



Human Factors in National Development: *Exploring Oppression*¹

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When I teach you to skate so I can rent you my skates, that's *oppression*. When you tell me you like me, so I'll need you to will me, that's *oppression*. When we give to others so they'll give to us, that's *oppression*.

1. Suggest a definition of oppression as it occurs in nation-to-nation relations:
2. Suggest how a particular "development program" or project might be oppressive.
3. Which of these declarations sound oppressive? Which suggest liberation? (Mark them "O" or "L")
 - a) Here's what you need.
 - b) I'll tell you how.
 - c) We need to search.
 - d) I need to learn.
 - e) Perhaps we can make a trade.
 - f) I'd like to help you find your way.
4. Consider how you reacted and how you made your judgments about the declarations in item 3 (above).
 - a) What are the clues that something is potentially oppressive?
 - b) What are the clues that something is potentially liberating?
 - c) Why are some declarations ambiguous? What else would you want to know?
5. Which of these practices are oppressive, and why.
 - a) Two applicants for a job driving as a truck driver apparently differ only in educational background. One has two years; the other because he has five years of schooling, is given the job. Oppressive? Why/Why not?

¹ Ted Ward. Human Factors in National Development: Exploring Oppression. Workshop: The Role of the Church in Development, Summer Course at Wheaton College, July 1981

- b) Two women are in prison. Bail for the one is set at \$500 but her family has no money or property. Bail for the other is set at a half-million dollars; her family has property and is able to post the bail. One of these women spends Christmas in jail. Oppressive? Why/Why not?

- c) Fishermen have been introduced to the pressure lamp. Those who still cling to the old burning reeds technique are able to catch much fewer fish. Only one man in the village has the cash capital to buy the needed lamps. He rents them to the fisherman and also charges a high rate for fuel. Oppressive? Why/Why not?

6. What is the common denominator among the three examples in item 5?