# From the author of *The Colonizer’s Model of the World, J.M. Blaut*

# If you had gone to school in Europe or Euro-America 150 years ago, (mid 19th century), you would have learned:

1. The most important things that ever happened to humanity happened in Europe (Europe being the greater Europe, from the Bible lands to the geographic continent of Europe).
2. You would have been taught that God created man in this region. The Garden of Eden was the beginning of human life 5,000 years ago.
3. Some of your teachers would have told you that only the people in this region are really human. Other people in other places are different and perhaps an infrahuman species.
4. All of your teachers would have agreed that non-Europeans are not as intelligent, not as honorable, and not as courageous as Europeans.
5. You would have been told that God made the others inferior, and He does not show the same favor to non-Europeans, or non-Christians that He shows to people who worship the True God.
6. You would have learned that people who live in Africa and Asia are not only inferior but in some sense evil. They were the people who had refused God’s grace and so fell from God’s favor. Africans are cruel savages. The best fate for them is to put them to useful work and Christianize them.
7. You would have learned that Indians and Chinese people somehow built barbaric civilizations, but they are stagnating and regressing and the people are cruel and not really civilized.
8. Your teachers would have concluded that only Europeans know what true freedom is.

Ideas change:

**If you had gone to school 50 years later, around the turn of the 20th Century, you would have been taught:**

1. The earth is very old and humans have been around for a long time, much longer than 5,000 years.
2. However, everything important in history still happened in Europe. The first true man lived in Europe, agriculture was invented in Greater Europe, and the first real civilization began in the Bible Lands.
3. You would have learned that humans emerged into two Caucasian groups who made all of history.
4. The Semites invented cities and empires and had monotheism and *even* Christianity, but they fell into Oriental decadence and decay.
5. The Aryans built on these foundations and migrated through geographical Europe and created the first real civilizations.
6. You would have learned that Africans are savages.
7. You would have learned that Oriental societies are decadent and tyrannical.
8. Your teachers would have taught you that non-Europeans can rise to a civilized level – nearly as civilized as Europeans – if they are taught by Europeans, and especially if they are under European control.

# Blaut describes a view of the world and other people that justified taking other people’s lands, resources, and labor for the sake of fueling industrialization and amassment of wealth for Europeans. As Blaut points out, capitalism became centrated in Europe (and North America) because colonialism gave Europeans the power to develop their own society and prevent development elsewhere.

**Anthropologists discuss colonialism in great detail because it led to one of the biggest forces of culture change world wide and is the foundation for huge economic disparity in the world today.**

# Colonialism

## **Colonialism – is defined as the active possession of foreign territory and the maintenance of political domination of that territory.**

## Colonialism has existed in various degrees probably since agriculture began as a subsistence strategy. **But Euro-American colonialism, from the 16th and including the 20th century was on a different magnitude than any other time.**

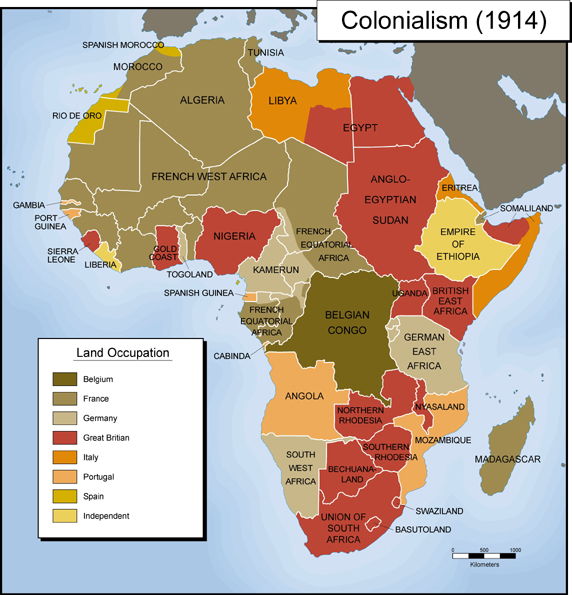
## European and Euro-American colonialism has been called the development of the west, and the degradation of the rest. Its purpose was to extract resources and harness indigenous labor to facilitate industrialization and a capitalist system for Euro-American accumulation of wealth and power.

