Everyday Neoliberalism and the Subjectivity of Crisis: Post-Political Control in an Era of Financial Turmoil

Nicholas J. Kiersey

As the financial crisis has progressed from its immediate origins in 2008 as a US-based credit crunch to a global economic emergency, Constructivist IPE scholarship has turned to social norms and expectations not only as variables explaining its origins, but also as factors constraining its resolution. In this article I suggest that while such work does usefully identify the role of 'everyday' values, and struggles, in shaping the game of contemporary financial life, it avoids discussing the fundamental role of capitalist practices of valorisation in sustaining this life. To make my case I invoke Foucault's discussion of neoliberal 'crisis subjectivity' and the closely attendant notion of human capital, suggesting a need to examine neoliberal technologies of the self. However, I expand on Foucault's arguments in this respect to show how his comments on neoliberalism posit not only a 'positive' ontology of subjectification but also make strong hints towards a theory of immanent social control through the market, akin to that outlined by Deleuze. In more recent formulations of the crisis, such as in Hardt and Negri's Commonwealth, this mode of control is posed as the only such mode adequate to a regime of capitalist valorisation that is itself premised on the productive potential of the common. This move allows Hardt and Negri, rightly, to associate today's crisis with a more profound, ontological crisis, grounded in the relative autonomy of labour from contemporary capitalist command.

Introduction

With early signs emerging first in the US 'subprime' mortgage market as early as 2006, the shuttering in 2008 of such premium names in Wall Street investment banking as Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers stand now as the harbingers of what many consider the greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression (Krugman, 2008). Exposing dramatically the weakness of an interdependent global economy leveraged increasingly by mortgage-backed securities and a host of other highly abstract financial products, 2008 saw spooked investors hurrying out of many of the funds offered by these banks. The resulting credit crunch had a massive knock-on effect not only in the housing markets of Cleveland and Detroit but also in Europe, where the tightening exposed vastly overleveraged loan sheets in a host of countries not typically associated with economic catastrophe, including Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain (the so-called PIGS). Despite a coordinated bailout strategy led by the EU and the IMF, these countries continue to face uphill battles sustaining the confidence of bond investors. While an initial bailout of the heavily indebted Greek economy early in 2010 seemed to assuage lenders' concerns temporarily, risks of a sovereign debt crisis are once again being discussed (Bit, 2010). Ireland in particular is seen as a risky prospect, with the government having already nationalised one major commercial bank that had dramatically overstated its position, and guaranteed the deposits of two others, with significant uncertainty remaining as to whether mortgage holders will be able to continue to make payments under the government's deflationary strategy (Kelly, 2010). While the jury is out as to whether these bailouts will work, it is clear that they have been rammed through with little regard for democratic debate and with severe conditionalities attached which will burden the citizens of Greece and Ireland with draconian austerity for years to come (Krugman, 2010; Byrne, 2010; See also BBC News, 2010).

One of the crucial take home stories to date of this 'Great Financial Crisis' is, of course, that of a maddening elite hypocrisy. Not only has neoliberalism's long-promised trickle-down growth failed to materialise but now vast swathes of the population of the Western world have been thrown into financial hardship. Several sovereign European nations stand on the precipice of receivership. And according to the Asian Development Bank, some $50 trillion in global asset values was written down in 2008 alone (Adam, 2009). That the costs of this disaster are being passed on to the masses is clear: political leaders of the major EU powers have continued to speak openly about the need for "ten years of austerity" and drastic cuts in public spending (Chapman, 2010). Meanwhile leading figures like Angela Merkel speak now with conviction of the duty of the "good European" to practice tough love, condemning a culture of profligacy on the periphery which she believes has now placed the euro itself "in danger" (The Local, 2010; EUbusiness, 2010).

In this sense, mainstream debate over the causes of the financial crisis has turned on a discourse of good citizenship, delineated in terms of economic responsibility, and moral courage. But what is remarkable about this discourse of responsibility is also what it has managed to forget. Much of the wayward behavior claimed to be at the heart of the crisis can actually be traced back to successive waves of neoliberal or "supply-side" deregulation, dating back to the 1970s (Surin, 2009, p. 70). These reforms, of course, attest to the premium neoliberals have placed upon privatising sources of wealth while extending social safety nets to elites who pursue risky investment strategies. In the same breath, these reforms have served as the permissive causes from which have flowed a long string of financial crises around the world. In the context of the current crisis, they also appear to be the root cause of everything from the predatory lending in the US to the risky speculative ventures that today have left such huge gluts in the Irish and Spanish property markets.

Yet, this hypocrisy acknowledged, what is far more fascinating is the relative ease with which elites have been able to palm off their lopsided solutions. So little has been demanded by way of accountability from the world's financial movers and shakers (for discussion, see Harvey, 2010). And even in Ireland, as the nation's sovereignty is subjected to the single greatest challenge since its founding, the recent election returned a centrist coalition, fully committed to the austerity regime and the enforcement of one of the most spectacularly unjust, and undemocratically decided, transfers of wealth from the taxpayers of an advanced Western nation to foreign bondholders (in this case, German, British, and French banks) in history (for discussion, see McWilliams, 2010; O'Toole, 2010). That the brutal reality of such facts can be so casually ignored suggests, at the very least, that 'ideas' play a significant role in shaping not only actors' expectations about the dynamics of markets but, also, the basic moral horizon of what social life is and what it is for. Constructivist scholars of IPE have focused significant attention on a range of areas where 'everyday' ideas about how markets function, and how they ought to function, appear to have influenced the development of the crisis, as well as the political responses to it (Seabrooke, 2010; Langley, 2010). As yet, however, little work has been done on the idea of crisis-generating behaviour itself as a metric of subjective behavior. Nor has much been said of the role attendant to this metric of contemporary techniques of capitalist valorization, which draw increasingly on capacities of subjectification in their basic functioning.

