

SS 11: COUNTERPOINTS

CH. 14: LIVING STANDARDS – NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Each year the UN publishes a Human Development Report
 - contains an index that ranks its member countries according to 3 measures: adult literacy (people who can read); life expectancy; and the **per capita GDP**
 - GDP = *gross domestic product* – the total value of all goods and services produced in a country in one year. Divide this number by the number of people in the country, and you get the average GDP per person, or per capita.
2. For each of the last 6 years of the 20th century, Canada ranked first overall on the Human Development Index.
See Figure 14-1 p. 341. There is a huge gap between the 10 countries at the bottom of the index and the 10 at the top.
3. 1999 report showed that people in 85 countries were worse off than they were in the 1980s.
4. In more than 20 countries, life expectancy at birth was still under 50 years, a full 30 years less than in Canada. Yet the wealth of the 200 richest people in the world – over a thousand billion dollars in 1998 – was greater than the combined income of 41% of the world's population.
5. The gap continues to grow, despite the efforts of organizations such as the UN, aid from government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as *Save the Children* or *Oxfam*.

THE DIVIDED PLANET

1. 1949 U.S. President Truman referred to the world of “*developed*” and “*underdeveloped*” nations.
 - **Developed** = industrialized, people well-housed, healthy, and educated; **infrastructure** – transportation and communication links, electric-power distribution systems, schools, and hospitals – were well-developed.

- **Underdeveloped** = few schools, doctors, and hospitals; roads mainly unpaved; few railways; few people had telephones; only cities had electrical power.
2. “*Developed*” countries were called the First World, “*underdeveloped*” were called the Third World. Countries in between were called the Second World.
 3. Now the accepted terms are
 - **Developed countries** = the most wealthy countries
 - **Newly industrializing countries** = places like Indonesia that are building up their industries and infrastructure
 - **Developing countries** = do not have a modern infrastructure or many industries
 - **Highly indebted poor countries (HIPC)** = most of the countries at the bottom of the UN Human Development Index in debt to developed nations

Comparing Living Standards

1. The developed world has accounting systems that can determine the level of industrialization, value of services, exports and imports.
2. Developing economies have many people who make goods at home and trade them in local communities; money may not be used. This makes it impossible to measure output.
3. If the wealth of the country is not shared among the people, the average income figure does not reflect the standard of living for the majority.
e.g. Saudi Arabia – the average per capita income is \$9000 (U.S.) because of income from the sale of oil resources. However, the wealth from these sales goes to a few very wealthy families.
4. Standards of living are not only measured in incomes, but also quality of life – health, levels of nutrition, life expectancy, literacy, the status of women and children.
5. A person living in poverty in Canada has access to health care, education, and other services.

6. A very poor family in a city in a developing country is likely to live in a dwelling made from scrap materials with no electricity, sanitation, or access to safe water.

See Figure 14-5 p. 344 which shows some of the economic disparities between the richest and poorest countries in the world.

Measuring Poverty

1. The World Bank sets the absolute poverty line in developing countries at less than one dollar per person per day – estimates that 1.3 billion people live below the poverty line.
2. Canada used to use a set income figure to measure poverty, but this did not take into account the differences in cost of living across the country.
3. 1999 – National Council of Welfare redefined living in poverty as spending more than 56% of a person's or family's income on the necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and clothing.
 - found that 17.2% of Canadians, or 5.1 million people, lived below the poverty line in 1998
4. In the U.S. poverty is measured against the “cost of a minimum adequate diet multiplied by 3 to allow for other expenses.
 - 1998 – approximate per capita income of \$11 (U.S.) per day
5. Quality of life also depends on freedom of expression, economic freedom, and the right to a safe and clean environment.

THE POVERTY TRAP

1. Almost 800 million people in developing countries are starving or malnourished. Yet, the world produces enough food to feed all 6 billion people an adequate diet.
2. For many of the poor, the problem is not being able to purchase the food that is available.
3. Farmers who do not own their own land and migrant labourers are the first to feel the effects of droughts, crop failures, or economic downturns.

