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Gaming development : online video games as aestheticized ideologies.

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Abstract

It can be argued that the online video game medium has provided new opportunities for the dissemination of educational and informational content, and indeed, such new opportunities have become increasingly exploited by various international organisations, as well as independent gaming producers in order to promote developmental messages. *Food Force*, *Fate of the World* and *Wildfire* are exemplary of such games that seek to inform players of methods that can be utilised to enhance development and alleviate poverty within developing nations. While the games' presence on the internet provides allowances for the dissemination of alternative and novel suggestions for development, the games prove however, to promote mainstream forms of development, most notably modernisation theories and participatory paradigms. Indeed, *Food Force* and *Fate of the World* strongly adhere to modernisation theories through their emphasis upon the necessity of intervention on behalf of developed nations and organisations in order to stimulate development and progress in developing nations, whereas *Wildfire* proves to be highly informed by participatory paradigms due its stress upon the potential of communities to bring about development by themselves and for themselves. However, due to these influences of such theories, the games also appropriate many of the problematic aspects of these theories. Thus, the games prove to offer ideological conceptualisations for development that are highly flawed and ineffective, and thus serve as a means to encourage and promote the hegemonic positions of developed nations and organisations within the developmental process.