# Neocolonialism

## **Neocolonialism is the extension of colonialism but through corporations, industrialization complexes, and modernization efforts – most of which benefit the original Euro-American economic complexes much more than they benefit Third World nations.**

## 1) In neocolonialism the corporate colonial power declares that continuation of its dominance, through economic progress, is a “necessary evil” if the Third World nation is to develop and modernize. Corporations declare that they are helping people in other countries progress and become more civilized, more like Europeans or Americans.

## The question is, are corporations really helping other people, or are they taking resources and exploiting cheap labor as colonists did before? Is this colonialism without responsibility to the people in these countries?



**By 1914:**

**13 European countries had divided between themselves, ¾ of the world’s land mass.**

**This does not include the United States or most of the Americas.** They typically divided regions and created lines on maps without acknowledging that there were people already living in these areas.

### Extent of Colonialism

##### (1939)

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| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **\*\*\*\*** | **Great Britain** | **France** | **Belgium** | **Netherlands** | **Germany (1914)** | | **Area in Square Miles** | 94,000 | 212,600 | 11,800 | 13,200 | 210,000 | | **Population** | 45,500,100 | 42,000,000 | 8,300,000 | 8.500,000 | 67,500,000 | | **Area of Colonies** | 13,100,000 | 4,300,000 | 940,000 | 790,000 | 1,100,000 | | **Population of Colonies** | 470,000,000 | 65,000,000 | 13,000,000 | 66,000,000 | 13,000,000 |   SOURCE: Mary Evelyn Townsend, *European Colonial Expansion Since 1871* (Chicago: J.P. Lippincott Company, 1941), p. 19 Percentage of Territories Belonging to the European/US Colonial Powers(1900)  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Region** | **Percentage Controlled** | | **Africa** | 90.4% | | **Polynesia** | 98.9% | | **Asia** | 56.5% | | **Australia** | 100.0% | | **Americas** | 27.2% |   SOURCE: A. Supan, *Die territoriale Entwicklung der Euroaischen Kolonien* (Gotha, 1906), p. 254 | |

**The idea of European superiority was necessary in order to get most people to believe and participate in colonialism, the industrial revolution, and capitalism.**

## If Europeans believed unfair treatment was wrong, then to take lands, force people into labor, and kill people …

## … Europeans had to dehumanize people, demean them so that they could be seen as inhuman as possible.

**The justification was that it was the duty of Europeans to teach the rest of the world how to live and especially how to be good Christians.**

## It seemed only logical to make one’s self and one’s country wealthy while you were in the process of civilizing and Christianizing the ‘heathens.

## The ‘heathens’, after all, didn’t know enough to make the most intensive use of their resources.

In Africa, as in other places of the world, colonialism was brutal. Forces from European nations brought with them automatic guns. With these guns they pushed Africans out of their homes, burned their homes, took over their lands, and put up fences to keep them out. When there was resistance, which occurred everywhere, people were slaughtered by the thousands. The Europeans then set up plantations to grow crops to feed the industrial complexes in their own countries. But they needed workers, so they typically set up European legal systems that were primarily for organizing forced labor. In the beginning, the Europeans used taxation as a way to force colonized people into working for wages. People everywhere were taxed and since they did not have money economies, the only way indigenous peoples could raise money for taxes was to work for European plantation owners for the cash to pay for the taxes.

Often the lands people had for growing their own food was taken or colonial governments required indigenous people to grow cash crops such as peanuts and cotton, instead of food for themselves. People who grew cash crops were given very little for their crops relative to what the European companies gained in profits from selling those crops. Often the crops, such as cotton, were used to make clothing which Africans were forced to buy at exorbitant prices. These kinds of practices destroyed land fertility and created a dependence on cash crops and processed goods. This was the beginning of a series of horrendous famines in many African regions.

**The following comes from a publication called *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, by Walter Rodney, 1973.**

### From Chapter Six. *Colonialism as a System for Underdeveloping Africa*

‘The black man certainly has to pay dear for carrying the white man’s burden.’  
George Padmore,  
(West Indian) Pan-Africanist, 1936.

Instead of speeding up growth, colonial activities such as mining land cash-crop farming speeded up the decay of ‘traditional’ African life. In many parts of the continent, vital aspects of culture were adversely affected, nothing better was substituted, and only a lifeless shell was left. The capitalist forces behind colonialism were interested in little more than the exploitation of labour. Even areas that were not directly involved in the money economy exported labour. In extracting that labour, they tampered with the factor that was the very buttress of the society, for African ‘traditional’ life when deprived of its customary labour force and patterns of work was no longer ‘traditional’.

