Over the course of this semester, many authors have provided perspectives about global development and what needs to change to bridge the ever-growing gap between the rich and the poor. In *The Need for the Home Perspective*the author, Wolfgang Sachs, proposes a radical and thought-provoking alternative to the common theory of development.

On page 291 Sachs’ states that “the world may have developed, but it has done so in two opposite directions”. The economic growth that has allowed industrialized and ‘developed’ nations to prosper has been at the expense of other countries. These Developed countries (Global North) have taken land and resources from the underdeveloped countries (Global South) which have allowed them to enjoy positions of power and privilege. This current model of development is unsustainable and the Earth cannot bear the weight of globalization for the underdeveloped countries (the crisis of nature). In a similar vein, the Global South calls attention to the fact that being denied globalization means that these countries cannot benefit from the same process as the Global North (crisis of justice). The crisis of nature and the crisis of justice directly conflict with one another which has prompted many to think of alternative models of development.

Sachs proposes 3 perspectives of sustainable development which address the issues of our current model of development (1. The Fortress Perspective  2. The Astronaut’s Perspective  3. The Home Perspective). The paper omits the sections where the first two perspectives are discussed however the Home Perspective is discussed at length.

The Home Perspective accepts the finiteness of development in time and suggests delinking the question of justice from the pursuit of development. It draws a different conclusion from the fact that the range of effects produced by the North has vastly outgrown the radius of Northern responsibility, and advocates reducing the effects until they remain within the given radius of responsibility (295).

With the Home Perspective in mind Sachs’ explains that our current method of growth economics (or growth development) is not sustainable and marginalizes the majority of the world's population for the pleasure of the minority of the world. The Home Perspective calls for the Global North to take responsibility for its actions; “The crisis of justice, according to this perspective, cannot be dealt with by redistributing ‘development’, but only be getting off people’s backs, limiting the development pressures emanating from the various ‘Norths’ in the world” (296). If the Global North reduced its ecological footprint it would not only repay “the ecological debt accumulated from the excessive use of the biosphere over decades” (297), but it would also allow for the Global South to achieve justice through development.

In order for this to happen Sachs’ states an estimation of a 70%-90% scale back of energy and materials (297). Acknowledging that this is an extreme cutback, Sachs’ attempts to rationalize this through his example of cargo on a boat. Even if cargo is rearranged on a boat at a certain point the weight becomes too extreme and the boat will sink. The only way to keep the boat afloat is to reduce the cargo through efficiency and sufficiency. Sachs’ argues that at a certain point GNP stops contributing to the quality of life which supports the idea that cutting back on energy and consumption can be possible without sacrificing quality of life. At the end of his paper, Sachs’ proposes that ‘lean consumption’, as opposed to our current model of consumption, could be attained if products were designed with a focus on quality and durability (299). Sachs’ ends his paper by explaining the issue of poverty is not poverty itself but in fact how wealth has been distributed. The Home perspective could be the way to address the current predicament our population finds itself in, however, it would require many immediate changes in behavior, societal values, and societal structure.

Questions to consider

1). Although Sachs’ focuses on ‘The Home Perspective’ he does offer other approaches (The Fortress Perspective and the Astronaut’s Perspective) which can be found on page 295. Do either of these perspectives offer a better approach than the Home Perspective? Why or why not might this be the case?

2). Is the Home Perspective realistic? Not only does the Home Perspective call for a reduction in consumption but also it suggests that a complete change of behavior and societal structure would be necessary to accomplish its goals. Is this perspective realistic enough for countries to adopt it? If not could some less extreme version of the Home Perspective be implemented?

3). Aside from his brief mention of the fuel-efficient car, Sachs’ doesn't fully explore the idea of technological innovation. Is this an oversight in his perspective or will technological innovation not be enough to help the current situation as he suggests?

4). The Home Perspective calls for the Global North to take responsibility for our past and current consequences of overdevelopment. Does Sachs’ go too far with his perspective? Is it fair? If not how could he amend the perspective so it is fairer?