

The Reinvention of the World Bank: From Developmentalism to “Basic Needs”

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Abstract

This paper argues that the World Bank is an international institution that creatively and strategically reinvented itself according to prevailing political-economic and geopolitical imperatives, especially in the crucial period 1965-1980. Through critical discourse analysis of core Bank publications, I explore the question of how the world Bank legitimated its shift from classical developmentalism to its basic needs approach. In doing so, I show that the Bank's transition from the classical developmentalism of the post-World War II era to basic needs-driven development in the late 1970s allowed it to expand its spheres of influence and assert itself as a soft, but highly influential, power in the international development arena. Focusing on the period spanning the Presidency of Robert McNamara (1968-1981), former US Secretary of State, I conduct an interpretivist mediated discourse analysis of the Bank's publications, including policy papers and speeches by McNamara himself which I source from the World Bank's Open Knowledge Repository. Interrogating how the World Bank justified and legitimated its reinvention, I focus my analysis around its discursive strategy, ultimately demonstrating that legitimation came from the persistent use of three interdependent linguistic strategies: a call for the moral imperative of global inclusivity, an appeal to shared social responsibility among the world's advanced economies, and the reification of the aforementioned strategies throughout the Bank's private and public discourses. Crucially, this three-pronged strategy served the Bank's interests well in the long term: by implementing this strategy, it managed to deflect opposition and critique and constantly reinvent itself and the need for its continued presence in the international development landscape.

Keywords: International Development, World Bank, Legitimacy Building, Basic Needs Approach

1. Introduction

Over its 75-year history the World Bank has reinvented itself a number of times. Noting these institutional shifts from classical developmentalism, basic-needs, austerity-based neoliberalism, to sustainable development and post-conditionality highlights an important puzzle.¹ How is it possible for a mainstage actor in development like the World Bank to legitimate change in its mission? Considering the differing interests of its investors, the varied needs of its loan beneficiaries, and the sheer size of its employee population further complicates this notion. Of these ideological shifts, this paper regards the Bank's first transition from classical developmentalism to basic-needs as the critical juncture in which, from 1965-1980, the Bank was able to assert itself as a soft, but highly influential, power in the international development arena.² Robert McNamara, president of the Bank from 1968-1980, was regarded as crucial to this ideological shift and institutional expansion, but the question remains through what means did he do so?³ Thus, emerges the following question: How did the World Bank operationalize language to legitimate its shift from classical developmentalism to its basic needs approach?

Through the analysis of speeches, publications given or chartered by Robert McNamara, and travel briefings directed at McNamara, this paper finds that to legitimate its transition from classical developmentalism to basic needs-based development, the Bank engaged in three distinct linguistic strategies. The first, a call for a moral imperative of global inclusivity. Second, the Bank asserts a shared social responsibility amongst the Global North for the Global South. The third strategy was the reification of the two previous strategies throughout the various branches of the Bank in order to establish a collective subconscious of “basic needs.” To best answer the proposed question, the literature review will 1. historicize and define the notions classical developmentalism, basic needs-based development and legitimacy followed by 2. a summation of Neocolonialism and Liberal Institutionalism as it relates to the World Bank. The methodology section then provides a justification for the paper’s use of explanatory critique, a variant of critical discourse analysis. The analysis is then followed by a discussion of both the implications of the Bank’s ideological evolution and the potential for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining the Boundaries: Classical Developmentalism, Basic Needs, and Legitimacy

To provide context, the literature review will first analyze scholarship that reflects critically on the World Bank’s ordering logic. As noted by Collier, Packard, and Ruger the Bank was founded under the premise of European reconstruction as the Bank for Reconstruction and Development.⁴ Reconstructionist capital infusion and infrastructure building became the foundation for its subsequent transition to classical developmentalism. As elucidated by Bresser-Pereira, classical developmentalism is a school of thought that sees modernization through industry as the central means to economic development.⁵ The Bank gained the support for these ideals from the United States, who feared postwar economic recession, and eventually the guise of development transformed into a “justification for intervening in the economic and social lives of millions.”⁶ Again under the broader guise of development, the Bank, beginning in the 1960s, transitioned to an ideology based on uplifting people from poverty by addressing their basic human needs.⁷

Global Health historians regard this move as a part of the overall shift towards primary health care (PHC) during the 1960s-70s.⁸ Within this, the scholarship regards the Alma Ata declaration of 1978 as the critical juncture within the PHC paradigm. The reason: the declaration has become the means by which the field defines health and establishes it as “a most important world-wide social goal whose realization requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector.”⁹ That said, this analysis goes on to assert that the World Bank’s own shift to basic human needs (BHN) or basic needs, was the basis upon which conventions like the Alma Ata declaration were made possible.

