

# Is development just a new form of colonialism?

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## **1.0 Introduction**

There has been much interest recently in the concept of colonialism in various forms and its influence on the development process in the World. Even though formal colonialism appeared to have ended in the early twentieth century, particularly after 1914, when the decolonizing movement began, most recent research implies that colonialism has reappeared through the back door. The factors addressed include imposed international development programs and policies and bilateral and multilateral aid. For this essay, bilateral aid is aid payments made directly to governments. It is between two countries or two groups on a specific bilateral matter. Multilateral aid is high-income countries donating money through the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund).

Development under bilateral or multilateral aid or in any form of social, environmental, or economic program requires that each participant feel a sense of control and ownership of the process. Despite decades of criticism of how development is implemented, it is clear that these variables continue to have a disproportionate influence on less developed and emerging countries, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, resulting in inequities and injustices. Therefore, the primary goal of this essay is to contribute to the debate concerning colonialism and the development process. As a result, I will discuss whether development is a new form of colonialism by first providing some background context on colonialism and development. Secondly, I will go through the two elements mentioned above as the causes of new thinking about development as a new form of colonialism. Finally, I will conclude my essay by suggesting a course of action addressing the subject.

## **2.0 Colonialism and Development: A Link**

Colonialism exploded in the 15th century during the 'Age of Capital,' when primarily Western nations colonized the majority of the world; the reasons behind colonialism were raw material exploitation, status, religion, and a monopolistic market. Looking back on colonial history is essential because empirical evidence indicates the impact of colonialism on today's global development process (Riahi, 2017:57).

Bump & Aniebo (2022:3) define colonialism as the state-sponsored creation of non-merit differences to benefit one group at the expense of another. In contrast, development is described as the move to a more advanced stage (Harris, 2014: 2). There is a belief that there is a link between colonialism and development since past colonists continue to have an impact on the global development process. It is, nevertheless, absolutely unsatisfying.

### **3.0 Imposed international development programs and policies**

Although colonialism is commonly thought to be a thing of the past, its repercussions continue to resonate today. As backed by Sultana (2019:32), development is a form of neocolonialism; even though official colonialism ended decades ago, the "name" lives on.

Many scholars suggest that the imposed MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) and SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) show how nation-states and economies reformed to follow international development policies that were designed by former colonizers. This implies that, rather than focusing on their goals, states' national plans should be aligned with these features, thus bringing a sense of colonial continuity. In contrast, M. Fehling et al. (2013) demonstrate extraordinary results in these initiatives. His claim aligns with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report from 2012, which indicates that between 1990 and 2008, people living under the poverty line have fallen from 2 billion to 1.4 billion.

### **4.0 Bilateral and multilateral aid**

Bilateral and multilateral aid are becoming increasingly crucial in the global development process. Over the last 50 years, the IMF and the World Bank have sent \$2 trillion to impoverished nations, especially in Africa (Muhumed and Gas, 2016:43). However, a decision to use them vested in Western countries. Former colonizers and powerful countries control international entities such as the World Bank, IMF, United Nations, and associated organizations. Backing the argument, Muhumed and Gas (2016) emphasized that power-sharing at the World Bank is problematic, as the United States has approximately 17% of the total votes, three times higher than 5.35 % of 44 developing nations. The unequal distribution of power in decision-making appears logical at first sight, yet it is debatable whether this is another form of colonialism.

**Table 1: The World Bank: Countries, Administration, and Voting Status**

	Countries	Administration	% of total vote
Developed countries	United States	1 Executive Director	16.35
	Japan	1 Executive Director	7.89
	Germany	1 Executive Director	4.51
	France	1 Executive Director	4.32
	UK	1 Executive Director	4.32
Developing countries	44 African countries	2 Executive Directors	5.35

This shows that five powerful nations are represented by five executive directors in running the World Bank, whereas 44 developing countries are represented by two only.

**Source: Taken from Muhumed and Gas (2016:41**

Furthermore, bilateral aid raises questions due to conditionality. According to Sagoe (2016: 43), development projects established by China in Africa are neocolonial since China has direct physical control over these projects. In line with this, some academics advocate for decolonizing development in ideologies, education, and pedagogies (Sultana 2019:35). What China is doing in this regard raises the alarm about a new form of colonialism.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

This essay was intended to determine whether or not development represents a new form of colonialism. Although formal colonialism looked to have ended, particularly after 1914, the legacy of colonialism is still felt today (Scarlett, 2022:1) under international development programs and policies, as well as bilateral and multilateral aid. As a result, decolonizing development is essential. However, due to the lack of evidence, I cannot conclude that development represents a new form of colonialism. While there is a need for further studies, the emphasis should be on the clear link between development and colonialism.

## 6. 0 References

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