

Discussion Questions for Week III

“The debate over what is *to be developed* and *how that should occur*”

The following questions should help in our efforts to understand the often-complex relationships between donors, recipients, priorities, and development as process. There are distinct associations between these issues that we will be exploring further as a class for the aid consortium project. Take a few minutes to review the following questions. Based on the number you have been assigned in class, ascertain which of this week’s readings you’ll need to review more closely in formulating your responses. We’ll leave a few minutes to initiate discussion with your group members on Tuesday. On Thursday, class will begin *promptly* with further discussion in the small groups (no longer than 15 minutes). We will then reassemble and a spokesperson for each group will share with the whole class the key issues, concerns and analyses that your group raised, incorporating references to the readings as appropriate.

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1. Many of the readings for this week have suggested that poverty is not the key obstacle to development and economic growth, but rather good governance is central for development assistance to make inroads towards solving the situation of global poverty. On what are these assumptions based? How is governance seen as an important vehicle for promoting development?
 2. The historical giving of aid was associated with colonial relationships, then the Cold War, and more recently post-Cold War global concerns. How have colonial relationships affected the structure of bilateral development assistance as it exists today? How do current assistance goals differ from the initial intent of post-World War II assistance policy?
 3. Modernization theory posits that there is an evolutionary, linear path of socioeconomic and political change that transforms societies from being ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’; what is meant by that terminology? In addition, modernization theory argues that an explicit pattern of development, which includes increases in investments and transformation of political institutions to include previously disenfranchised groups, is a necessary precondition for ‘economic takeoff.’ How do you see modernization theory at work in ideas of resilient sustainable development in aid-receiving countries and in shaping our expectations of the *possibilities* of development?
 4. Paul Nelson highlights key differences between the MDGs and SDGs; what are the main ones he pinpoints? What does Nelson identify as the potential positive impacts and pitfalls of the SDGs?
 5. Haley Swedlund (*The Development Dance*) claims that incentivizing both donor agencies and recipient governments to live up to their commitments to each other over the long term is central to designing more effective ways of delivering aid. She argues to ensure credibility of commitment and the sustainability of aid mechanisms, there must be a concentrated effort to limit problems in the negotiated compromises between donors and recipients. What is the basis of her argument?

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6. Arjan deHaan lays out different arguments that contest aid: to reduce or abolish it, to reform it, and the role that international politics plays in it. What is the gist of each argument (to reduce or abolish it vs. to reform it), which do you find to be the most convincing, and why?

7. Galeano (in *The Post-Development Reader*) challenges the development apparatus and the costs to develop “To Be Like Them” (e.g., can markets expand limitlessly? Can the earth environmentally and physically sustain the costs of production?). Galeano sends a condemnation to this linear path of development in which resources are squandered for the sake of expanding markets at an environmental cost. Identify Galeano’s key points and what he instead recommends.

8. Ashis Nandy (in *The Post-Development Reader*) writes of the “colonization of the mind” and the subsequent notions of cultural inferiority and subserviency which are remnants of this process. What does he argue are the causes behind this? In what ways might development assistance reinforce the “colonization of the mind” and in what ways might development assistance facilitate countering this effect? In other words, what are possible ways to rectify the colonization of the mind that have occurred during colonial and postcolonial encounters?

9. The article “Learning from Ladakh” (by Helena Norberg-Hodge in *The Post-Development Reader*) challenges the assumptions that ODA donor agencies generally make when determining what is to be developed. What are these assumptions that she critiques, and what instead does she recommend be considered when determining development goals and priorities? In other words, what can we ‘learn from Ladakh’?