In this essay I examine recent social theorisation concerning the financial crisis, focusing on the tension between such 'everyday' Constructivist approaches and those more concerned with actually existing technologies of power. Focusing on contributions to a 2010 Special Issue of the journal of *New Political Economy* (Volume 15, Issue 1), I argue that Constructivist approaches do offer much that is interesting and important in terms of understanding how 'theory-driven' financial innovation drove the development of the esoteric products that actually collapsed in the meltdown (Wigan, 2010); how epistemic frames help select instruments for assessing performance in the market (Langley, 2010); and how everyday expectations shape welfare trade-offs (Seabrooke, 2010). However, even after a generous reading of these accounts, it is clear that their willingness to examine quotidian life only goes so far. For example, one has little sense from them of the power of neoliberal capitalism itself as a form of life; the place of crisis in its basic normative logic of subjectification; or the manner in which it actually goes about the business of producing value today. To remedy this I invoke Foucault's (2008) concept of neoliberal 'crisis subjectivity,' as well as the closely attendant notion of human capital, and argue that neoliberalism does in fact quite self-consciously see itself as a strategy of economic subjectification. Focusing especially on his discussion of neoliberal attitudes to the body in this respect, I suggest that Foucault intuitively understands neoliberalism as a regime of immanent social control through the market, akin to that outlined by Deleuze (1992). This understanding of social control is central to such theorisations of global order as Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000), with its focus on the decentred nature of today's capitalist 'command'. Yet it also plays out in the dimension of financialisation itself. To make this argument I invoke recent publications from Christian Marazzi (2010, 2008), as well as from Hardt and Negri (2009), whose work within the theoretical framework of Autonomist Marxism attests to a much deeper crisis facing capitalism as it struggles to sustain its regime of valorisation.

Financial Crisis: Constructions and Exclusions

One of the earliest Constructivist critiques of the current financial crisis came from a rather unlikely source. In his book *The New Paradigm* (2008), the world-famous financial speculator George Soros prefaced his analysis of the causes and dynamics of the crisis with a lengthy philosophical exposition of the importance of social norms and conventions in determining financial outcomes. Acknowledging the highly innovative and intrinsically risky nature of many of the financial products that failed during the crisis, Soros's basic argument was that principle fault for the crisis should, in fact, be lain squarely at the feet of modern economic theory and its misguided belief in itself as a 'science'. As economic exchange falls in the realm of social activity, he suggested, it is an object of inquiry that is necessarily resistant to study through scientific method. While the methods of natural science may be appropriate for studying the stuff of the natural world, such as nuclear physics, they can produce seriously misleading results when applied to realm of human affairs. Citing the influence on his thinking of Karl Popper, Soros (2008, p. viii) put forward the argument that the study of social life is confounded by the dilemma of what he calls "interference reflexivity". Basically, this dilemma suggests that, because they are also participants in the ongoing processes that they are trying to study, students of human affairs can never completely remove from their analyses preconceived understandings of how the world works.

For Soros, the global financial system 'bet the farm,' so to speak, on a set of non-reflexively developed assumptions about the nature of economic life. As such, for him, the crisis reflects the ultimately necessary "moment of truth" that confronts such assumptions when "reality can no longer sustain ... exaggerated expectations" (Soros, 2008, p. 66).

Indeed, he notes, even at the moment when such expectations might be challenged in this way, 'corrected' behavior is not necessarily the result. As with the figurative lemmings over a cliff, beliefs can drive the market far past the moment of truth and into calamity. Thus Soros cites the infamous quip of former Citibank CEO Chuck Prince: "As long as the music is playing, you've got to get up and dance" (cited in ibid., p. 84). Albeit inadvertently, Prince was actually suggesting something quite correct about the socially embedded nature of economic life; while actors expect markets to tend towards equilibrium, history suggests that equilibrium is in fact an ever "moving target" (ibid., p. 72). In this sense markets are *always* to some extent wrong. The problem comes, however, when the brute force of this basic fact is supplanted by what he terms a 'super-bubble' in expectations. For where actual asset bubbles, such as in the case of property, can be driven by a 'local' misconception, such as the refrain that "the value of collateral is not affected by the willingness to lend" (ibid., p. 83), a super-bubble is driven by a much more foundational expectation – that is, the norm of 'market fundamentalism' where regulators and traders make the assumption that markets tend to automatically correct their excesses (ibid., p. 91).

In the introduction to a recent special issue of the journal *New Political Economy*, Soros's book is cited as an example of an early and somewhat premature approach to the crisis, and one that is too focused on the 'surface relationships' of financial market discourses. More specifically, the authors state, works such as Soros's are unilogical, ignoring key discursive contestations at the level of the everyday politics of contemporary finance. Thus, for example, we find no discussion of "the process through which credit expansion, the commodification of future welfare needs and the purposeful creation of bubble dynamics are all somewhat predictable outcomes of an increasingly financialized model of capitalism" (Brassett et al., 2010, p. 3). Nevertheless, in the essays that follow, many of the core theoretical conceits that Soros relies on are set to work to bring these 'missing,' micro-level nuances into relief. Wigan (2010, p. 110), for example, focuses on the idea of 'theory-driven' financial innovation to study how the esoteric products that actually collapsed in the meltdown were innovated and rendered commensurate with more traditional, 'primitive' investment vehicles, like government bonds. The point being to show how, in distinction to, say, a more Keynesian 'animal spirits'-style analysis, where price bubbles are thought to be an ever-present reality in markets, the crisis was prefigured by a shift in the discursive locus where risk was framed from governments to the global banking industry itself. The Basel process of the 1980s, which ultimately facilitated this shift, switched the substantive object of regulation from the overall capitalisation of banks in terms of reserve requirements to their "capacity to navigate all future changes in all market prices" (ibid., p. 112) – and this being despite the fact that it was quite uncertain what could be said to count as an adequate capital reserve for the new, derivative-style financial products which banks were using as vehicles for their 'originate-to-distribute' model.

Wigan (ibid., p. 114, 118) suggests that the emergence of such products, and the fact that they were internally regulated by the industry, together with the fact that the purported guarantors of the transparent value were ratings agencies, themselves already with dubious records for accuracy, implies the need for a 'productive lens' capable of recognising the discursive 'power of finance', and its cadre of experts, in the governing of finance. In a similar vein, Langley (2010, p. 73) also looks at the 'normalising' power of finance but adopts a somewhat less 'macro' focus to examine instead the "calculative devices, models, formulas and so on which make possible pricing, exchange and circulation". If the market is the quintessential site of veridiction of government policy, as Foucault basically puts it in the *Birth of Biopolitics*, then Langley is interested in the epistemic devices and metrics that make this truth possible. His key question is how, in the context of the financial crisis, key firms and agencies performed liquidity and, in so doing, attested to the power of the "wider norms of Wall St. and the City" (Langley, 2010, p. 85). To make his argument, however, Langley turns to poststructural ideas, going deeper into epistemological territory than Wigan. Borrowing from De Goede (2005), for example, the 'power of finance' is expressed less in terms of the normative potential of the banking sector and more in terms of how these devices became instrumental in narrating "uncertainties and volatilities about future income streams as risks" (Langley, 2010, p. 75).

