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Introduction

This paper is the second of a three-part series which attempts to outline a bioregional paradigm for a global ethic as an alternative to the dominant development paradigm (for preliminary definitions of the two paradigms, see Evanoff 2009a). The series offers a critique of the central notion of the dominant development paradigm that continued economic growth will eventually help developing countries "catch up" with the developed countries in terms of material affluence. The first paper in the series (Evanoff 2009b) argued that this goal is not only unachievable but also undesirable because it undermines the ability of the environment to sustain both human and non-human flourishing and reduces both natural and cultural diversity. The second paper, presented here, suggests that the dominant development paradigm exacerbates rather than overcomes social inequalities both within and between cultures. The third paper contends that the dominant development paradigm fails to promote genuine well-being in terms of both human health and quality of life for all but a wealthy minority. The series concludes that a bioregional alternative to the dominant development paradigm is better able to meet the goals of a global ethic based on ecological integrity, social justice, and human flourishing (proposed in Evanoff 2005).

Down and out in the global village

The dominant development paradigm is often justified on the grounds

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that development is necessary in order to overcome poverty and achieve social justice between rich and poor. This argument is supported in one form or another by both capitalist and Marxist theorists. It is assumed, first of all, that the "good life" can be equated with the various forms of overconsumption enjoyed primarily in first-world countries and, second, that the best way to achieve social justice is not by reducing over-consumption among the rich but rather by increasing consumption in both the developed and developing worlds. Development is portrayed as being in everyone's interest and the obligation of rich countries to "help" poor countries is cast as a moral imperative. Critics of the dominant development paradigm are correspondingly accused of having a "let-them-eat-cake" attitude that condemns the poor to lives of misery and poverty.

There are two versions of the argument that achieving higher levels of economic growth is good for the poor. The "catch-up" model of development is based on the more or less egalitarian idea that the developing countries will eventually be able to attain the same levels of consumption as the developed countries. Growth for all must continue but its benefits must be spread more equally if the relative gap between rich and poor is to be overcome. An alternative view accepts inequality as inevitable but nonetheless insists that "a rising tide lifts all boats." Inequalities may persist but growth is beneficial if everyone is better off in absolute terms. Despite their differing perspectives on what constitutes social justice, each of these positions sees continued economic growth as being both desirable and possible, while ignoring the idea that there may be environmental limits which make such growth ultimately unattainable (as argued in the first paper in this series).

In fact, development often works to the advantage of privileged groups in both the North and South, while working to the disadvantage of non-privileged groups in both spheres. Many development projects can be criticized not only because of the impact they have on the environment, but also because of the social inequalities which result, not only *between* the first and third worlds but also *within* the first and third worlds. Development projects often aid the wealthier segments of developing countries while ignoring the poor altogether. Many of the projects which are undertaken by major development agencies are high-cost mega-projects, such as dams, power plants, and roads, intended to provide infrastructure for further capitalist development. They do little or nothing to improve the lives of the truly needy and in fact often have a harmful effect.

Development aid to build a series of power plants in Singrauli, India, for example, resulted in 300,000 people being forced to evacuate their homes (Chatterjee 1994). Before the project began, the people were by no means rich, but they were nonetheless able to provide a relatively satisfying life for themselves through subsistence farming. After the development project was completed, however, much of their farmland had been taken away, and the soil and water had become contaminated with industrial pollutants. While a few people in the region no doubt benefited from the development project and while it undoubtedly contributed to an overall increase in per capita GNP, the majority of the local population became less healthy and poorer as a result. Although there may be cases in which capitalist-style development genuinely raises living standards, numerous other case studies can be cited in which development projects have actually hurt rather than helped the poor (see also Cassen 1994; George and Sabelli 1994; Oxfam Policy Department 1995; Rich 1994; Sogge 2002).

Much of the aid given by developed countries to developing countries also comes in the form of "tied" aid, which means that the money must be spent not on local companies in the developing countries but rather on goods and services provided by companies in the countries giving the aid. The result is that tied aid often provides a boost to first-world economies while doing little or nothing for the economies of the countries being aided. In fact, most aid money never leaves the donor countries; some projects are specifically designed so that the ultimate beneficiaries are the donors rather than the aided countries. Even aid given through multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, can end up being channeled back to corporations in donor countries through procurement orders and purchase agreements. The essential mechanism is one in which money is channeled from first-world taxpayers through aid agencies to first-world corporations, who then execute development projects which often benefit elite classes in the recipient country. Streeten characterizes the situation as one in which funds are transferred from " . . . the poor in the rich countries to the rich in the poor countries" (quoted in Burkey 1993, p. 31).