As is stated in the introduction, understanding the dichotomous relationship between classical developmentalism and basic needs within the context of the World Bank necessitates the exploration of legitimacy. Suchman defines the concept as a socially accepted perception of an organization’s actions, values and norms.¹⁰ His analysis considers legitimacy three-pronged: pragmatic, cognitive and moral.¹¹ Pragmatic legitimacy results from the perceived benefit of key stakeholders, which in this study are representative of the Bank’s loan recipients and the investors. Underpinning this form of legitimacy is the concept of an organization’s perceived ability, which for the Bank was its ability to adequately distribute loans to projects that would garner beneficial returns for loan recipients & investors. Palazzo and Scherer regard cognitive legitimacy as the naturalization of an organization’s policies, practices, and leadership to a point in which societal context regards it as inherently necessary.¹² Further, scholars of corporate legitimacy take moral legitimacy as an institution’s provision of “socially acceptable goals in a socially acceptable manner.”¹³ Said scholars take legitimacy as occurring in and through pronounced public discussion as well as within a realm of collective subconscious.¹⁴ Thus, this has led the analysis to consider the speeches of Robert McNamara as they represent a conversation with the Bank’s stakeholders (i.e. the Board of Governors) in conjunction with the mechanisms through which the Bank disseminated information so as to inject its conception of basic needs into the cognitive discourse of development.

2.2 The World Bank as a Neocolonial, Liberal Institution

Scholars have critiqued the Bank’s various programs since its inception. Current scholars often begin by criticizing the bank’s liberal policies from as early as the 1950s. They posit that prior to the 1970s the World Bank’s liberal approach to global development was insufficient and unrealistic.¹⁵ More specifically, in this branch of literature scholars posit that the bank’s early policy of infrastructure oriented economics proved insufficient when trying to shift

from reconstruction of Europe to a more broad involvement in the developing world.¹⁶ Furthermore, scholars that are critical of the World Bank's early years note that their programs merely created an "illusion of sustainability."¹⁷ In that vein, scholars also tend to highlight this illusionism as a paradigmatic of the World Bank's role in reifying colonialism.¹⁸

Scholars are highly critical of the World Bank as a *Western* liberal entity. These scholars highlight that the Bank sought to quickly aid the development of newly decolonized states in order to align them with liberal ideologies of the West.¹⁹ They take that the Bank was working on "embedding liberalism," and would assist developing countries in their development needs (e.g. providing adequate health services) while still reaping the benefits of "capitalist expansion."²⁰ Alas, economic instability and World Bank program failures in the region during the 1960s forced the World Bank to adjust its approach.²¹ The key takeaway, however, is that despite the Bank's continual adjustment to economic and development challenges, scholars posit that the Bank's liberal underpinning will always limit its ability to facilitate the creation of permanent solutions focused on changing colonial legacies of structural inequity.²²

3. Methodology

This study employs a critical discourse analysis of World Bank publications from 1965-1980. I have chosen critical discourse analysis with the definition provided by Fairclough and Wodak in mind.²³ They note that critical discourse analysis understands power relations as discursive, discourse as being a means of ideological formation, discourse as inextricably historical, discourse as social action, and discourse analysis as a means of interpreting the world.²⁴ As a variant of critical discourse analysis this study employs the analytical framework provided by Roy Bhaskar, denoted as explanatory critique.²⁵

Explanatory critique is a five-step analytical framework. The first of which is to consider a social problem which has a semiotic aspect. In this study, the problem is represented by the World Bank's construction of institutional ideology. The analysis must then identify potential obstacles to overcoming that problem. For the World Bank, the primary obstacle to asserting its new ideological framework, basic needs, was legitimacy. The third step then considers whether the social order under analysis needs that problem to exist.²⁶ For the World Bank, this is in fact the case, as its ability to remain relevant and provide effective programming is contingent on its institutional ideology. The study must then determine potential ways to overcome the problem. The Bank's solution to propounding its new ideology of basic needs was to operationalize language as a means of constructing legitimacy. As such the final step, critical analysis, determines three linguistic strategies by which the Bank legitimated its transition from classical developmentalism to basic needs.