Classically, 'liquidity' denotes the existence of a 'deep' market with willing buyers and sellers who believe the assets they are trading are 'safe'. For Langley (ibid., p. 86), however, liquidity does not simply exist. Rather, the "imaginary of liquidity" constitutes an "ideal-type end point" for markets which must be crafted through discourse. Thus, as he cites De Goede, finance is a "discursive domain made possible through performative practices, which have to be articulated and rearticulated on a daily basis" (ibid., p. 75). Echoing Soros here, however, Langley (ibid., p. 75, 77) suggests that underneath the epistemologically confident and "seemingly scientific" discourse of liquidity, its utterances are bound constantly to meet "their others" in the shape of destabilizing activities like "gambling and speculation". Through various media representations during the 1990s, liquidity in global markets became reified and taken for granted. Thus it was not only that the Basel process allowed the banks to become the discursive adjudicators of their own capital requirements, as Wigan suggests, but also that key governmental agents like the Bank of England gave pronouncements suggesting that the new lending practices were actually beneficial in terms of systemic stability ibid., p. 78). Moreover, through their work in categorizing and 'structuring' the subprime loans into tranches of risk which could then be used to allocate portions of them into credible Structured Investment Vehicles (SIVs), the large investment banks were also key agents of the liquidity story.

Langley's take home point from all this is that the system was performed as 'risk', not uncertainty. Within the margins of this subprime lending system, and at various levels of its process, a host of epistemic instruments were relied upon to give standardised and qualified accounts of the risk of subprime-related products. For example, the 'FICO' creditworthiness scores of the borrowers fed into the calculative metrics and standards of ratings agencies, who issued evaluations of the various 'sliced-and-diced' securities. Similarly, insurance firms underwrote the minimal capital requirements of the issuers with credit default swaps, which could themselves be enjoined and traded on by speculators. That such deep complexity and uncertainty could be passed off as 'risk' might appear to beggar belief. However, as Seabrook (2010, p. 53) notes, it is somewhat unfair to study these facets of the crisis without also recognizing the uniquely American "variety of residual capitalism," and the cultural premium it places on access to credit as a "welfare trade-off". Thus where Langley examines the epistemic instruments and performances that made subprime 'safe', Seabrooke (ibid., p. 52) turns to the "everyday politics of expectations" which both demanded a certain access to credit and, today, constrain the efforts of those trying to address systemic concerns.

For Seabrooke (ibid., p. 53), "financialization is set deep in the bones of US everyday politics." and many quite consciously defend aspects of it, including securitisation. Moreover, suggests Seabrooke, it is not for scholars, critical or otherwise, to determine the metric of what may be said to count as a legitimate way of facilitating credit in a society. Instead, the goal should be to explain the role of conventions and norms of social practice in shaping the horizon within which actors pursued strategies to secure their own wellbeing. While taking on vast quantities of debt might appear irrational today, there were intersubjective understandings at work which made these practices to some extent *intentional and rational*. One of the key background aspects of the crisis was the practice of redlining, where African American communities were passed over in terms of options to receive credit for their properties. Such practices, ongoing since before World War II, received some remedy with the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which created a sibling institution to Fannie Mae (the semi-state Federal National Mortgage Association), itself created in the Great Depression to help address credit needs in the wake of the US foreclosure crisis of the late 1930s. This new organisation, Ginnie Mae, was a public market-focused entity, intended explicitly to operationalise the idea that institutions could "actively redistribute access to credit" (ibid., p. 59). By the time of the Savings and Loan (S&L) crisis of the 1980s, however, the 'community activist' base that catalysed Ginne Mae clashed with industry interest groups, and 'experiments' were necessary in order to resolve it. This is the period that saw the emergence, for example, of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), which successfully developed a public campaign that linked strategies to resolve the S&L crisis to the affordable housing issue (ibid., p. 61).

Seabrooke goes on to link these developments to subsequent US securitization strategy in order to restore demand in the early 1990s, and through to the administration of George W. Bush. While the 'siblings' had always functioned by passing through mortgage-backed securities, under Bush they were seen as more under the rubric of a business than a public good and, Seabrooke suggests, may indeed have engaged in irresponsible lending practices. He concludes with a discussion of the continued role of expectations and norms as 'path dependencies' in relation to the Obama Administration's efforts to engage in financial reform (ibid., p. 64). As such, we are left with the impression that newer 'experiments' will unlikely reflect major changes from the *status quo ante*. Restarting securitisation has been defended by the Administration's public officials as a core pillar of the American approach to credit and, as Seabrooke reminds us, the US mentality towards welfare tradeoffs. For Seabrooke, this mentality reflects 'deeply embedded desires' of the US population more broadly (ibid., p. 52).

Insofar as they are emblematic of a Constructivist approach to the current financial crisis then, the commentaries discussed above usefully show how norms and conventions form deep constraints on processes, whether in terms of actual causes of the crisis or, indeed, efforts to resolve it. In some ways, the take home point of their critique is similar to that of Soros: a correct understanding of markets requires us to introduce greater reflexivity into our analysis of them. Reflexivity requires us to lower our expectations about what we can claim to know about human affairs. Making absolute predictions about future performance, for example, is impossible because any assumptions upon which such predictions might be based are necessarily incomplete, and tentative. However, Soros' approach is also revealed as rather superficial insofar as the Constructivists go much deeper into questions concerning the power of experts, epistemic devices, and social conventions concerning welfare tradeoffs. This notwithstanding, the commentaries noted above do seem to stop short of questioning the situatedness of the crisis in discourses and practices which yield the very capitalist structure that serves as its ostensible condition of possibility in the first place. In this sense, it is not at all clear what Constructivists mean when they refer to the 'power' of everyday norms and conventions of political economy, or how far 'down' this understanding of power might be applicable. In the next section, I suggest that one possible angle for progressing Constructivist IPE further into the realm of everyday politics would be the terrain of subjectivity. I start with a basic overview of Foucault's understanding of the concept of 'technologies of the self' before showing how this concept is central to his theory of contemporary governmentality. The imbrication of power with modern governmental knowledge was not intended simply to evoke the possibility a regime which would classify subjects as worthy of inclusion, or as requiring disciplinary management or exclusion, but was, rather, also about the technologies of the self that produced power's willing partners.

Market Autonomy, Market Confession: The Emergence of Crisis Subjectivity

As developed by Foucault, the term 'governmentality' refers not simply to the power of technocratic experts and institutions but also, in a more positive sense, to both "the way in which one conducts the conduct of men", and to the creation of "an analytical grid" for assessing the efficacy of this conduct (Foucault, 2008, p. 186). Here, then, governmentality refers to the relationship between power and the conduct of the subject, both in terms of the body of knowledge that provides the criteria of the ideal subject, and in terms of the precise ways in which the actual subject is led to practice itself in satisfying these criteria. As a form of critique then, Foucault's theory of governmentality allows for an epistemologically indirect analysis of social institutions, focusing less on the analysis of an institution's form and more on the abstract "technology of power" which gives it its functional coherency (Foucault, 2007, p. 117). Such a technology can manifest itself in the operations of a host of institutions, including the state itself, that share a common genealogy in the efforts of a social formation to assess and manage certain problems.