Loans to developing countries to support such development projects have also led to an international debt crisis of monumental proportions. Wilkins (1992, pp. 170–171) cites figures which show that the total amount of debt owed by developing countries to developed countries increased from about $18 billion in 1960 to $1,341 billion in 1990, or about 74 times. The debt figures are so high that since the early 1980s the amount being repaid has actually exceeded the amount of new loans and aid being offered. From 1983 to 1989 the total amount of net transfers was $223 billion (Wilkins 1992, p. 175). More recently the *New Internationalist* has reported that outflows from South to North (in the form of profit remittances, debt service, and estimated illicit flows) exceeded inflows from North to South (in the form of aid, migrant remittances, net foreign direct investment, and new loans) by an average of $348 billion per year during the period 2002 to 2006 ("Tax Injustice — The Facts" 2008).

It is mainly non-elites who must work to pay off these debts and who suffer from policies designed to ease a country's debt burden. Countries which wish to continue receiving loans and aid typically participate in "structural adjustment" programs sponsored by the International Monetary Fund. The programs have the stated goal of trying to make debtor countries credit-worthy by increasing revenues and decreasing expenditures. But the prescribed method usually includes draconian cuts in government spending on health, education, and welfare; the elimination of food subsidies; wage reductions; credit restrictions; price increases for essential goods and services; and higher taxes — all so that poor countries can repay their debts to rich countries. George, in a comment which mirrors Streeten's quoted above, suggests that "Third World debt . . . is a mechanism by which the poor in the poor countries can be forced to finance the rich in the rich countries" (1988, p. 253; see also

George 1992).

Cases in which aid has led to successful development can be used to legitimate the present system — what has worked in the past will work in the future if more aid is given. But failures can equally be used to legitimate the present system: if development is *not* occurring, it can be attributed to insufficient levels of aid — to remedy the problem more aid should be given! Appeals to help the "poor" are cynically used to justify simply pumping more money into the system. Elites in both the first and third worlds argue on ethical grounds that the first world has an obligation to help the third world develop, but clearly the model which is being promoted is not achieving its stated goal. Kassiola cites a study which shows that if the annual growth rate of per capita GNP for all countries during the period 1965–1983 remained constant, it would take South Korea (a newly industrialized country) 42 years to reach the level of the fully developed nations, while Sri Lanka (a poor Third World country) would take 902 years. The 49 poorest countries, including Kenya, India, and Peru, would never catch up (1990, p. 255).

The dominant development paradigm has in fact been a colossal failure, not only in absolute terms but also in relative terms. Hancock notes that despite the fact that development assistance increased from $1.8 billion per year in the early 1950s to more than $60 billion per year at the end of the 1980s, the gap between rich and poor actually increased during that period (1989, p. 43 and p. 187). In 1960 the richest 20% of the world's population had 30 times more wealth than the poorest 20%; in 1995 the figure was 82 times more ("Poor and Rich — The Facts" 1999). The ratio between the richest and poorest countries was only 1.5:1 two hundred years ago (Schuurman 1993, p. 10). Despite four decades of concentrated efforts to "develop" the third world, the percentage of total global income received by the poorest 20% of the world's population has actually declined by more than half, from 2.3% in 1960 to 1.1% by the end of the last century (Kim *et al.* 2000, p. 14). By comparison the richest fifth of the world's population receives approximately 82.7% of the world's wealth (Reid 1995). The richest 250 people in the world now have the same amount of wealth as the bottom 3 billion people, representing 40% the world's population, while the wealth of the three richest families in the world is equal to the combined GDP of the 49 poorest countries (Peres 2008, p. 19). In the face of such inequality the United Nations Development Programme has " . . . calculated that it would take less than 4% of the combined wealth of the 225 richest individuals in the world to achieve and maintain access to basic education, basic health care, reproductive health care, adequate food, safe water, and adequate sanitation for all people living on the planet" (Kim *et al.* 2000, pp. 7–8).

