

# Weekend reading and listening (plus a bonus talk to go to next week)

by Terence Wood and Camilla Burkot  
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It's marred by a few flaws (ominously intoning about the size of global debt is largely meaningless — one person's debt is another's savings, so you might as well talk enthusiastically about how much is being saved; and more could be done to distinguish private from public debt), but [this](#) ABC Rear Vision podcast is an excellent primer on debt. One that makes an important point related to the way Australian aid cuts have been justified: Australia is not a particularly indebted nation. (And — admittedly irrationally — hearing talk of the Japanese government's quadrillion yen debt left me [Terence] a little less worried about the size of my mortgage.)

Project Syndicate has a [good debate](#) on the future of capitalism and the state's role in facilitating development. There is an excellent contribution by [Dani Rodrik on mercantilism](#) as well as an [interesting piece](#) by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson on the pros and cons of state-led models of economic development (the argument in short: if you're willing to assume a mostly benign state, it's easy to argue the state has an important role to play in fostering development — but history has shown this is a bold assumption to make). [Update – you need to register to access most articles on Project Syndicate but: it's free and the site is an excellent resource; you'll be registering one day, so you might as well make it now.]

Dave Algozo has an [interesting blog post](#) critiquing the 2015 *World Development Report*, arguing that even as economics has incorporated the insights of psychology, “Development sector professionals [still] have an amazing ability to wish politics away in our analysis and action.”

The *Washington Post's* Monkey Cage blog has a [fascinating post](#), drawing on interviews and survey data from Iraq, examining the extent to which Sunni Iraqis support ISIS, and the reasons why they do. Meanwhile, the *New Yorker* has an informative [article](#) on the recent terrorist attacks in Tunisia and what their ramifications may be for the country's democratic future.

And if you're wondering about how much you should be doing to help tackle the woes of the world, Dr Theron Pummer is giving a talk here at ANU next week on “The Ethics of Giving: Why, Where, and How Much?” (details are [here](#)). In the meantime, you can also listen to Owen Barder's excellent interview with Toby Ord [here](#), and watch William Easterly debate Peter Singer [here](#).

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Link:

<https://devpolicy.org/weekend-reading-and-listening-plus-a-bonus-talk-to-go-to-next-week-20150327/>