To assert these findings I evaluate speeches, reports and internal documents that delineate the Bank's perception of various state actors. I have selected this methodology as it provides an analysis of both public and private discourse which, according to Wodak and Meyer, ultimately constitute ideology and represent social action.²⁷ My study first looked at a 1965 Address to the Board of Governors given by the World Bank President George Woods.²⁸ The analysis considered the discourse highlighted in this specific transcript as a means of contextualizing the Bank's views on development leading up to its push for basic needs. The paper then analyzed a selection of annual speeches given to the World Bank's Board of Governors during the Presidency of Robert McNamara from 1968-1980, as he is largely regarded as having initiated the Bank's transition away from solely classical developmentalist projects, and for its incorporation of projects focused basic needs.²⁹ Additionally, the study analyzed World Bank Reports from 1978 to 1980, the first Health Sector Policy Paper 1975, various collections of case files and reports which include, briefings, and airport speeches written for and by McNamara between 1971 and 1980 as these data sources shed light the Bank's internal and external discourses.

4. Analysis

Upon conducting an explanatory critique, the analysis finds that the language coming out of the World Bank from 1965-1980 served as a legitimating mechanism for its basic needs development paradigm. The means of which came through language of morality, and collective burden, which were then followed by the internal replication of these aforementioned discourses throughout the organization. It also finds that as people, governments, and countries needed developmental assistance the bank was more than doubling its efforts to provide on every occasion.³⁰ Thus, implicating the Bank's self-portrayal as a pseudo-savior there to guide the world down a better path. Therefore, the analysis

suggests that the legitimation of basic needs is tied to the construction of a new development discourse in which the World Bank could remain as a central player in perpetuity.

4.1 The Development Problem: Categorizing the World Bank's Identity

In order to contextualize the differences between the World Bank's first and second ideological frameworks, classical developmentalism and basic needs, the paper first analyzed the discourse from the years leading up to Robert McNamara's presidency. Starting with the 1965 address given by McNamara's predecessor, George D. Woods.³¹ In the address, there is a clear presence of an *other* and an intense sense of stagnancy. Throughout, Woods only directs remarks towards developed countries, denoting developing countries only as they or them as if entirely absent from the discussion at hand.³² The onus of a lack of investment by industrial countries is also placed on the developing country's own internal efforts to build infrastructure and stimulate economy which ignores both colonial histories of extortion and the basis upon which the bank was founded to work to raise the living standards of *all* of its member countries.³³ He continues by categorizing the borrowing practices of newly independent, developing countries as often "unwise," adding to the general tone of inadequacy, incompetency and *other* when regarding developing countries.³⁴

Continuing, Woods asserted that the solutions to the problems of the developing world remained in the hands of developed countries as capital to be invested through the World Bank. He goes on to portray himself as an optimist who remains aware of the gravity of the problems facing the World Bank's current path.³⁵ Ironically, Wood's here is highlighting the underlying problem: a need for institutional revitalization through a shift in its ideological framework. That said, the solutions he chose to spearhead focused on the reimplementing of the same or similar policies that had plagued the first half of the "development decade."³⁶ These solutions drew attention to the importance of money as a means of remaining on the only known path to development: that of classical developmentalism.³⁷ The resulting redundancy from the Bank's inability to change led to frustration which would later help and hinder McNamara's attempts to transition to a basic needs-based development approach. The sentiments expressed by Woods in the 1965 address lingered in discourse in the years prior to McNamara's presidency.³⁸ As such, the problem had been established; the bank required a means of developing the world's newly independent, poor countries that moved beyond the competencies of classical development.

4.2 Legitimacy: The Reinvention Hurdle

Robert McNamara came on to the scene in 1968 with an unparalleled vitality.³⁹ He spoke of a new holistic approach to economic development that centered on health, education, and food in his 1968 address to the Bank's board of governors and to the United Nations.⁴⁰ He regards this new centered approach, centered on basic human needs, as a departure from "present economic trends," of which mankind is weary; adding that there is an overdue need for investment from the Bank's governors related to their deterioration in faith regarding classical developmentalist schemes.⁴¹ In itself, a need for investment might seem simple, however, what it represents is the chief hurdle to McNamara's new ideas: legitimation.

