

Module 4 Lesson: Roots of Global Inequality, Decolonization and Resistance



The painting titled, “Encuentro” (in english: The Meeting or The Encounter) by Jaime Zapata represents a meeting between an indigenous person and a conquistador (an early Spanish colonizer). The indigenous person is presented as living in good health, with an abundance of nature, offering a bowl to the conquistador. The conquistador is depicted with deathly imagery and examples of a destructive modern civilization. “Encuentro” by Jamie Zapata is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

The previous Chapter 4 and Module 3 examined how sociologists measure inequality within and across countries. It also covered how we classify countries in the context of

“Module 4: Lesson” by Aimee Krouskop for Open Oregon Educational Resources is licensed [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

globalization. Chapter 5 asks you to consider: What are the roots of that global inequality?

It first explored the colonized perspective that has created inequities between nations and among groups of people within nations. Then it examined two related social changes that impact global inequality: the globalization of the trade and financial sector, and the international aid and development movement. Finally, Chapter 4 explored movements and emerging possibilities that exist to address our global inequality issues.

Chapter 5 asks:

- What ideologies and systems have led to patterns of inequality in the world?
- How has humanitarian aid and development instilled positive impacts in the world?
- How has humanitarian aid and development increased global inequality?
- What new perspectives and movements exist for addressing global inequality?

But, what's the real purpose of Chapter 5? And what's the real purpose of the many newer initiatives that attempt to rewrite the issues related with increased inequality as a result of aid and development?

Pope Francis explained the purpose well, in the [encyclical Laudato Si'](#) published in 2015. An encyclical is a letter from the Pope designed to help everyone better understand how to apply the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Catholic Tradition. In that year's encyclical the Pope explicitly explained that we need to redefine what progress means, including our models of global development.

He recognized that if we employ economic measures of wellbeing, a good case is made that inequality has diminished in the last several decades. However, as the Pope observes, quality of life has diminished. He even criticizes sustainable growth as "a way of distracting attention and offering excuses.... absorbing the language and values of ecology into the categories of finance and technology and the social and environmental responsibility of businesses often gets reduced to a series of marketing and

"Module 4: Lesson" by Aimee Krouskop for Open Oregon Educational Resources is licensed [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#).

image-enhancing measures.” Read this Guardian article, [Sustainable development is failing but there are alternatives to capitalism](#) to learn more.

The goal is to better understand, from a social change perspective, how to improve quality of life of people living in poverty on the planet.

Your textbook has introduced some concepts that redirect perspectives for improving quality of life. Bien vivir is one. Another concept is degrowth. The video, [Degrowth: Is it time to live better with less?](#) outlines the idea of degrowth well: its aim is to ensure that our economic systems are designed to place life at their center. The narrator explains: "That means challenging the idea that economic growth is good for everyone and instead focusing directly on making people happier and healthier. As you watch, consider how it touches upon several concepts we've covered in Chapters 3 and 4 (viewing time: 6:35 minutes).