Foucault (ibid., p. 185) finds the abstract model for this activation of the subject in the early Christian pastoral, which he suggests is "one of the decisive moments is the history of power in Western societies". Here we find a concern not so much with the problem of governing a territory but, rather, the problem of a "flock in its movement from one place to another," or "a multiplicity on the move" towards some sort of goal (ibid., p. 125). This is, in other words, an entirely positive form of power, or a power that seeks to function immanently. It is a power "with a purpose for those on whom it is exercised" (ibid., p. 129). Citing Paul Veyne, Foucault (ibid., p. 148) notes that the 'flock' metaphor is somewhat imprecisely linked to Christianity, but that nevertheless it is in the early Christian era that the practices of positive power develop. Compared to the Greeks and Romans, Christian institutions worked uniquely to develop an "art of conducting, directing, leading, guiding, taking in hand, and manipulating men ... an art with the function of taking charge of men collectively and individually throughout their life and at every moment of their existence" (ibid., p. 165). In this sense, what the pastorate bequeaths to modern government is the ability to instill in the subject a sense of a generalised "economy of faults and merits" (ibid., p. 183).

What Foucault emphasises here then is the innovative nature of this technology which produces obedience to an ideal of the soul. Previously in the West, he suggests, the Greeks had established an ideal that as a subject one should 'take care of oneself', in the sense of making oneself a project or an unfolding. In the Christian economy of faults and merits, however, the goal is the purification or renunciation of the self and its worldly temptations. In this sense, the Greek mandate for self-care is displaced by the task of self-knowledge relative to an ideal, and confession to an authority knowledgeable about this ideal. Foucault emphasises that this type of 'technology of the self' thus produces a very complete form of domination or subordination. As the individual now voluntarily turns to another, expert individual, for guidance on the proper way to live and think, there is a sense in which the everyday life of that person is now subject to evaluation relative to a set of conformist criteria. Thus the development of techniques of the self is significant for Foucault insofar as it suggests the advent of the first ever "individualizing society" (cited in Kelly, 2009, p. 95) And while the normative language of Christianity may have faded, its mode of governing lingers on; as Foucault (1978, p. 59) notes, "we have since become a singularly confessing society". Today, he suggests, in a host of institutions, from the prison to the hospital to the bedroom, it plays a role "in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life" (Foucault, 2007, p. 59).

How might such a reading of the techniques of governmentality help us to better appreciate the relationship that the Constructivists discussed above are trying to draw our attention to – namely, that between everyday life and the ongoing financial crisis? To answer this question we might wish to look at a further seminal aspect of the broader historical development of governmentality, and the role of the language of political economy therein. For where the Christian pastoral pursued the production of a divine asceticism in the subject, contemporary governmentality pursues the development of a subject of economic life. Developments in the sixteenth century appear to be very important for Foucault here, with major transformations both in the supplanting of the earlier feudal state by the more modern, territorially administrative variety, but also in the dispersion of confessional technologies through the Reformation and Counter Reformation. In this time, the art of governing is discussed in relation to a proliferating series of objects which commentators take as somehow naturally existing or present in the state of affairs. Instead of a select cadre of pastors, a new, expanded cadre of 'police' now appears. Here Foucault notes that the eighteenth century meaning of police is more appropriate, referring to government agents more generally. In distinction to Machiavelli's unique governing 'prince' figure, whose struggle with knowledge is carried out in the name of maintaining as a sovereign his link with his territorial dominion, these police are distributed across the whole of society, and operate on a diversity of levels in ensuring the proper arrangement of a dynamic field of exchange of certain things: "individuals, goods, and wealth" (ibid., p. 94). The task of this police is thus not to forge or reinforce a link to the territory but, rather, to practice "economic government" (ibid., p. 95).

As Foucault describes it then, the question of what governing is and what it is that is governed finds its modern origin in this abstract object of the economy. However, if the sixteenth century marks the emergence of the economy as an aspect of governance, by the eighteenth century it has more fully come to "designate a level of reality and a field of intervention for government" (ibid., p. 95). Thus Rousseau, for example, suggests that the principle goal of the state is to scrutinise and manage the population and its wealth. But it is important to recognise the intimacy of this managerial project. Much as in the Christian pastorate, we see scholars of government at this time drawing attention to the need for a certain pedagogy in the management of "men in their relationships with things like customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking" (ibid., p. 96). There are various elements in play then, each with their own essential nature and "suitable" ends, all of which must be respected if the state is to be governed successfully (ibid., p. 99). Foucault provides a variety of reasons why this new discourse does not properly arrive as a political force immediately in the sixteenth century. However, by the eighteenth century, he notes, it becomes clear that political economy is the "major form of knowledge" through which government knows and assesses the ethical performance of human life (ibid., p. 108).

Now, Foucault emphasises that the concept of the market was not a new one *per se* in the eighteenth century. But where previously it had thought to be a domain of activity that should be regulated in the name of sovereign ends, in the eighteenth century it starts to achieve a certain autonomy by becoming an indicator or metric of the success or performance of government. Man is here understood not as the container or vessel of a soul that must be directed towards heaven but, rather, as a creature of economic rationality, or an *homo oeconomicus*. As such, there is a certain congruence identified between the natural activities of man which, when taken as an aggregate phenomena at the level of the population, tends to produce a greater good. But this is only true if government leaves man alone to a certain extent. Thus, suggests Foucault, we find ourselves in the era of Classical Liberalism, where the success of a government is deemed in large part to be contingent on its ability to "cut out or contrive a free space of the market" for the expression of man's utilitarian impulse (Foucault, 2008, p. 131).