Cognitive, pragmatic and moral legitimacy stood forefront as McNamara faced his fellow Bretton Woods institution, the United Nations, as well as with the Bank's Board of Governors.⁴² Since the Bank's inception both groups had become accustomed to classical developmentalism so much so that it became a subconscious taken for granted as the natural ordering system of the Bank's operations. McNamara's needed the support of the UN, to begin establishing the pragmatic legitimacy he required of investors and loan recipient countries.⁴³ Underpinning this form of legitimacy is the concept of ability. For the Bank, this meant its ability to adequately distribute loans to projects that would garner beneficial returns for loan recipients & investors. Both moral and cognitive legitimacy are enveloped into McNamara's delineation of the pragmatic legitimacy. The reason being, a belief in the potential of economic returns is bolstered by moral assertions that "aid is a continuing social and moral responsibility, and its need now is greater than ever."⁴⁴ Further, without spreading such assertions throughout various branches of the Bank, McNamara would neglect cognitive legitimacy as the subconscious of stakeholders still aligned with classical developmentalism at the beginning of his tenure as Bank President.

4.3 The Need for Basic Needs?

To best understand the World Bank's intentions behind its transition to basic needs, the paper analyzed a selection of World Development Reports. Made poignant by 1978 and 1979 reports, the Bank had a continued desire to tackle absolute poverty as it aligned with its basic needs approach.⁴⁵ A 1980 report highlights, however, the various

difficulties to health provision and meeting the basic needs of people in developing countries. A surface reading of these reports ignores something very important: The World Bank needed absolute poverty, economic deterioration, and socioeconomic inequality to necessitate its own continued existence.

The World Development Report was, itself, a World Bank publication, so in highlighting the struggles of humanity it simultaneously fortified the Bank's own ability to address those struggles. The 1980 report asserts that throughout the 1970s the Bank did everything in its power to increase employment, meet basic needs, eliminate inequality and increase human capital in poor countries.⁴⁶ Here the analysis must embolden that all of these strategies, goals and solutions are self-defined by the World Bank. In essence, the Bank was attempting to solve a problem that it itself had defined. This is not to say that poverty and human suffering did not exist, of course it did; however, the Bank was drawing the boundaries of what constituted these problems as well as their solutions. What defines poverty, accordingly, is simultaneously all the things the World Bank is attacking under the umbrella of "basic human needs."⁴⁷ Thus, by asserting these things as the defining factors of absolute poverty, through publications like the World Development Report, the Bank was working to legitimate its broader institutional practices focused on tackling those *exact* problems. In essence the Bank constructs its version of the truth in defining both the world's problems and solutions this way; it allows the institution to fit its policies in to the larger development narrative quite cleanly.

Moreover, the World Development Reports allow the bank to double back and analyze its own approach to development in a seemingly objective manner that does not highlight the World Bank as its core. Rather it emphasized the state of development as a global matter, not an institutional one. In enframing "basic needs" as a specific set of objectives, the Bank shifted the spotlight from its own institutional failures to "objective" poverty indicators which it alone was poised to solve as a global actor. Thus, the analysis posits that the Bank needed to transition its ideology basic needs as a means of remaining relevant in the world order, which is why it went to such lengths to enframe the world's problems in such a way that it could fix them.

4.4 The Solution: Morality, Responsibility, Repeat

Robert McNamara's first Address to the Board of Governors in 1968 was in stark contrast to the discourse that preceded it. Within just the first few lines of his address McNamara began to lay the ground work to legitimate basic needs. First, he defines himself as a global citizen, a worldly person who is thereby conscious and concerned with the issues facing *all* of humanity.⁴⁸ He continues this show of sympathy by recognizing the board's perceived frustration felt after a decade of lackluster development outcomes, which thus allows him to build on the past rather than dwell in it. The speech continues with powerful uses of language that indicate permanence, foresight, and strong moral incentives for revitalizing *world* development.⁴⁹ McNamara made it obvious that the Bank was preparing for a new era of development in which it would employ "our," as in humanity's, "overwhelming strength for the betterment of *all* [emphasis added] mankind, and the fulfillment of the human spirit."⁵⁰ All in all, the analysis regards McNamara's first speech to the Board of Governors as a foundation and template that does well to create a sense of morality and shared burden of which he goes on to incorporate into his subsequent speeches.

