resilience through induced participatory development practice. If anything, it could be read as a rallying call to disentangle themselves from prevailing socio-cultural expectations which dictate that psychological self-improvement or self-actualisation can elicit supposedly transformational socio-political outcomes and to instead turn their attention back to the material and structural constraints that endlessly constrain the conditions of the development subject's possibility.

By all means, orientate your efforts to support the development subject to actively and constructively participate in the messy politics of resistance, adaptation, accommodation and survival that invariably determine the longer term possibilities of its development; but stop making enterprise and endeavour out of that same subject's psychological self and instead revisit and rehabilitate the radical edge aspirations of induced participatory development practice in the spirit of Freire or others who located potential in its ability to invigorate radical political democracy.<sup>1506</sup> This might seem like an unusual missive for a piece of research that openly set out to illuminate the creeping psychologisation of the development subject together with a growing interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice a little less pejoratively. However, given that immanent critique seeks to identify and unveil the presence of tensions and contradictions within the prevailing knowledge claims of an object of study and reappropriate that understanding in the service of human emancipation; it strikes me that now highlighting the pitfalls and risks of expecting the development subject to immerse itself in the depths of its psychological self and likewise cautioning against a proclivity within community-based approaches to participatory development to turn psychological characteristics into matters of endeavour and enterprise which surreptitiously fashions that same subject's psychological self into a socio-political resource satisfies that mandate for me.

### *Final Summary*

In final summary, it remains to be said that this thesis, using REFLECT as its illustrative case study, shines a critical lens on the anticipated consequences of participation on the development subject's psychological capital as well as the normative foundations underpinning aspirations to improve that capital through induced community-based

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<sup>1506</sup> Moran, A., 'Indigenous Identities: From Colonialism to Post-Colonialism', in Elliott, A (Ed). *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies*, p. 361.



participatory development practice. It has revealed that REFLECT's psychologised vision of the empowered development subject - expressed in a mixture of political and psychological terms - would appear to harbour twofold aspirations to empower and responsabilise the development subject to be both an agent of change and an agent of its protection. To do this, it enacts something which this thesis has described as *a relational therapeutic ethic of responsabilisation* which expects the development subject to '[psychologise its] relationship to the world'<sup>1507</sup>, to even 'live as if making a *project* of [itself]'<sup>1508</sup> and to inculcate 'a socio-political demand [...] to become responsible for [itself]'<sup>1509</sup> - but to do so in a way which connects its sense of self to the oscillating protection and improvement of the livelihood platforms that determine the possibilities of its future development. All in all however, it stops just shy of labelling REFLECT as a form of therapeutic governance which having identified, discussed and scrutinised Pupavac's work, and other literature, on the subject at length within the thesis *pathologises the personal and responsabilises the self*.

Decisively labelling it as such would have been erroneous given that none of the deep pathologies of vulnerability, dysfunctionality and unresilience that characterised hers, and others, highly securitised conceptualisations of therapeutic governance could be found within the representations of the development subject made by members of the epistemic community of non-governmental organisation actors involved in REFLECT's initial conception and subsequent early implementation. Nonetheless, the thesis still echoes many of the concerns and frustrations expressed in that literature about the ways in which development is beginning to psychologise, and make highly personal responsabilising demands of, the development subject. Indeed, it has illustrated that REFLECT's psychologised vision of the empowered development subject has arguably brought new expectations to bear upon how the development subject should practice its subjectivity. Generally speaking, it has revealed that individual efforts to continually *make and re-make the self*, or in other words psychologised efforts to continually work upon one's own self-improvement - to essentially be a *self-reflexive subject-in-process* - are starting to determine the required parameters of a psychologised development subjectivity.<sup>1510</sup> More specifically however, it has illustrated that this psychologised development subject is expected to transform its psyche into a site of enterprise and adopt new kinds of habitus which turn all manner of psychological characteristics into matters of endeavour and enterprise within and beyond the space of a REFLECT circle.<sup>1511</sup>

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<sup>1507</sup> Madsen, O.J., & Brinkmann, S., 'The Disappearance of Psychologisation', p. 197.