The idea then is that there are now certain things which government ought not to do if it is to be successful. In this sense, says Foucault (ibid., p. 17), liberal political economy drives "a formidable wedge" between the powers of the state and the sphere of daily human life. This has a whole series of external and internal impacts on the orientation of state-governmental power. Externally, it appears to push to the side the more typical diplomatic-military Realism that dominated thought on the relations between states in Europe in the Mercantilist era. From the perspective of early liberalism, the mutual enrichment presupposed by a truly harmonious order was blocked by the tendency towards military balancing. Citing Kant and Adam Smith, Foucault notes the emergence of free-trade globalisation as a solution to the enmity of European states. Internally, however, it seems that the concept of the market works to bring pastoral techniques once again to bear upon the subject. This becomes true especially as the era of Classical Liberalism recedes and the ideal subject of a naturally existing *homo oeconomicus* becomes somewhat problematic. Indeed, the challenge for 'neoliberalism' is to develop a form of subjectivity that "accepts" itself as a *homo oeconomicus* (ibid., p. 269). For this reason, neoliberals take the study of economics itself as nothing less than the "analysis of the internal rationality, the strategic programming of the individuals' activity" (ibid., p. 223). In the twentieth century, the 'Ordo-liberals', for example, retained the liberal anxiety about state intervention in the economy. However, they rejected the laissez-faire naturalism of the classical liberals in favor of what they termed a *Gesellschaftspolitik*, a policy of socialisation, which should serve as "the condition of possibility for a market economy" (ibid., p. 160). Here the concept of a *homo oeconomicus* best left to his own devices thus becomes something more like a confessional ideal – one which must be incited or solicited by the institutions of government, through education, and one to which the meritous subject is subsequently expected to subscribe.

For the Ordo-liberals then, the fragility of the market is mitigated to some extent by this interventionist social policy. However, Foucault's analysis of the economic pastoral of modern Western governmentality also encompasses another, more contemporary framework which, like Ordo-liberalism, rejects the idea of a naturally existing *homo oeconomicus* but which nevertheless appears to eschew the idea of a government-led economic pedagogy in favor of a far more universal solution. This is the more American brand of neoliberalism, or Anarcho-liberalism, associated with Milton Freedman and the Chicago School. According to this strand of neoliberalism, the inculcation of the confessional ideal should happen exclusively through the instrument of the market. The market is a perfect instrument of governmentality insofar as, for the latter neoliberals at least, *every* facet of social life can be read as an ostensibly market-based interaction. Key to this market-based pedagogy is the rejection of the Ordo-liberal separation between the realms of social and economic activity. How are non-economic activities to be read as economic? The key move here is the theory of human capital, or the idea that all labour, including wage labour, can be understood as a voluntary investment or entrepreneurial activity carried out in the individual pursuit of some sort of surplus value, future return, or wage (ibid., p. 224). As a result, economic analysis can be applied to almost any form of social activity: marriage, parenting, discrimination, education, fertility, population growth, crime and punishment, addiction, and even insanity. That is, any activity which involves "substitutable choices" or the application of a "limited means to one end among others" (ibid., p. 222, 268).

Human capital is distinguished from other types of capital by the fact that it requires the human to be present if it is to be converted to surplus wealth. In this sense, the worker is fundamentally enjoined with his capacities as a kind of assemblage with a dynamic productive potential. He is thus a "machine-stream ensemble" or even a "capital-ability" (ibid., p. 225). This kind of labour is not merely a 'factor of production'. Rather, it has a qualitative and dynamic aspect, too. That is, in neoliberalism, the worker is in a very real sense "an active economic subject" not just at work but in everything he does (ibid., p. 223). What this means is that neoliberalism has effectively swapped out the traditional sovereign *homo oeconomicus* for a fully economic and adaptable entity. He is not a partner in a 'process of exchange' as traditionally conceived but a dynamic 'entrepreneur of himself', constantly balancing costs and benefits, and constantly careful of the future impact of choices even in seemingly non-economic spheres. The universality of this subject consists in the fact that he will then, out of the hope of some return, pursue his own transformation through enhancement of his basic physical capacities, mental skills, and his attitude through the market (ibid., p. 226, 229). Importantly, neoliberalism knows full well that such a pursuit might go too far and, to this extent, it is characterised by a "consciousness of crisis" (ibid., p. 68). However, Foucault is clear on this: neoliberalism recognises that the risk-seeking life of the ever more developed entrepreneur may generate costs. Such costs are something to be managed, to be sure, for governmentality understands all too well how, left unmanaged, the obsessions of entrepreneurial life, or the need to "live dangerously", will create instability (ibid., p. 66). But to the extent that they are acknowledged, such problems have little to do with a passive subject. To the contrary, they are simply externalities which must, when necessary, be managed on the margins, through the market, as costs of "manufacturing freedom" (ibid., p. 65).

Unlike in previous modes of government then, here we see no need for much of a formal institutional framework for preparing the subject. The choice-focused nature of this subject makes him "eminently governable" through the 'technology of the self' that is the incentive structure of the market (ibid., p. 270). Government works through this 'market milieu' to create incentives and disincentives, shaping how entrepreneurs think and act towards others and themselves. In this sense, neoliberal governmentality seems to deploy the market as a kind of technology of the self. When government is seeking to instill the "rules of the game" it is not simply working in what previously was recognised as the field of economic activity but, rather, within a field populated by entrepreneurial capital-subject assemblages (ibid., p. 260). The ideal of the capital-subject assemblage of *homo oeconomicus* is obviously quite far removed from the Christian confessional ideal, discussed above. Under neoliberalism the ideal content of the subject is that, simply, of the subject and his preferences in the marketplace. To the extent that this subject is expected to follow rules then, he is asked simply to be an investor guided by his own, governable tastes. In this sense, while the neoliberal subject may appear to be a very fluid or postmodern subject, with no particular allegiances to the ethical ideals of more traditional subject modes, he nevertheless recognises his self-making project as one ultimately carried out in the pursuit of a form of capital. Now, importantly, Foucault does not seem to develop the broader social implications of this universal yet ontologically empty or contingent 'subject-as-capital'. However, by pointing to it as a salient feature of neoliberal ideology he appears to intuit, in a manner similar to Italian Autonomist Marxism, that neoliberalism makes a substantive difference within the history of governmentality precisely because it takes the subject not simply as something which must be produced but something which is in fact productive in a very broad sense.

Linguistic Valorisation, Financial Crisis

In the light of the above discussion on the emergence of the pastoral and, subsequently, the transferral of these techniques to the governmental state, the Constructivist stance on everyday life would appear to be quite superficial. Foucault believes that the basic tools of governmentality are found already in the Christian pastoral. For him, it is here that the technologies of the self which dominate the entire governmental history of the West are first developed. What neoliberalism seems to bring to this history is the use of the market itself as one such technology. Indeed, neoliberalism, as discussed, is acutely aware of the fragility of *homo oeconomicus* and the need to instill its desires and habits within the subject. In this sense the market seems to have a pedagogical function. Foucault does not explicitly refer to the market as a technology of the self, but to the extent that neoliberals themselves have commented on this, it would seem clear that they do believe that the market is a key pastoral agent (see, for example, Becker and Posner, 2008). What is of crucial importance, though, is the way that the subject responds to this governance: if it accepts the premise of the market, it will make decisions that result in the development of its own human capital in order to better survive and prosper; however, if it refuses to make such choices, it will experience some measure of discomfort, thereby allowing the market to correct the subject's choice calculus.