In order to further legitimate its development approach detailed by McNamara in his initial address, the Bank's publications that followed quickly fell in line with the new ideological framework. Highlighted in the Bank's 1969 annual report, McNamara's 1971 remarks to the government of Chad, and his 1972 addresses to the government of the Central African Republic.⁵¹ Throughout the 1969 Annual Report, education, agriculture and public service funding serve as symbols for basic needs.⁵² Education, for example, is spoken of as inherently tied to the developing world's economic and social well-being.⁵³ While still aligned with classical developmentalism's infrastructure building, with regards to the construction of schools, here the Bank focuses on quality as opposed to just access. Noting that the basic human needs of many people, especially post-colonial states, were hindered by inherited, ill-fitting education systems that did not suffice the needs of the whole population.⁵⁴

In McNamara's later responses in both Chad and the Central African Republic he maintains this fortification of quality and combines it with the notion of group responsibility.⁵⁵ Upon his arrival in Chad, McNamara delineated the Bank's intention to "gain a better understanding of the problems and prospects of your economy, in order to assess what the World Bank Group can do to help you cope with the problems and improve the prospects."⁵⁶ He later asserts the same in the remarks to the governments of the Central African Republic, Mauritania, Spain, and more.⁵⁷ Having analyzed a number of speeches given to developing member states, these sentiments can be regarded as highly common.

In recycling terminology, notions of morality, and the World Bank Group's responsibility for the betterment of developing countries the Bank's discourse began to evolve the collective consciousness of the development arena. This led World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), in accompaniment with various member to sign on to these ideals.⁵⁸ These organizations were also charged with the

betterment of the world's poor, so the opportunity for funding and multilateral support from the World Bank Group's new charter of basic needs was a major incentive for them to align. The underlying logic of the World Bank's "basic needs" ultimately became the basis for which the previously mentioned organizations established and partook in the post Alma Ata, Primary Health Care movement.⁵⁹

Another key moment is captured by the 1973 Address to the Board of Governors in Nairobi, Kenya which marked the close of McNamara's first 5-year term. His remarks highlighted the many successes of basic needs.⁶⁰ The speech codified the notion of basic needs as naturally representative of development success. Coupled with this codification is the concept of unity that appears throughout McNamara's address which helped solidify a sense of trust.⁶¹ Trust here refers to the establishment of pragmatic and moral legitimacy. Pragmatic legitimacy stemming from the positive returns the Bank's investors and its loan recipients were receiving which thereby satisfied each individual member countries' self-interested reason for partaking in "basic needs." Moral legitimacy was co-constructed with pragmatic legitimacy as positive returns also allowed investors to more fully enjoy and uphold the Bank's just mission of poverty alleviation through basic needs.

The success of basic needs empowered McNamara to say the following: "I should stress that unless national governments redirect their policies toward better distribution, there is very little that international agencies such as the World Bank can do to accomplish this objective."⁶² This remark spotlights the symbolic duality that existed between the Board of Governors and the World Bank Institution. Deconstructing this further, he uses the opportunity in Kenya to call on both developing and developed member countries to promote the means of development distribution within their borders as the Bank had little agency in the realm of domestic politics.⁶³ In saying this, McNamara subordinates the Bank's ability to that of member state competencies, but by coupling this subordination with the symbolic success of basic needs, he is able to assert that the Bank as inextricably necessary for the continued success of development. In essence saying, I may need your money, but without this institution your money means nothing for the development of the world. He ends the address like most others, with a prior moral incentive of global inclusivity and shared humanity.⁶⁴ which he uses to set the normative standard under which there is shared social responsibility to further the Bank's mission of human development through basic needs.

Following this success, McNamara called for a new type of institutional review, that reinforced its focus on health and human development. The analysis conducted in the 1975 "Health Sector Policy paper" is a prime example of institutional self-replication done by the Bank in order to swell the broader discourse with its own views on development. The analysis posits that "too large a portion" of investments are directed towards "impressive, but expensive"⁶⁵ hospitals, that ultimately underserve the majority of the areas they are in. Similar to McNamara's speeches, policy paper advocated for localized basic human needs-based development practices. In addition, the document places moral incentives at the forefront, noting that previous actions may have hindered the development and health of aid recipients. Case in point is onchocerciasis, or river blindness, which had been worsened by the Bank's previous dam-building programs in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.⁶⁶ The document's choice to highlight these negative externalities creates a moral incentive for the Bank and the development community as a whole to reanalyze the impacts of its past, in order to transition towards holistic development to address basic human needs.