The notion that development improves the lives of the poor and helps developing countries "catch up" with developed countries is a myth that is contradicted by the actual evidence (*cf.* Mies 1993). Development projects are often the *cause of,* rather than the *solution to,* the problems of poverty and environmental degradation. As a result, "development" has come to be characterized as "non-development" (de Rivero 2001), "anti-development" (Goulet 1995), and "maldevelopment" (Amin 1990b), and we have entered what some writers refer to as a "post-development" era (Latouche 1993; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997). Hancock, whose fairly comprehensive critique of development agencies includes, among other things, the lavish receptions aid diplomats give themselves, money spent on new facilities for aid organizations rather than for the poor, and ineptness in dealing with major problems, such as the famines in Somalia and Ethiopia, concludes that we do not need more development, but less:

> . . . [O]fficial development assistance is neither necessary nor sufficient for "development": the poor thrive without it in some countries; in others, where it is plentifully available, they suffer the most abject miseries. Such suffering . . . often occurs not *in spite of* aid but *because* of it. To continue with the charade seems to me to be absurd. Garnered and justified in the name of the destitute and the vulnerable, aid's main function in the past half-century has been to create and then entrench a powerful new class of rich and privileged people (1989, p. 192).

Delinking from the global economy

High levels of affluence can be maintained in some countries only through the systemic exploitation of labor and resources in other countries. Dasmann (1984), one of the originators of the bioregional perspective, used the term "biosphere" people, to describe cultures which exploit resources from other environments and cultures in order to support a higher standard of living than they could maintain otherwise. The term "ecosystem people" is used, by contrast, to describe cultures that are able to live comfortably and sustainably within their own local environmental conditions. While ecosystem cultures have been the norm throughout most of human history, current trends towards globalization encourage people, particularly in developed countries, to become biosphere people, i.e., to consume more resources than their local bioregions can sustainably provide. The result is that those living in exploited bioregions are often left with insufficient natural resources to provide for their own basic needs.

Globalization can be seen in this light as the primary mechanism by which affluent countries are able to live beyond their ecological means. Trainer, who has written penetrating critiques of current development models from a limits-to-growth perspective (1985; 1989), concludes that the first world " . . . does not constitute a model that can be achieved by all people, that it is only a possibility for a few so long as the majority of people in the world do not attain it" (1985, p. 3). Daly defines "overdeveloped countries" as those " . . . which have per capita resource use rates that could not be sustained indefinitely if all people in the world consumed at that rate"; correspondingly the aim of development policies should not be " . . . to convert underdeveloped into overdeveloped economies, but to convert both into steady-state economies at population and wealth levels that are sufficient for a good life and sustainable for a long future" (1988, p. 96). To be equitable the burden of reducing consumption should not fall on the poor who are presently "underconsumers" but rather on those who are "overconsumers."

The primary impetus behind much development assistance and the effort to bring undeveloped countries into the global market is, in any event, not so much a desire to "help the poor" as it is to give capital greater access to third-world labor, resources, and markets. The economies of many developing countries now depend on exporting natural resources, agricultural products, and manufactured goods to developed countries. In other words, the poor are not extracting resources, growing food, or making products for themselves, but rather for people in developed countries. In export-driven economies imbalances are created in which the siphoning off of labor and goods from developing countries to developed countries leaves the poor with insufficient resources to meet their own basic needs.

Instead of growing a variety of crops for local consumption, for example, a single crop is grown for export (*cf.* George and Paige 1982; George 1986). The community then becomes dependent on the global market for its income, including the income it uses to buy food. With the increased mechanization of agriculture, justified on the grounds that it is necessary in order to be competitive in global markets, and the consolidation of small landholdings into larger units, rural labor is displaced. When rural laborers move to the cities in search of work, there are simply not enough jobs and the jobs that are available are often exploitive. The very policies which were promoted as a means of bringing the rural poor out of frugality and raising their levels of commodity consumption often leads, ironically, to destitution. The poor often end up having to resort to various forms of environmental exploitation to simply sustain themselves, such as landless peasants in Brazil destroying the Amazon rainforest to engage in subsistence farming. Adding insult to injury, the first world then argues that it is the poor, not the rich, who are responsible for environmental degradation.

