

EXCLUSIONARY DISCOURSES OF DEVELOPMENT

THE MDGs, THE UNDP AND THE WORLD BANK IN
BOTSWANA

Stacey Berquist

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What development discourse is being propagated by the MDGs?
- How does that discourse play out in the actual policies of the UNDP and World Bank?
- What are the implications of these constructions of development?

FRAMEWORK

- Postcolonial theory
 - Critical insights and methods of poststructural theory
 - But has its own project of specific critique of colonialism and its legacies
 - Focus on colonial power relations and identities
 - Offers the possibility of alternative ideas and outcomes

METHODOLOGY

- Discourse analysis of first MDG to ‘eradicate extreme poverty and hunger’ and its supporting documents
- DA of UNDP and World Bank policies for Botswana to ground the analysis
 - UNDP Draft Country Programme for Botswana 2010-2014
 - World Bank Country Partnership Strategy 2009-2013

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Dollar-a-day discourse (median of 10 poorest countries' poverty lines)
- Poverty is exclusively economic and once we reach that barest of targets, poverty is ended
- Issue of inequality is excluded
- Tension of ideas within even the UNDP itself:
 - HDR 2000 report claims to 'secure, for every human being, freedom, well-being and dignity'

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Halving of hunger
 - Hunger here measured as minimum caloric intake required to meet basic energy needs
 - Depoliticised, biologically defined notion of hunger
 - Tension with WFP notion of food access and security
 - ‘A world in which every man, woman and child has access at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy lifestyle’

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Discourse of exclusion
 - Only the issues addressed by the Goals are relevant
 - The solutions are only to be found through market integration and trade
 - Only some actors have the expertise to advise others on what they need to do, and how to do it
 - Implicit understanding that ‘we’ the international community does not include the poor

UNDP DRAFT COUNTRY PROGRAMME

- Explicit adoption of MDGs into specific policy construction
- Strong focus on need for measurement and data collection and the natural role of the UNDP in conducting such research
- Reinforcement of market strategies of development; necessity of private-sector development and 'inclusive globalisation' for poverty reduction

WORLD BANK COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

- Parallels with UNDP policy
- Rigorous support for market-based solutions to poverty and the key to development
- Bank's rightful, neutral role as expert advisor, capacity builder and its natural place within developing countries

IMPLICATIONS

- A limitation of our understandings of poverty and hunger to basic economic and biological measures – a depoliticisation
- A discourse in which people who live in poverty should have lower expectations – and in which wealthier people's responsibilities are limited
- Development is defined as entry into world economic markets, a certain GDP and a basic economic standard of living