<sup>1508</sup> Rose, N. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, p. 157.

<sup>1509</sup> Crespo, E., & Serrano, A., 'The Psychologisation of Work and the Deregulation of Work and the Government of Will', p. 44.

<sup>1510</sup> Reid, J., 'The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience', p. 74.

<sup>1511</sup> Gane, M., 'Foucault on Governmentality and Liberalism', p. 358.

As intimated earlier in this conclusion, this does raise questions about the ambitions of the development project but likewise, it also raises questions about the ambitions of community-based approaches to participatory development, including the possibilities imagined of participation itself at that spatial scale. In this respect, this thesis' identification of a protection *and* change enabling subjectivity through which the development subject might act to shore up its protective mechanisms, recognise and capitalise upon its opportunities, but above all else engage in the messy politics of resistance, adaptation, accommodation and survival that pervades its everyday life as an imagined upshot of REFLECT circle participation is revealing.<sup>1512</sup> Without a doubt, it suggested to this thesis that the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on the longer term prospects of the development subject were much more muted and modest than its publicly presented ambitions to empower the development subject to speak to power and to radically overcome the effects of marginality, dependency and domination implied.<sup>1513</sup> This undoubtedly tests the longstanding belief that community-based approaches to participatory development can facilitate decisive beneficiary led development action and social change; principally because the pragmatism contained within that aspiration reveals a recognition that the anticipated consequences of REFLECT circle participation on that subject might not fully connect with the grand visions of transformatory empowerment and social change that plenty of community-based approaches to participatory development trade off.

Such a statement nonetheless bumps up against the boundaries of what this thesis can claim and here it is worth reiterating that participation's normativity as a development concept, which harbours a multiplicity of contingent, situational and relational meanings, precludes making generalisations about the imagination of the possibilities of participation for development within other community-based approaches to participatory development. By way of a reminder, thinking about *multiplicity* theoretically should prohibit making generalisations across that complexity and should instead allow this thesis to claim that its insights may be transferable and translatable to other community-based approaches to participatory development. As such, my concluding synopsis that the psychologised development subject is expected to transform its psyche into a site of enterprise and adopt new kinds of habitus which turn all manner of psychological characteristics into matters of endeavour and enterprise within and beyond the space of a REFLECT circle is no more instructive beyond its own idiosyncrasies. It should however be compelling enough to sensitise the reader to new ways of thinking; which here extends to thinking about what a

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<sup>1512</sup> Moran, A., 'Indigenous Identities: From Colonialism to Post-Colonialism', in Elliott, A (Ed). *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies*, p. 361.

<sup>1513</sup> Morrow, RA., & Torres, CA. *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, p. 116.

growing interest in the emotional and psychological aspects of life within development policy and practice has brought to bear upon the anticipated consequences of participation on the development subject together with the normative commitments held by those who dress their vision of the empowered development subject in political and psychological terms.



Appendix One  
**Interview Timetable**

	<i>Nature of Research Participant</i>	<i>Nature of Interview</i>
Interview Transcript 1	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 2	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 3	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 4	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 5	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 6	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 7	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 8	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 9	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 10	UK based INGO staff member	Telephone
Interview Transcript 11	UK based INGO staff member	Telephone
Interview Transcript 12	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 13	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 14	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 15	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 16	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 17	UK based INGO staff member	Telephone
Interview Transcript 18	UK based INGO staff member	Face to Face
Interview Transcript 19	UK based INGO staff member	Telephone
Interview Transcript 20	UK based INGO staff member	Telephone