The poor in developing countries are increasingly rejecting the idea that their resources and labor should be used to subsidize the overconsumptive lifestyles of affluent individuals in both the North and South. Communities can "delink" themselves from the global economy by achieving greater economic self-sufficiency and greater political autonomy. As originally formulated by Amin (1990a; 1997), delinking refers to an explicitly Marxist version of the dominant development paradigm, which aims to rectify the unequal development of the past by allowing countries to pursue their own self-development. Amin shows little concern for environmental limits to growth, however, and explicitly dissociates himself from Green ideas of self-sufficiency (which he refers to as "autarky"). Economic growth is still the main goal in Amin's version of delinking; trade is also acceptable as long as it is on terms which benefit the developing country. Amin does, however, see delinking as leading to a "polycentric world" in which economic and political power is no longer centered in a single world system but rather dispersed throughout various regions having different social and cultural systems.

In an alternative bioregional paradigm, however, delinking would refer to the development of relatively high degrees of self-sufficiency which then make possible relatively high degrees of independence. As with Amin, delinking would sever current relations of domination and dependency and thus allow each culture the freedom to pursue its own course of economic and social development, but it would also involve building societies and economies which are largely self-sufficient in material terms. Once such self-sufficiency and independence have been obtained, the *need* for aid would be substantially reduced since each culture would basically be in a position to take care of itself. Delinking places final political and economic decision-making power in the hands of local communities rather than in international agencies such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO, which largely serve the interests of business and transnational corporations. By refusing to ship resources and wealth to developed countries, the poor would be able to provide for their own basic human needs in a socially just and environmentally sustainable manner.

Delinking would attain a relatively more egalitarian global system not through the redistribution of wealth (the consequences of production) but through the equitable distribution of resources (the bases of production) — or put differently, by preventing the global exploitation of local resources. Once delinking occurred, excessive wealth in the developed countries, which is increasingly premised on the exploitation of resources and labor in developing countries, would simply evaporate, making the redistribution of wealth a mote issue. While calls for a redistribution of wealth between the first and third worlds (*cf.* Nielsen 1992) are often well-intended, they are ultimately inadequate if they simply perpetuate the condescending notion that the rich and powerful should "help" the poor and powerless to reach their own supposedly "superior," but ultimately unsustainable, levels of material affluence. Redistribution is entirely compatible with leaving existing forms of exploitation in place and then simply redistributing the ill-gotten gains later; in this respect it differs little from calls for aristocratic philanthropy.

It is absurd, for example, that the first world should exploit the third world by encouraging it to produce crops for export and then offer food aid to the third world in times of famine, often while crops continue to be exported to the first world. Instead, self-sufficient forms of agriculture should be promoted that provide first for local needs. It is conceivable that in a future "delinked world" countries which are at present industrially developed but resource-poor will be asking countries which are at present industrially undeveloped but resource-rich for assistance. Calls for financial assistance and technology transfers to alleviate third-world poverty and environmental degradation in the name of distributive justice (*cf.* Harris 1997) are also well-intended but ultimately deleterious because they often serve to prop up rather to challenge the dominant industrial paradigm. Offers to "help" the third world overcome poverty and environmental degradation ignore the extent to which the first-world exploitation of third-world labor and resources is often the *cause* of poverty and environmental degradation. More "development" is hardly the solution.

The principle of non-interference

The only way that poverty can be overcome and social equality achieved in a world of ecological limits is not through more growth but rather through a more equal distribution of wealth. If the pie cannot be made bigger, it must be cut more fairly. Calls for increased economic growth on a global scale are simply a means for obscuring this fact and holding out the false hope that high levels of material affluence can indeed be attained by all the world's people. The reason for keeping people hopeful about their future prospects is precisely so that they will not call for eliminating existing inequalities through a radical restructuring of current social arrangements.

Unlike an interventionist ethic, however, which argues that the rich have a positive obligation to help the poor attain the former's level of development (or some other goal), a bioregional approach to delinking can be connected to a social libertarian principle of noninterference. The purpose of aid, in this view, is not to create forms of dependency based on a paternalistic redistribution of wealth, but rather to restore local autonomy. Wealth, under this scheme, would be "redistributed" not by taking from the rich and giving to the poor, but rather by preventing the rich from taking from the poor in the first place. The social libertarian argument against liberal notions of welfare is that since wealth can only be accumulated by exploiting the labor of others, redistribution does not get to the root of the problem. If the social rules which determine how wealth can be initially acquired are fair and determined in a genuinely democratic manner, the later redistribution of wealth is for the most part unnecessary.

