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EMPOWERING GOVERNMENTALITIES RATHER
THAN WOMEN: THE *ARAB HUMAN*
DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2005 AND WESTERN
DEVELOPMENT LOGICS

This article analyzes the *Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*. I argue that the *Arab Human Development Report 2005* works within a United Nations development framework that strengthens states and elites in relation to their populations. This strategy reinforces the logic of national, transnational, and feminist governmentalities. Little attention is given to oppositional movements as sources of development. The authors of the report are often caught in the contradictions of using it to make radical critiques of undemocratic Arab state regimes and repressive Western state policies. International measures such as the human development index and the “global women’s rights” discourse used by the United Nations Development Programme and other organizations selectively authorize subjectivities, freedoms, and transformations and help to normalize and constitute a range of inequalities among women.