In this sense, the hegemony of neoliberal life appears to foreclose the possibility of any alternative mode of existence. Relying on the market as a tool of governmentality, the neoliberal regime would seem to evoke Deleuze's (1992) concept of the society of control. That is, as Hardt and Negri (2000, p. 23) frame it:

> … that society (which develops at the far edge of modernity and opens toward the postmodern) in which the mechanisms of command become ever more “democratic,” ever more immanent to the social field, distributed throughout the brains and bodies of the citizens.

Hardt and Negri have tried to develop the notion of a society of control in combination with this tendency to invest in human capital as a means for investigating the transformation of political power in contemporary globalisation. Referring to this mode of globalisation as 'Empire', they note the preeminent role played in this transformation not just of neoliberal discourse, but also of a tendency towards labour practices made possible by communicative technologies and the deepening of the subject's capacities in capitalism for 'immaterial' labour. "Empire," they declare, "takes form when language and communication, or really immaterial labour and cooperation, become the dominant force" (ibid., p. 385). The advent of this type of global communicative capitalism for Hardt and Negri bespeaks what they refer to as the passage to 'real subsumption'. Whereas in the era of classical imperialism a nation-based *European* mode of capitalism expanded to enshroud the entire world, thereby also expanding the political forms of European modernity, 'real subsumption' suggests a shift away from the economic modernisation of the industrial era and towards socialisation, or a change in quality of labour itself, as labour reconcentrates around the production of information goods and physically intangible 'service' goods.

In considering the ways in which the ongoing financial crisis is driven by everyday phenomena, Hardt and Negri's identification of the linguistic and communicative nature of neoliberalism's hegemony would seem to be of seminal importance. In keeping with the broad ontological power of neoliberalism which Foucault hints at, Hardt and Negri frame Empire as a project of 'subsumption' of the creative potential of human capital. Under conditions of subsumption, every form of activity, from the household to the schoolyard to the family doctor's office to the university, is now accountable to metrics of behaviour determined by capitalist rationality. Yet certain ambiguities also become apparent here. For example, one of the key implications of the turn towards the human capital framework is that there is now, effectively, an indeterminacy in the location of wealth-producing labour. The line between labour and non-labour has been blurred. As Negri (1992, p. 85) observes, today "the factory spreads throughout the whole of society ... production is social and activities are productive". Skills of care and capacities of intuition that were once more or less irrelevant to industrial production are now referred to as indispensible forms of 'human capital' and are directly implicated not just in the production of value but in the reproduction of order *tout court*. Thus, as Jason Read (2001) has argued, Hardt and Negri are preoccupied with the basic political significance of these novel forms of labour insofar as they have a kind of ontological power. That is, by virtue of the way capitalism extracts surplus today – through the production of knowledge, desires and affects – the question of power is not simply a question of the production of subjectivity but, rather, a question of the real and intense ways in which the 'commanding heights' of the economy have become immanent through the hegemony of immaterial labour. It is 'control' then, but a control, as Read (2003, p. 18) puts it, premised upon "the production of subjectivity by subjectivity".

Some may raise objections here about periodisation and the extent to which subjectivity might not plausibly be said to have always been productive, and command always immanent. But this is to miss the point: where the Christian pastoral took the conveyance of souls into heaven as its goal, today's capitalism actively seeks out the deep capacities of human capital, especially the capacities of subjectivation, in order to generate surplus capital from them. Thus, in the abstract at least, while the productive capacities of today's postmodern labour can hardly be said to be new, their place in capitalist production today can be broadly understood to have focused them according to a certain logic, giving them a certain, historically new "modulating" influence over all manner of social interactions (Virno, 2002). In other words, the rise of forms of labour oriented around intellect, intuition, compassion, and communication suggest that these practices have acquired "a new political and moral dimension" (Luke, 2001, p. 124). We can speak, therefore, of the subjective conditions and effects of this sort of capitalism; basic capacities of the heart and mind have not simply been subsumed within capitalist production; we live in an era of capitalist 'biopolitics' where these capacities have achieved a new preeminence in the reproduction of social life.

In their more recent work, *Commonwealth* (2009), Hardt and Negri discuss the hegemony of these capacities of capitalist valorisation in relation to the ongoing difficulties governments are experiencing in reflating their economies in the wake of the global credit crunch. For them, the hegemonic figure of this era of crisis is the "biopolitical metropolis" (ibid., p. 154), which reveals how the 'technical composition' of capitalism's source of surplus value is today founded in what Hardt and Negri term 'the common'. That is, not just the common wealth of the natural world but, also, the "knowledges, languages, codes, information, affects" of today's increasingly complex and dynamic social world (ibid., p. viii). Importantly, such resources are neither passive nor scarce (ibid., p. 139). In this sense, and this is a vital point in the development of the argument in *Commonwealth*, it is quite erroneous to say today's capitalism functions on the basis of *profit*. Rather, because capital itself no longer maintains any significant role in the process of producing the surplus value it requires, capitalism today is premised upon the extraction of *rent*. In an actual city, the example is fairly obvious: real estate agents pitch the price of 'high value' properties on the strength of their proximity to 'cool' or 'chic' parts of town. Thus, there is necessarily a "common work" of the crowd going on externally to the property, giving it additional value (ibid., p. 155). The value of a certain good in a rent economy is therefore possible only through the appropriation of that value from the common. Hence the dilemma, and this is precisely the analysis that Hardt and Negri bring to the realm of global finance: should the district become unpopular, the source of value disappears.