**Thematic Coding Framework**

<b>Theme (Primary Tree Node)</b>	<b>Sub-Themes (Child Nodes)</b>
<b>REFLECT: Expectations of Impact/What it Does</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Aspires; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* For people/communities to realise potential;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Brings people together; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* To build a collective sense of power;</li> <li>* To challenge power;</li> <li>* To confront common development challenges;</li> <li>* To overcome negative experience; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* To overcome conflict;</li> <li>* To overcome mistrust;</li> <li>* To overcome trauma;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>* To solve collective problems;</li> <li>* Builds; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Participants' agency; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Gives agency;</li> <li>* Rehabilitates and rebuilds agency;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Participants' confidence to be independent, self-actualising; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Indirectly;</li> <li>* Progressively;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>* Changes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Perceptions; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Participants perceptions of others;</li> <li>* Participants perceptions of themselves;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>* Confers recognition; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Upon a group to feel like a collective;</li> <li>* Upon the marginalised/excluded to feel like political actors;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Creates space; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A political space; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A space for collective mobilisation;</li> <li>* A space to contemplate/question society;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* A safe, stimulating space; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A space for dialogue;</li> <li>* A space for participants to find their voice;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* A space for participants to validate each other;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Develops; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Functional literacy skills;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Effects; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Change at an individual level;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Enables; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Participants to advocate for themselves; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Participants to demand things of others;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Participants to come to terms with their experiences; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Participants to overcome internalised suffering;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Participants to defend themselves; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Participants to protect themselves better;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Participants to discuss things they might not normally talk about; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Participants to address issues publicly;</li> <li>* Participants to open up about their fears;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Participants to establish ways to resolve their problems;</li> <li>* Participants to organise themselves;</li> <li>* Facilitates; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Individual and group learning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>REFLECT: Barriers to Impact</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Arouses conflict;</li> <li>* Creates a political space that arouses external suspicion; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Threatens external groups/factions;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Sets off internal conflict within the REFLECT space;</li> <li>* Difficult to assess impact; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Poor monitoring and evaluation measures; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Especially of/for psychosocial change;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>* Facilitator dependent; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* For generating group confidence necessary to touch on political and personal issues;</li> <li>* For the internal establishment of a space democratic space for all; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* For negotiating inherent power relations;</li> <li>* For the management/negotiation of conflict within a space;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>* Long term process; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Iterative process of success and failure;</li> <li>* Requires long-term commitment;</li> <li>* Takes time to be accepted;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Potentially psychologically damaging; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Danger of bearing witness, not protecting dignity;</li> <li>* Unearthing trauma without subsequent support;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Structurally dependent; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Upon external cultural and social structures;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Susceptible to failure/fault; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Consciousness does not always lead to action; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Consciousness causes reverse harm if subsequent inaction;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Creating a democratic space always a struggle;</li> <li>* External/structural factors heighten potential to lose gains; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Danger of assuming literacy will solve everything;</li> <li>* Only works if participants take long-term ownership.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>* Never perfectly realised.</li> </ul>
<p><b>REFLECT: Building Confidence &amp; Self-Esteem</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Confidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A by-product; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Difficult to build immediately;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Incentivising; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Unsticking people who get stuck;</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Interdependent;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- \* Finding confidence collectively in each other;
- \* Not totalising
  - \* Can still feel disempowered in other spaces or situations;
  - \* Capable of bridging other spaces of lives;
  - \* Needs to be built within the REFLECT space first;
  - \* Subject to a specific space or situation.
- \* Self-Esteem
  - \* Absence of;
    - \* Delinquency;
      - \* Gives permission for delinquency;
      - \* Legitimises delinquency;
    - \* Equates to an absence of consciousness;
  - \* Cultural validity;
    - \* Different cultural understandings;
    - \* Only partial validity across cultures.
  - \* Idea of;
    - \* Dangerous if just linked back to the individual;
    - \* Not to be underestimated;
    - \* Useful;
  - \* Increase in;
    - \* Yields positive behaviour impacts;
  - \* Interdependent;
    - \* With the confidence of the REFLECT group.



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