McNamara's moral incentives and notions of shared social responsibility permeated within and outside of the Bank. A prime example being his 1977 article written for the Boston Globe entitled "The Moral Dimensions of Development."⁶⁷ He effectively states that the future of development must be one centers on equity. Further, he harks back to the strides made by developing countries that are members of the World Bank Group. However, similar to his 1973 address to the Board of Governors, he notes that the Bank can only do so much to ensure that these members states equitably distribute education funding, farming technologies, and health services.⁶⁸ This contrasts with the Bank's 1975 travel briefing for McNamara as he traveled to Nigeria; the document professed the World Bank Group's responsibility to ensure that developing countries distribute the wealth of their budding industries in a with morals and equity in mind.⁶⁹ The same or similar sentiments can be found in travel briefings about Egypt, Kuwait, Senegal and more. These documents were never intended for the public to see, so it shows how even deep within the Bank's internal discourse the notion of basic needs was being reified.⁷⁰ The analysis takes that this is representative of the slow, but effective development of cognitive legitimacy through internal self-replication. By always maintaining a sense of moralism and responsibility for the Global South through this period of development, the Bank was able make its claims seem commonsensical. Through as many outlets as possible (and of which this analysis could take into consideration) the World Bank established basic needs as normative and integral to the world at large.⁷¹

The final data point this study analyzed was Robert McNamara's 1980 address to the Board of Governors from.⁷² The speech solidified the institution's conviction to legitimating basic needs-based development throughout McNamara's tenure at the Bank. The address was the culmination of twelve years' worth of moral incentives, assertions of the Bank's responsibility to oversee development, and the self-replication of these ideals throughout the Bank's various discourses. In turn, McNamara ends his time at the World Bank with the following proclamation:

“I believe we can take a measure of satisfaction that many governments and institutions throughout the international development community, including this Bank, are beginning to think about poverty in a more thoughtful way than they did a decade ago. And they are beginning to ask themselves how they can reshape their own efforts to deal with it more effectively.”⁷³

In denoting these assertions as common sensical within the development community, as opposed to future goals for the Bank’s development project, he confirms the legitimacy of his once fledgling policy; “basic needs” was now the basis of all human development.

5. Conclusion

This paper sought to analyze World Bank as a social actor instituting social change. It focused on institutional legitimation within the broader world order of the 1960s and 1970s. It took specific regards for the World Bank’s relation to the history of global health and in doing so finds that the Bank’s language incorporated moral incentives, institutional self-replication and the development of shared social responsibility into its discourse. Thus, explaining *how* the World Bank, a main actor in global development, was able to redirect and reinvent its overall mission. This study, in turn, recognizes the essential role that language, symbolism and perception played in constructing organizational legitimacy. The paper regards these findings as relevant to the scholarship of global health, legitimacy, and liberal institutionalism. As it relates to global health, the analysis provides a new conception of the push for primary health care that centralizes the World Bank a main actor in perpetuating this rhetoric. Scholars of legitimacy studies would regard the analysis as a support for Palazzo and Scherer’s conjecture that organizations have access to multiple means of legitimacy, and as such should use each to their advantage.⁷⁴ Furthermore, this study contributes to the critical views of the World Bank’s liberal alignment in negating the idea that the Bank has always focused solely on its power to facilitate freer trade between its member states.

Each document analyzed between 1965 and 1980 reflected the dedication of the World Bank Group, in its entirety, to implement a basic needs approach to development. That said, this paper centralized Robert McNamara in its analysis as it considered him both a continued advocate and catalyst for the Bank’s basic needs discourse. He emboldened the Bank through his moralistic rhetoric starting as early as his first address to the board of governors. However, the addresses made by McNamara alone would not have been enough to shift broad development norms. Rather, there was coherence of language, symbol, and meaning in the Bank’s understandings of development which facilitated its legitimation of basic needs.

6. Further Research Opportunities

Finally, the analysis sees great potential for further research. Namely, the study finds that the process of legitimizing basic needs simultaneously essentialized the Bank’s role in global development and provided it a framework for reinvention. Therefore, the Bank had created a template for reimagining its own institutional identity as a means of serving its underlying mission in perpetuity: mitigate the contagion of global risk and insecurity. This assertion opens an entirely new evaluation and reflection of the literature on development.

7. Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express his appreciation to Dr. Malini Ranganathan, Dr. Lauren Carruth, and Dr. Maria De Jesus, for it was their teachings that inspired me and made this analysis possible.

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