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*Discussion Paper in Master Seminars (University of Bonn;
Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences)*

as of 2022.05.22

Why countries are rich or poor and belonging to different income groups?

Cf. U. Holtz (2010): *Die Millenniumsentwicklungsziele – eine gemischte Bilanz [The Millennium Development Goals – a mixed balance]*, in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte/APuZ*, 8 March 2010, p. 3-8.

U. Holtz (2013): *Die Millenniumsentwicklungsziele [The MDGs]*, in: H. Ihne/J. Wilhelm (eds.): *Einführung in die Entwicklungspolitik [Introduction to development Politics]*, Berlin pp. 41-64, 54-57.

U. Holtz (2018): *SDGs und demokratische Partizipation. Was ist die Rolle der Parlamente? [SDGs and democratic participation. What is the role of parliaments?]*, in: *Tobias Debiel (ed.): Entwicklungspolitik in Zeiten der SDGs. Essays zum 80. Geburtstag von Franz Nuscheler*, Duisburg, Bonn - April 2018, pp. 93-98
[\[www.sef-bonn.org/fileadmin/SEF-Dateiliste/04_Publikationen/Weitere_Publikationen/Sonderpublikationen/sb-2018_essayband-nuscheler_de.pdf\]](http://www.sef-bonn.org/fileadmin/SEF-Dateiliste/04_Publikationen/Weitere_Publikationen/Sonderpublikationen/sb-2018_essayband-nuscheler_de.pdf), in English www.uwe-holtz.uni-bonn.de/virtueller-apparat/virt.-apparat/2030agenda-SDGs-Parliaments/view

A huge literature was and is dealing with these questions. Since decades Holtz has been trying to contribute to this discussion. After a chart that classifies the so-called developing/recipient countries by income groups, he makes a bold attempt to list positives and negative factors for (mal-)development in brief theses. (an ongoing working process)

DAC List of ODA Recipients
Effective for reporting on 2018, 2019 and 2020 flows

Least Developed Countries	Other Low Income Countries (per capita GNI <= \$1 005 in 2016)	Lower Middle Income Countries and Territories (per capita GNI \$1 006-\$3 955 in 2016)	Upper Middle Income Countries and Territories (per capita GNI \$3 956-\$12 235 in 2016)
Afghanistan Angola ¹ Bangladesh Benin Bhutan Burkina Faso Burundi Cambodia >>> Central African Chad Comoros Democratic Republic of the Congo Djibouti Eritrea Ethiopia Gambia Guinea >>> Guinea-Bissau >>>> Haiti >>> Kiribati Lao People's Democratic Republic Lesotho Liberia Madagascar Malawi >>> Mali >>> Mauritania Mozambique Myanmar Nepal Niger Rwanda Sao Tome and Principe >>>> Senegal >>>> Sierra Leone Solomon Islands Somalia South Sudan Sudan Tanzania Timor-Leste >>> Togo >>> Tuvalu Uganda Vanuatu ¹ Yemen Zambia	Democratic People's Republic of Korea Zimbabwe	Armenia Bolivia Cabo Verde ●●● Cameroon ●●● Congo ●●● Côte d'Ivoire ●●●● Egypt ●●●● El Salvador Georgia Ghana ●●● Guatemala ●●●● Honduras India Indonesia Jordan ●●● Kenya ●●●● Kosovo Kyrgyzstan Micronesia Moldova Mongolia Morocco Nicaragua Nigeria Pakistan Papua New Guinea Philippines Sri Lanka Swaziland Syrian Arab Republic Tajikistan Tokelau Tunisia Ukraine Uzbekistan Viet Nam West Bank and Gaza Strip	Albania Algeria Antigua and Barbuda ² Argentina Azerbaijan Belarus Belize Bosnia and Herzegovina Botswana ●●●● Brazil China (People's Republic of) Colombia Cook Islands ³ Costa Rica Cuba Dominica Dominican Republic Ecuador Equatorial Guinea Fiji Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Gabon ●●●● Grenada Guyana Iran Iraq Jamaica Kazakhstan Lebanon Libya Malaysia Maldives Marshall Islands Mauritius ●●●● Mexico Montenegro Montserrat Namibia ●●●● Nauru Niue Palau ² Panama Paraguay Peru Saint Helena Saint Lucia Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Samoa Serbia South Africa ●●●● Suriname Thailand Tonga Turkey Turkmenistan Venezuela Wallis and Futuna
47	1	37	57

totalling 152 countries

Positive factors supportive or responsible for development

1. A development-oriented behaviour of governments and elites with strong parliaments, which includes the participation of the population (incl. civil society) and its ownership (in line with sustainable, human, resilient, healthy development ensuring a life of dignity for all)
2. Capable governments, effective administrations and institutions - at all levels based on democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and good governance
3. Fight against poverty by a national framework setting, which promotes the private sector and doesn't gag it (in line with a social and ecological market economy)
4. Advancement of education, vocational training, knowledge, science, cognitive capabilities and capacity building
5. Material and immaterial infrastructure equipment incl. ICTs

6. Mobilization of domestic (financial) resources
7. Development of a favourable mental and cultural enabling environment
8. Acknowledgment of the important role of women
9. Sustainable industrialization, stimulation of a broad-based, sustained, anti-poverty growth and making use of the international division of labour
10. Containment of rapid population growth
11. Efficient use of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the sense of ownership and help for self-help
12. Internal peace and an enabling international environment not hindered or even aggravated by wars

Two cause bundles are responsible for lagging behind:

A. Factors, which were / are particularly virulent after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000 and of the 2030 Agenda in 2015:

1. After the terrorist attacks from September 2001 some industrialized countries prioritized rather military and geopolitical aspects than civilian and socio-economic development (“securitization of development policy”)
2. The significant increase of failed, collapsed states and of ‘new’ wars, violent conflicts and jihadism
3. The climate change with its growing negative effects
4. The energy, food as well as financial and economic crises or the recent COVID-19 pandemic
5. Migratory movements towards some ‘donor’ countries lead sometimes to a “migrationization” of their development policy

B. Factors, which were always of great importance and must be considered, if a turn to the better is intended:

1. The population growth (1990: 5,3 billion; 2021: 7,9 bn, 2050: 9,8 bn) (U.H.: The best pill for development is development.)
2. Corrupt and kleptocratic elites, clientelism
3. Bad governance and poor performance
4. The neglect of the rural areas and (traditional) agriculture
5. A development-hostile environment (the non-recognition of education, training and knowledge as well as of tolerant cultures open for change)

6. Difficult internal situations (fragility, land locked, military conflicts, hostile ecological systems ...)
7. Relying on fossil energies instead of renewables
8. Legacy of colonialism (in particular in some African countries: arbitrarily drawn borders, destruction of self-confidence, supplier of raw materials)
9. The developed countries unwillingness to build up a truly fair trade and financial global system – too often unsuitable recipes of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank
10. Despite several efforts to increase ODA and its efficiency, the insufficiency and unwillingness of some industrialized countries to undertake serious, strong steps in the direction of a quantitatively higher and qualitatively better development policy

In any case, there is neither a 'one size fits all' recipe nor a scientific ready-made meal.