Hardt and Negri do avoid the sort of claim that Soros teeters on, that finance is just a social construction and, literally, untrue. Instead, they pose the world's financial system as an "enormous engine of abstraction" and the "paradigmatic economic instrument" of biopolitical capitalism's exploitation (ibid., p. 157, 258). However, citing Marazzi, they suggest that there is still a very real, albeit mystified, "social wealth" underlying it all (ibid., p. 158). Drawing from the conceptual framework of *Empire* to offer a critique of the financial crisis, Marazzi (2008, p. 89) offers an antagonistic reading of the subsumption of household savings by investment, and its accompaniment by the 1990s "noninflationary growth" strategy. However, in contrast with Seabrooke, Marazzi suggests that the strategy of deregulation and deflation which catalysed this move was adopted by the US in the late 1970s as a response to the crisis of profitability of Fordism, the productive regime that Autonomist Marxism poses as coming prior to today's 'Post-Fordist' regime. Here manufacturing firms turned to financial speculation as an alternative to productive reinvestment of profits, and workers turned to debt as a way of making up for lost wages (Marazzi, 2010, p. 27). In this way, the emerging post-Fordism recruited the poor and middle class elements of the economy in the "becoming-rent" of profit (Vercellone, cited in ibid., p. 30). Marazzi (ibid., p. 31) posits this transformation of life savings as a massive redistribution of risk, a "kind of privatization of deficit spending à la Keynes," facilitated by a suite of new, securitised financial products possible only in a highly deregulated environment. The scale to which these operations reached, relative to the productive activity of the economy, is clearly indicated by the impact of subprime crisis in the US, both at home and on the global markets.

As Autonomist Marxists, neither Marazzi, nor Hardt and Negri, would likely disparage Seabrooke's argument about the importance of community activists in securing access to credit. Nevertheless, for Autonomists, contemporary capitalism has been innovated to a great degree in response to the struggles for social equality waged in the Fordist era. Thus, for Marazzi (ibid., p. 33), the subprime crisis attests to the cynicism of capitalism today as it stoops to invest "in the raw lives of people that cannot guarantee anything" in order to survive; failing in the production of real value, contemporary capitalism must make "raw life a source of profit". Yet this is not surprising, he notes, putting forward the thesis that "financialization is not an unproductive/parasitic deviation of growing quotas of surplus value and collective saving, but rather the form of capital accumulation symmetrical with the new processes of value production" (ibid., p. 36). Key here is the idea of *externalising* the task of value production through the mass recruitment of a class of 'productive consumers' who add value to the good through the sheer fact of its consumption. As an analogy, Marazzi offers the example of the involvement of the consumer in the production of a piece of IKEA furniture. The point is that none of the new speculative profit-making would be even possible without the value-making capacities of this kind of "unpaid labour" (ibid., pp. 38-39). Non-productive accumulation in capitalism takes place reflexively in this sense, through a kind of 'crowd sourcing', bringing in the informal labour and time of the worker in an unprecedented way. And all of this reveals the extent of just how far traditional productive labour has been bypassed as a determinant of productivity. The current financial crisis then is to some extent "the result of the long march of capital against the Fordist working class" (ibid., p. 40). Thus, whereas in the past the end of an economic cycle might have brought on a shift to 'fictitious capital' as real investment opportunities dried up, thereby potentially creating a speculative bubble, in the 'New Economy' the involvement of household or life savings has reframed finance, disastrously, as coterminous with the real economy (ibid., p. 26). The great impasse of the crisis today is that the government 'stimulus' strategies being set in place are oriented towards refloating precisely the status quo of this empty, 'Ponzi' model of an economy.

Conclusion

In the hope of deepening the critique of IPE's Constructivism then, this article has argued that contemporary developments in financialisation attest to the transformation of capitalism and the recruitment within its regime of governance of the power of subjectivity. As Foucault hints, contemporary governmentality works via the market to instill in the subject an understanding of himself as capital. To live and survive in a market-based society is thus to reproduce this understanding in the practice of one's daily life. From the perspective of the Autonomist Marxists, this form of labour that the subject performs on himself is, in the context of contemporary capitalism, an *externalisation* to the sphere of immaterial labour of the task of sustaining accumulation. This externalisation is no less present in the reflexively constituted markets of high finance. That financialisation today is premised on the conversion of savings and pensions is a sober testimony to the fragility of 'Late Capitalism' as a reflexive economy. Yet it is this self-same type of reflexivity that sustains popular investment in the conceit of postmodern labour as human capital. Financialisation thus appears to foreclose any understanding of the source of capitalist value as occurring anywhere other than in the brain and body of the individual. However, as we have seen, the extension of techniques of capital accumulation into the non-economic sphere, via the recruitment of such non-linear capacities as care and intuition, bespeaks the extent to which accumulation today is in fact heavily reliant on social production.

What the Constructivists perhaps miss then, most critically, is the extent to which norms and conventions are now, in a sense, quite beside the point. As Surin (2009) puts it, today is the era of the 'low-information voter'. Ours is an era of 'post-political' politics to the extent that the political today has been turned into "the mere business of manipulating and dragooning voters according to the largely fictitious rhythms of election cycles" (ibid., p. 10). Politics itself has been marketised, resulting in the fact that politicians today are marketed, and about as hard to tell apart as "fizzy beverages" (ibid., p. 10). And political parties have become vote-harvesting enterprises, run more by consultants "primarily attuned to the desires of corporate interests" than by the politicians themselves (ibid., p. 11). Yet we must acknowledge even here the value-added of a positive ontology of social reproduction. If a debate emerges between Constructivism and this latter, Foucauldian strain of thinking then, it concerns just this: the extent to which capitalism today functions through an expropriation of the social or linguistic nature of production. Neoliberalism is not just an authoritative discourse, it is a way of life. Through its pedagogy of human capital, neoliberalism works in a decisive manner to corrode the link between the state and citizen, where the state has generally in the past been represented as a force for social progress through economic development. In the place of this ideal, Western political life emerges today in a decidedly postmodern form, where labour judges the merits of its activity according to the adaptive metrics and prescriptions of the market. As the above discussion indicates, Constructivism does recognise the technical rationality, and partiality, of government as a potential force of discipline or exclusion against those who might lack a voice. Yet by avoiding the deeply constitutive nature of contemporary capitalism, Constructivism fails to offer us any sense in which we might begin to challenge capitalism's cynical deployment of the power of subjectivity.

Bibliography

Adam, S., 2009. Global Financial Assets Lost $50 Trillion Last Year, ADB Says *Bloomberg,* [internet], 9 March. Available at: http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchiveandsid=aZ1kcJ7y3LDM [Accessed 30 November, 2010].

BBC News., 2010. Irish Republic announces record budget cuts. *BBC News* [internet], 4 November. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-11693654?print=true [Accessed 4 November, 2010].

Becker, G. and Posner, R., 2008., The Erosion of Individual Responsibility. *The Becker-Posner Blog* [internet], 2009. Available at: http://www.becker-posner-blog.com/archives/2008/03/the_erosion_of.html [Accessed June 20, 2009].

Bit, K., 2010. Greenlight's Einhorn Says Global Sovereign Debt Crisis Looms. *Bloomberg* [internet], 7 December. Available at: http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-12-07/greenlight-s-einhorn-says-global-sovereign-debt-crisis-looms.html [Accessed 10 December, 2010].