During the colonial era, many thinly-populated villages appeared in central and southern Africa, comprising women, children and old men. They practised subsistence agriculture which was not productive enough, and colonialists contrasted them with cash-crop areas, which in comparison were flourishing. However, it was precisely the impact of colonialism which left so many villages deserted and starving, because the able-bodied males had gone off to labour elsewhere. Any district deprived of its effective labouring population could not be expected to develop.

There were several spots within different colonies which were sufficiently far removed from towns and colonial administration that they neither grew cash-crops nor supplied labour. In Southern Sudan, for instance, there were populations who continued to live a life not dissimilar to that which they had followed in previous centuries. Yet, even for such traditional African societies the scope for development no longer existed. They were isolated by the hold which the colonialists had on the rest of the continent. They could not interact with other parts of Africa. They were subject to increasing encroachment by the money economy and were more and more to be regarded as historical relics. The classic example of this type of obstructed historical development is to be found in the U.S.A., where the indigenous population of ('Red’) Indians who survived slaughter by the whites were placed in reservations and condemned to stagnation. Indian reservations in North America are living museums to be visited by white tourists who purchase curios.

In South Africa and Rhodesia, the policy of establishing ‘native reserves’ was openly followed. Inside a reserve, the major means of production was the land. But the quantity and fertility of the land allocated was entirely inadequate to support the numbers of Africans who were driven in. The reserves were reservoirs of cheap labour, and dumping grounds for those who could not be accommodated within the money economy of the racist southern section of Africa. Further north, there were no areas named as ‘reserves’, except ir, colonial Kenya and to a very limited extent in Tanganyika. But the money economy was constantly transforming the traditional sector into one which was just as deprived as any reserve.

The money economy of colonialism was a growing sector. That is not to be denied. However, it has already been indicated how limited that growth was, viewed over the continent as a whole. The growth in the so-called modern sector exercised adverse effects on the non-monetary sector. What remains is to emphasise that the character of growth in Africa under colonialism was such that it did not constitute development — i.e., it did not enlarge the capacity of the society to deal with the natural environment, to adjudicate relations between members of the society, and to protect the population from external forces. Such a statement is already implicitly borne out in the inability of capitalism to stimulate skilled labour in colonial Africa. A system which must stand in the way of the accumulation of skills does not develop anything or anybody. It is implicit too in the manner in which Africa was cut into economic compartments having no relation one to another, so that, even though the volume of commercial activity within each compartmentalised colony may have increased, there was no development comparable to that which linked together the various states of the U.S.A.

In recent times, economists have been recognising in colonial and post-colonial Africa a pattern that has been termed ‘growth without development’. That phrase has now appeared as the title of books on Liberia and Ivory Coast. It means that goods and services of a certain type are on the increase. There may be more rubber and coffee exported, there may be more cars imported with the proceeds, and there may be more petrol stations built to service the cars. But the profit goes abroad, and the economy becomes more and more a dependency of the metropoles. In no African colony was there economic integration, or any provision for making the economy self-sustained and geared to its own local goals. Therefore, there was growth of the so-called ‘enclave’ import/export sector, but the only things which developed were dependency and underdevelopment.

A further revelation of growth without development under colonialism was the over-dependence on one or two exports. The term ‘monoculture’ is used to describe those colonial economies which were centred around a single crop. Liberia (in the agricultural sector) was a monoculture dependent on rubber, Gold Coast on cocoa, Dahomey and South-east Nigeria on palm produce, Sudan on cotton, Tanganyika on sisal, and Uganda on cotton. In Senegal and Gambia, groundnuts accounted for 85% to 90% of money earnings. In effect, two African colonies were told to grow nothing but peanuts!

Every farming people have a staple food, plus a variety of other supplements. Historians, agronomists, and botanists have all contributed to showing the great variety of such foods within the pre-colonial African economy. There were numerous crops which were domesticated within the African continent, there were several wild food species (notably fruits) and Africans had shown no conservatism in adopting useful food plants of Asian or American origin. Diversified agriculture was within the African tradition. Monoculture was a colonialist invention.