Noninterference allows different cultural groups to pursue their own goals and their own particular notions of what constitutes a good life. Noninterference is not the same as moral isolationism, however. Delinking is perfectly compatible with various forms of intercultural solidarity, such as instances in which groups pursue goals and forms of life that oppress their own members, other groups, or the environment (*cf.* Verhelst 1990). Humanitarian aid in times of distress and remedial redistribution of wealth to redress past grievances can also be advocated (a first step would be the canceling of third-world debt). Whatever aid is given, however, should be aid which genuinely provides for the basic needs of the poor and helps them to become more self-sufficient, rather than aid which is simply intended to draw developing countries into the global economy. Rather than give food aid which undermines the ability of local farmers to sell their products, assistance should be aimed at helping countries grow more food for themselves. Instead of first-world governments using taxpayer money to compensate large pharmaceutical companies for providing AIDS medicine to the poor in low-income countries, permission should be given for those countries to produce the medicine more inexpensively on their own. Rather than provide education aimed at increasing technical skills so that people in developing countries can eventually get jobs producing goods for export to developed countries, education should be aimed at providing individuals with the skills necessary to produce goods for themselves and improve their own societies.

On these points social libertarians side with Dower (1983, p. 52), who suggests that we have both a positive obligation to help those in genuine need and a negative obligation not to engage in actions which would make the situation worse or prevent it from becoming better, and against writers such as Luper-Foy (1995) who think we only have a negative obligation to avoid interfering with other people's projects. The principle of non-interference is a proscription against domination, not against genuinely needed assistance. Delinking allows cross-cultural relationships to develop, much as they do with sound personal relationships, not on the basis of control and dependency but rather on the basis of autonomy and mutual respect. The concept of delinking does not suggest that we abandon concerns for global justice; rather it is the means by which global justice can best be achieved.

An alternative development paradigm

Delinking local economies from the global capitalist system can be seen as one component of an emerging alternative development paradigm which emphasizes local production for local consumption and community decision-making processes (see, for example, Galtung, O'Brien, and Preiswerk 1980; Dube 1988; Trainer 1985; 1989; Max-Neef 1991; 1992; Rahman 1993; Burkey 1993; Sachs 1999). The paradigm has its origins in *The Cocoyoc Declaration* (1974) and the theory referred to in the development literature as "Another Development" (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation 1975). Burkey summarizes the "Another Development" approach as follows:

> . . . [D]evelopment should be: *need-oriented,* geared to meeting both material and nonmaterial human needs; *endogenous,* stemming from the heart of each society; *self-reliant,* implying that each society relies primarily on its own strength and resources; *ecologically sound,* utilising rationally the resources of the biosphere; and based on *structural transformation* as an integrated whole . . . .This implies that there is no universal path to development. Every society must find its own strategy (1993, p. 31).

This approach is consistent with the view that cultural evolution should involve multilinear rather than unilinear forms of development, i.e., the view that cultural diversity is preferable to a single, homogenous monoculture.

Both *The Cocoyoc Declaration* and "Another Development" arose as a reaction to the New International Economic Order (NIEO), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1974 but never fully implemented (see Adams 1993). The NIEO attempted to address inequality between rich and poor by arguing, in effect, that the South should have the same opportunities as the North to exploit natural resources and engage in industrial development. The method proposed for achieving this end was to further integrate developing countries into the global market, with production being geared towards export. Developed countries should not only permit but encourage the free flow of resources and goods from South to North by reducing restrictions and tariff barriers. The ultimate purpose of such policies was not so much to directly help the poor in developing countries as it was to allow third-world elites to gain access to global markets. The NIEO was ultimately unacceptable to the developed countries, however, because its provisions included calls for the regulation of multinational corporations, the nationalization of foreign property, the formation of cartels, and continued economic and technical assistance from the first world. Despite the stated intention of the NIEO to help "poor countries," its underlying goal of promoting a wealthy consumer class at the expense of the poor themselves is perfectly consistent with the dominant development paradigm.

With the Reagan-Thatcher revolution of the 1980s, the political climate began to shift away from the idea that it was the responsibility of governments to further development towards the idea that markets alone could raise overall welfare in both developed and developing countries. Neoliberalism (also referred to as the "Washington Consensus") contended that government interference in the economy impeded rather than furthered development. The solution was to allow markets to operate in the absence of government control. Specific policies called for the privatization of state-owned enterprises and social services, such as health, education, and welfare; the liberalization of trade and investment, seen as a means of reducing prices for consumers by increasing competitiveness and efficiency; and deregulation aimed at lessening government control over the economy and allowing corporations the freedom to pursue their own interests regardless of the effects that their actions may have on the environment or society as a whole.

