

Abstract

Eriksson Baaz, Maria, 2002, *The White Wo/Man's Burden in the Age of Partnership: A Postcolonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid*. Department of Peace and Development Research, Göteborg University, Box 700, SE 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden. 234 pages. Written in English. ISBN: 91-87380-53-6

Based on a study of two Scandinavian development NGOs in Tanzania, this thesis analyzes the construction of 'donor' and expatriate development worker identities and how these are manifested in development aid practice. While the thesis explores the articulation of 'donor' and expatriate development worker identities in a more general way, the identities are analyzed in relation to the policy of 'partnership' in particular: How are 'donor' identities manifested in the practices of development aid? How do they relate to the calls for partnership in which paternalism has no place, where 'partners progressively take the lead' and where communication is open and transparent? The thesis is based on interviews conducted in Tanzania in 1998 and 1999 and on an analysis of policy documents and other texts.

Starting from the assumption that identities are constituted within discourse, this study situates and analyzes processes of identification within two contexts. First, it situates 'donor' identities within a postcolonial context and analyzes how these identities are informed by more general discourses constituted by colonial history. Second, it situates processes of identification within the development aid context itself. In particular, it analyzes processes of identification in relation to the economic inequalities which characterize this context.

This thesis demonstrates the conflicts and tensions characterizing identification in the development aid context. It shows that identities reflect the partnership discourse itself which disavows paternalism. They reflect the influence of a long-standing critique of the eurocentrism of development, today most often articulated in so called 'post-development' texts. At the same time, the identities analyzed in this study also reflect the workings of quite different discourses which inform images of a superior, active, reliable 'donor' Self in opposition to an inferior, passive, unreliable 'partner', identities which in different ways contradict the policy of partnership.

Keywords: Identity, Development aid, Postcolonial Theory, Development NGOs, Partnership, Post-development, Discourse, Africa, Tanzania, Europe, Denmark, Sweden.