Those who justify the colonial division of labour suggest that it was ‘natural’ and respected the relative capacities for specialisation of the metropoles and colonies. Europe, North America and Japan were capable of specialising in industry and Africa in agriculture. Therefore, it was to the ‘comparative advantage’ of one part of the world to manufacture machines while another part engaged in simple hoe-culture of the soil. That kind of arrogant partition of the world was not new. In the 15th century, the feudal monarchies of Portugal and Spain wanted the whole world for themselves, and they got the Pope to draw a line around the globe, making the allocations. But Britain, Holland and France suggested that they were not at all convinced that Adam had left a will which gave the earth to Portugal and Spain. In like manner, it can be questioned whether there is any testament which stated that the river Gambia should inherit ground-nut growing while the river Clyde (of Scotland) should become a home of shipbuilding.

There was nothing ‘natural’ about monoculture. It was a consequence of imperialist requirements and machinations, extending into areas that were politically independent in name. Monoculture was a characteristic of regions falling under imperialist domination. Certain countries in Latin America such as Costa Rica and Guatemala were forced by United States capitalist firms to concentrate so heavily on growing bananas that they were contemptuously known as ‘banana republics’. In Africa, this concentration on one or two cash-crops for sale abroad had many harmful effects. Sometimes, cash-crops were grown to the exclusion of staple foods — thus causing famines. For instance, in Gambia rice farming was popular before the colonial era, but so much of the best land was transferred to groundnuts that rice had to be imported on a large scale to try and counter the fact that famine was becoming endemic. In Asante, concentration on cocoa raised fears of famine in a region previously famous for yams and other foodstuff.

Yet the threat of famine was a small disadvantage compared to the extreme vulnerability and insecurity of monoculture. When the crop was affected by internal factors such as disease, that amounted to an overwhelming disaster, as in the case of Gold Coast cocoa when it was hit by swollen-shoot disease in the 1940s. Besides, at all times, the price fluctuations (which were externally controlled) left the African producer helpless in the face of capitalist manoeuvres.

From a capitalist viewpoint, monocultures commended themselves most because they made colonial economies entirely dependent on the metropolitan buyers of their produce. At the end of the European slave trade, only a minority of Africans were sufficiently committed to capitalist exchange and sufficiently dependent upon European imports to wish to continue the relationship with Europe at all costs. Colonialism increased the dependence of Africa on Europe in terms of the numbers of persons brought into the money economy and in terms of the number of aspects of socio-economic life in Africa which derived their existence from the connection with the metropole. The ridiculous situation arose by, which European trading firms, mining companies, shipping lines, banks, insurance houses and plantations all exploited Africa and at the same time caused Africans to feel that without those capitalist services no money or European goods would be forthcoming, and therefore Africa was in debt to its exploiters!

The factor of dependency made its impact felt in every aspect of the life of the colonies, and it can be regarded as the crowning vice among the negative social, political and economic consequences of colonialism in Africa, being primarily responsible for the perpetuation of the colonial relationship into the epoch that is called neo-colonialism.

Finally, attention must be drawn to one of the most important consequences of colonialism on African development, and that is the stunting effect on Africans as a physical species. Colonialism created conditions which led not just to periodic famine, but to chronic undernourishment, mal-nutrition and deterioration in the physique of the African people. If such a statement sounds wildly extravagant, it is only because bourgeois propaganda has conditioned even Africans to believe that malnutrition and starvation were the natural lot of Africans from time immemorial. A black child with a transparent rib-case, huge head, bloated stomach, protruding eyes, and twigs as arms and legs was the favourite poster of the large British charitable operation known as Oxfam. The poster represented a case of Kwashiorkor — extreme malignant mulnutrition. Oxfam called upon the people of Europe to save starving African and Asian children from Kwashiorkor and such ills. Oxfam never bothered their consciences by telling them that capitalism and colonialism created the starvation, suffering and misery of the child in the first place.

There is an excellent study of the phenomenon of hunger on a world scale by a Brazilian scientist, Josue de Castro. It incorporates considerable data on the food and health conditions among Africans in their independent pre-colonial state or in societies untouched by capitalist pressures; and it then makes comparisons with colonial conditions. The study convincingly indicates that African diet was previously more varied, being based on a more diversified agriculture than was possible under colonialism. In terms of specific nutritional deficiencies, those Africans who suffered most under colonialism were those who were brought most fully into the colonial economy: namely, the urban workers.