The effects of neoliberalism have been well-documented:

> In many cases, economic policies guided by neoliberal agendas have worsened the economic situation of the middle classes and the poor. Today, per capita income in more than 100 countries is lower than it was 15 years ago. At the close of two decades of neoliberal dominance in international finance and development, more than 1.6 billion people are worse off economically in the late 1990s than they were in the early 1980s . . . . Even where neoliberal policy measures have succeeded in stimulating economic growth, growth's benefits have not gone to those living in "dire poverty" — one-fourth of the world's population, according to the WHO. Rather, the gains of growth have been concentrated disproportionately in the hands of the already well-off (Kim *et al.* 2000, p. 7).

By pulling developing countries into the global market, their economies can be shifted away from the production of goods and services which the poor may need but cannot afford towards the production of goods and services which the affluent have the money to buy and which are hence more profitable for companies to provide. Free markets, no less than government control, concentrate decision-making in the hands of a small minority, leaving the poor majority with neither the wealth to provide for their basic material needs nor the power to participate in fundamental decisions about how society is to be organized.

Rather than concentrate power in the hands of either governments or corporations, the alternative development paradigm seeks to decentralize power and wealth in the hands of citizens themselves. This model is based on the principle that citizens in both developed and developing countries should use their resources, agricultural productivity, and labor not to produce goods for the global market (which mainly serves to satisfy the wants of the already-affluent) but rather to produce goods and services for domestic consumption (and thereby meet their own basic human needs). The needs of the community take precedence over the needs of the market. The paradigm thus achieves with a single stroke both the elimination of underdevelopment in the third world and overdevelopment in the first world.

At present 20% of the world's population consumes 80% of the world's resources (Sachs 1999, p. xii). By delinking itself from the global economy, sufficient resources and labor would be freed up to enable the third world to eliminate absolute poverty and create a flourishing life and culture within ecological constraints. The first world, deprived of the opportunity to exploit third-world resources and labor, would be forced to forego the production and consumption of inessential luxuries. By following the same principle of local production for local consumption, however, the former developed world would also be able to create a flourishing life and culture for itself within ecological constraints.

The goals of the alternative development paradigm dovetail with efforts on the part of bioregionalists to foster local communities based on economic self-sufficiency, democratic decision-making, and ecological sensitivity (Sale 2000). *A Blueprint for Survival* (Goldsmith *et al.* 1972) was one of the first books to suggest that affluent Northern societies should limit both economic and population growth. Similar views have been advanced by Green Party activists (Porritt 1985; Bahro 1994), advocates of deindustrialization (Goldsmith 1988; Kassiola 1990;

McLaughlin 1993), and other supporters of economic and political decentralization (Trainer 1995; 1997; Kaufman and Alfonso 1997; Esteva and Prakash 1998; Sachs, Loske, and Linz *et al.* 1998). Trainer (1985) has argued for a process of "de-development," and Bello (2002) for "deglobalization." Shiva (1993) speaks of "decolonizing the North" on the grounds that the links between North and South in the global economy contribute not only to the wealth, knowledge, and freedom of the North, but also to the poverty, ignorance, and "unfreedom" of the South. Others write of the need for countries to develop a "subsistence perspective," which focuses on providing for the basic needs of all rather than on increasing overconsumption for the few (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999; Bennholdt-Thomsen, Faraclas, and Werlhof 2001).

In the bioregional model, levels of wealth could rise slightly in developing countries — i.e., to levels sufficient to meet basic needs — while levels of wealth in the developed countries would fall since developed countries would no longer be able to exploit the labor or resources of developing countries. Trainer suggests that the overaffluent should reduce their per capita resource consumption at least 80% so that everyone can share the earth's resources in an equitable and sustainable way (1985, pp. 248–249). The result would be a rough parity between North and South at levels of material affluence that both meet basic human needs and are ecologically sustainable. The idea that the consumption levels of overconsumers should be drastically reduced and that underconsumers abandon their aspirations to emulate first-world lifestyles may be politically unpopular but it is nonetheless an achievable and realistic way of bringing about greater degrees of social equality between rich and poor. In the words of a popular slogan, the rich must learn to live more simply so that the poor can simply live.

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