Brassett, J. Rethel, L. and Watson, M., 2010. The Political Economy of the Subprime Crisis: The Economics, Politics and Ethics of Response. *New Political Economy,* 15(1): pp. 1-7.

Byrne, E., 2010. Global financial crisis undermining our democracy. *Irish Times* [internet], 11 May. Available at: http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2010/0511/1224270130292_pf.html [Accessed 15 November, 2010].

Chapman, J., 2010. Osborne's austerity cuts will cost £10,000 a family as think tank warns it may STILL not be enough. *MailOnline* [internet], 21 October. Available: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1322344/SPENDING-REVIEW-2010-Osbornes-austerity-cuts-cost-10k-family.html?printingPage=true [Accessed 1 December, 2010].

de Goede, M., 2005. *Virtue, Fortune, and Faith: A Genealogy of Finance.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.

Deleuze, G., 1992. *Postscript on the Societies of Control* [internet]. Available at: http://www.n5m.org/n5m2/media/texts/deleuze.htm [Accessed October 18 2003].

EUbusiness. 2010. Merkel: Crisis-hit Europe needs 'new stability culture'. *EUbusiness* [internet], 19 May. Available at: http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/finance-economy.4t5/?searchterm=None [Accessed 20 May, 2010].

Foucault, M., 1978. *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I: An Introduction,* New York: Pantheon.

———–. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population; Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

———–. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics; Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hardt, M. and Negri, A., 2000. *Empire.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

———–. 2009. *Commonwealth.* Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Harvard.

Harvey, D., 2010. David Harvey on Capitalism and its Crises. *Against the Grain* [internet], 12 October. Available at: http://www.againstthegrain.org/program/354/id/411525/tues-10-12-10-david-harvey-capitalism-and-its-crises [Accessed 12 October, 2010].

Kelly, M., 2009. *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault.* New York: Routledge.

———–. 2010. If you thought the bank bailout was bad, wait until the mortgage defaults hit home. *Irish Times* [internet], 11 November, 2010. Available at: http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2010/1108/1224282865400_pf.html.

Krugman, P., 2008. Desperately Seeking Seriousness. *New York Times,* October 26.

———–. 2010. Eating the Irish. *New York Times* [internet], 25 November. Available:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/26/opinion/26krugman.html?_r=1and pagewanted=print [Accessed 25 November, 2010].

Langley, P., 2010. The Performance of Liquidity in the Subprime Mortgage Crisis. *New Political Economy,* 15(1): pp. 71-89.

Luke, T. W., 2001. Cyberspace as Meta-Nation: The Net Effects of Online E-publicanism. *Alternatives,* (26), pp. 113-142.

Marazzi, C., 2008. *Capital and Language; From the New Economy to the War Economy.* Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

——————. 2010. The Violence of Financial Capital. In Fumagalli, A. and Mezzadra, S., (eds.) *Crisis in the Global Economy: Financial Markets, Social Struggles, and New Political Scenarios.* Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

McWilliams, D., 2010. Bailout will sink Ireland before we can even swim. *Irish Independent* [internet], 1 December. Available at: http://www.independent.ie/opinion/columnists/david-mcwilliams/david-mcwilliams-bailout-will-sink-ireland-before-we-can-even-swim-2442878.html [Accessed 10 December, 2010].

Negri, A., 1992. Interpretation of the Class Situation Today: Methodological Aspects. In Bonefeld, W. Gunn, R. and Psychopedis, K. (eds.) *Open Marxism, Vol. 2: Theory and Practice.* London: Pluto.

O'Toole, F. 2010. The people must act or we will remain irrelevant. *Irish Times* [internet], 23 November, 2010. Available at: http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2010/1123/12242839328 71_pf.html.

Read, J., 2001. The Hidden Abode of Biopolitical Production: Empire and the Ontology of Production. *Rethinking Marxism,* (13), pp. 24-30.

——————. *The Micro-Politics of Capital.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Seabrooke, L., 2010. What Do I Get? The Everyday Politics of Expectations and the Subprime Crisis. *New Political Economy,* 15(1): pp. 51-70.

Soros, G., 2008. *The New Paradigm for Financial Markets: The Credit Crisis of 2008 and What It Means.* New York: PublicAffairs.

Surin, K., 2009. *Freedom Not Yet; Liberation and the Next World Order.* Durham, Duke University Press.

The Local., 2010. Merkel says EU's future at stake in Greek crisis. *The Local* [internet], 5 May. Available at: http://www.thelocal.de/politics/20100505-26981.html [Accessed 30 June, 2010].

Virno, P., 2002. *Virtuosity and Revolution, The Political Theory of Exodus* [internet]. Available at: http://www.makeworlds.org/node/34 [Accessed February 20 2003].

Wigan, D., 2010. Credit Risk Transfer and Crunches: Global Finance Victorious or Vanquished? *New Political Economy*, 15(1): pp. 109-125.

Nicholas J. Kiersey is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Ohio University-Chillicothe. He has published research on 'world state' theory; scale and bio-politics in the War on Terror; and the European Union's attitude to Turkish accession. His current research focuses on discourses of neoliberal capitalist subjectivity, and the 'debate about empire' in IR theory.

Everyday Neoliberalism and the Subjectivity of Crisis: Post-Political Control in an Era of Financial Turmoil. As the financial crisis has progressed from its immediate origins in 2008 as a US-based credit crunch to a global economic emergency, Constructivist IPE scholarship has turned to social norms and expectations not only as variables more. As the financial crisis has progressed from its immediate origins in 2008 as a US-based credit crunch to a global economic emergency, Constructivist IPE scholarship has turned to social norms and expectations not only as variables explaining its orig Big tech, nationalist politics, and the billionaire class have propelled a novel political economy. What impact will the virus have on this new status quo?Â Moreover, western neoliberalism has witnessed a significant mutation over the last years, not least to better accommodate the changing logics of global capitalism.Â Growing up under the radar of the war on terror and financial turmoil, the first decade of the twenty-first century saw the birth of a fundamentally global, offshore, digitized and financialized hyper capitalism.Â In combining economic neoliberalization with illiberal political control since the late 1970s, the CCP has been one of the worldâ€™s neo-illiberal vanguards. Financial meltdown, environmental disaster and even the rise of Donald Trump â€“ neoliberalism has played its part in them all. Why has the left failed to come up with an alternative?Â As the poor become poorer and the rich become richer, the rich acquire increasing control over another crucial asset: money. Interest payments, overwhelmingly, are a transfer of money from the poor to the rich. As property prices and the withdrawal of state funding load people with debt (think of the switch from student grants to student loans), the banks and their executives clean up.