For the sake of the doubters, several of de Castro’s observations are listed below (occasionally supplemented by other data).

1. Investigators who have studied the nutritional conditions of ‘primitive’ Africans in tropical Africa are unanimous in stating that they show no clinical signs of dietary deficiency. One of the most striking indications of the superiority of indigenous African diet is the magnificent condition of the teeth. One researcher among six ethnic groups in Kenya could not find a single case of tooth decay, not a single deformation of the dental arch. But when those same people were transplanted and put on the ‘civilised’ diet available under colonialism, their teeth began to decay at once.
2. In Egypt, the peasants or fellahin had always suffered from periodic famines, but under colonialism this deteriorated to become chronic hunger. It was the intervention of the British which upset the balance of the peasants’ diet; and comparison with early accounts shows that there was once a much greater variety of legumes and fruits.
3. The kwashiorkor (of the Oxfam posters) is itself noticeable wherever the African’s contact with the European was prolonged. A Committee on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire found a noticeable absence of animal fat and protein in the Gambia. The absence of proteins of good quality is one of the principal contributors to kwashiorkor; and once again comparison with what Europeans saw in the Gambia ever since the 15th century would indicate that a change had come about after the coming of the whites. The Gambia not only grew a variety of food in the early period, but it was stock-raising country where meat was consumed in considerable quantity. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, cattle hides were sold by the thousands to European buyers every year, and the local population ate the meat. How then could they have suffered from an absence of animal fat!
4. Studies in Equatorial Africa have revealed frequent signs of dietary deficiencies caused by the absence of fresh foods among Africans entering the service of the colonisers. These include, beriberi, rickets and scurvy. Rickets is a typical temperate climate disease, to which lack of sun contributes. But after colonialism had so destroyed the pattern of judicious food consumption in tropical Africa, even the sun was not enough to keep children’s bones straight. As for scurvy, that is so closely identified with the English sailor that he was nicknamed ‘Limey’, from eating limes to prevent scurvy while lacking access to fresh food on long sea voyages. However, a scurvy epidemic broke out in the middle of Tanganyika in the colonial epoch-among workers in the goldfields, whose wages and conditions of work did not permit them to get fresh citrus and other nourishment.
5. In South Africa, white settlement and capitalism transformed African diet from meat and cereal to dependence on mealy-meal (maize). Pellagra or ‘rough skin’ was unknown in South Africa until about 1914. Subsequently, it became a scourge among Africans, because it derives from absence of milk and meat.
6. An official report on Basutoland (now Lesotho) had this to say: ‘According to residents of long-standing, the physique and health of the Basuto today is not what it used to be. Malnutrition is seen in every village, dispensary, school and recruiting office. Mild scurry and subscorbic conditions are not infrequent; pellagra is becoming more and more frequent and lower resistance to disease increasingly apparent. It is becoming generally accepted, too, that the occurrence of leprosy is associated with faulty diet.’

To clinch the argument that colonialism had a deleterious effect on the African as a physical (and hence mental) entity, it is useful to point to those African peoples who until today have managed to maintain their own pattern of existence in so far as food is concerned. The pastoral Masai, Galla, Ankoli, Batutsi and Somali are all in that category. Their physique is generally so superb, their resistance and endurance so great, that they have become the objects of scientific research to discover why they do so much better than the ‘well-fed’ capitalists who are collapsing from heart disease.

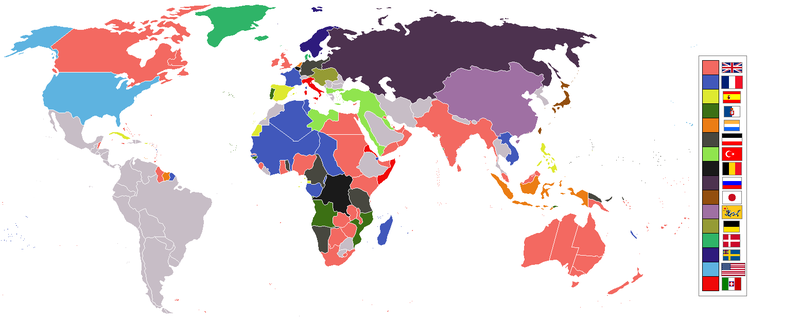
**If you are going to accumulate wealth through industry, you need raw resources, and you need cheap labor.**

**This was the real purpose of colonialism, although Europeans often told themselves it was for nobler reasons.**

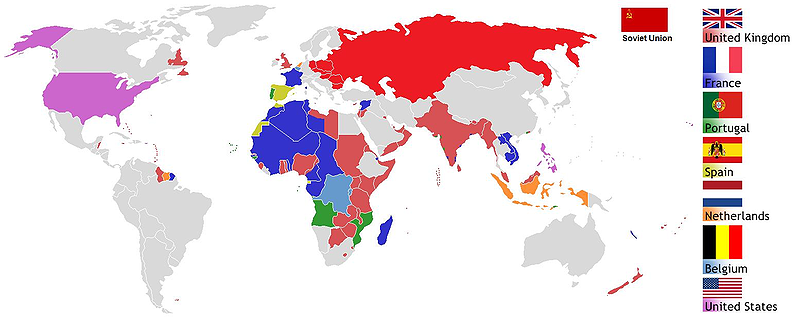


“Colonialism became a very widespread practice by powerful European states during the second half of the nineteenth century. Colonialist practices became increasingly unpopular in the twentieth century, and most colonies were eventually granted independence. However, the extortion of resources from the colonized nations, as well as the suppression of the native populations, has created a lasting impact in former colonies. Colonialism is an example of globalization, as the lives of Europeans and colonized societies became increasingly interconnected; a governance decision made in Europe could affect its colonies, and scenarios such as a native revolt or a discovery of a new natural resource affected the pockets and sentiments of Europeans. The practice of colonialism in the past has helped to shape the world of today. Former colonies are overwhelmingly in the poorer economic bracket, with a significant disparity in the small elite class and large poverty-stricken class. In much of Africa, current state political boundaries are the result of the lines drawn by European powers to designate the boundaries between their colonies. This has led to the grouping of historically diverse and opposed nations within the same political state, often leading to civil war, government instability, and the rise of tyrants and war lords to power.”

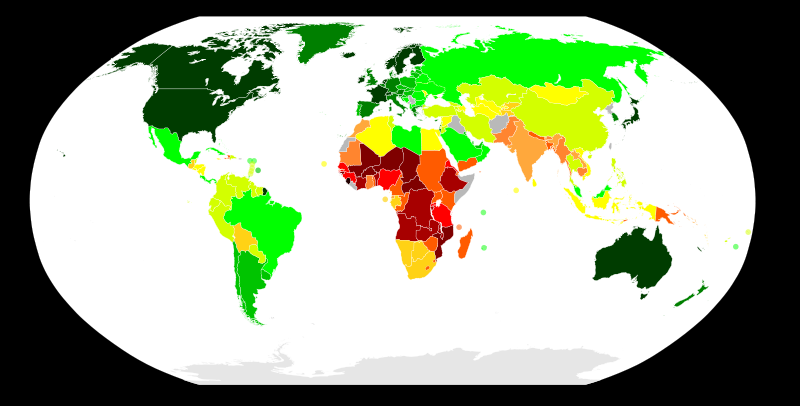
# World 1898 empires colonies territory



World empires and colonies in 1898, just before the [Spanish-American War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish-American_War), [Boxer Rebellion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boxer_Rebellion) and [Boer War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boer_War)



World empires and colonies in 1945



[UN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations) [Human Development Index (HDI)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Development_Index) for 2004, derived from 2006 UN HDI report. An HDI below 0.5 is considered to represent low development and an HDI 0.8 or more is considered to represent high development.

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| 0.950 +      0.900-0.949      0.850-0.899      0.800-0.849      0.750-0.799 | 0.700-0.749      0.650-0.699      0.600-0.649      0.550-0.599      0.500-0.549 | 0.450-0.499      0.400-0.449      0.350-0.399      0.300-0.349      under 0.300      n/a |

People with red-green color vision deficiency should [click here](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:UN_Human_Development_Report_2007_%282%29_CBC.svg) for a map which has been modified for accessibility.  
  
For an exact list of countries by their HDI, see the [List of countries by Human Development Index](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index)