The Burden of Debt

1. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **World Bank** were set up at the close of WW II as agencies of the UN.
 - were to provide loans and development assistance to help countries improve their standards of living through economic growth
 - encouraged governments in developing countries to start megaprojects, such as dam building and agricultural irrigation
 - Many of these initiatives caused environmental damage and did not improve the countries' economies.
2. 1960s – Western banks were eager to lend billions of dollars to newly independent African countries, which were exporting minerals and agricultural products.
3. Then, a world economic slowdown led to a collapse in prices for these commodities, making repayment of the debts difficult. Also, some of the loaned money had gone into the overseas bank accounts of corrupt dictators.
4. The Western banks and their governments encouraged the IMF and the World Bank to lend countries the money they needed to pay off their debts. The lenders had changed, but the debt remained.
5. Today, African countries alone owe \$227 billion.
6. In return for the loans, the IMF told the debtor (in debt) countries to restructure their economies to ensure repayment.
7. **structural adjustment programs (SAPs)** – the IMF wanted the debtor governments to agree to encourage foreign investment, grow cash crops for export, and have some government services run by private companies.
8. Many debtor countries have few natural resources or receive low prices for them on the world market because there is an oversupply, or their resources are under the control of foreign **multinational companies (MNCs)**.

E.g. – Ghana produces 70% of the world's cocoa, must sell the crop to 4 multinational companies who control the price. Very little of the profit filters back to the Ghanaian farmer.

9. The debt burden of governments in developing countries makes it difficult for them to pay for services that could improve the standard of living of their people.
E.g. – Mozambique spends 10 times more on debt repayments than on health care.
10. Many African countries have suffered natural disasters, such as the devastating floods in Mozambique in 2000, or brutal civil wars like those in Rwanda and Sierra Leone.
11. Some lenders have begun to act to reduce the debt.
 - 1999 – an agreement was reached at an international summit to cancel about \$111 billion of the \$354 billion owed by the highly indebted countries.
 - Mozambique became the 3rd country (after Uganda and Bolivia) to be offered relief through the HIPC agreement.
 - About ½ of Mozambique's \$2.5 billion debt will eventually be wiped out.
12. Canada has been among the first to call for an easing of the debts owed by the HIPCs.
 - 2000 – the federal budget set aside \$175 million for a debt reduction plan.
 - The goal is to reduce the debt load of highly indebted countries so their scarce resources can go towards poverty reduction programs rather than to debt servicing.
 - Canada has forgiven all overseas development aid debt to all HIPCs except Myanmar, which is governed by a military dictatorship.
13. Since 1986, all *bilateral aid* for development (assistance from one government to another) has been in the form of grants instead of loans.
14. 10 Latin American countries have been allowed to repay debts by investing in environmental and other sustainable development projects in their own countries.

KENYA: TRAPPED IN POVERTY

1. Is about 60% of the size of B.C., but in 1999 was estimated to have a population of 29 million – had increased from 5.4 million in 1948 to 28.4 million in 1997.
2. Nearly 1 million people are added each year.
3. Economic opportunities are limited, with education unaffordable for many, and few jobs.
4. Has 3 main geographic regions:
 - 1) Tropical coast has rainforests and sandy beaches – popular for tourists from Europe
 - 2) Highland plateau has natural parks with abundant wildlife.
¼ is too dry for farming and has scrub vegetation that is poor grazing land.
Highlands in the west have the one good farming area, but is only 7% of the land. Produces tea and coffee and cut flowers for export.
 - 3) 37% is tropical grassland, used by nomadic herders for grazing cattle.
5. About 80% of the population make a living from farming.
There is now less food produced per capita than 30 years ago, partly because of the population increase, and partly because good cropland is being used to produce cash crops for export.
6. Unemployment is at about 50%.
Less than ½ the population has access to safe drinking water, and nearly 30% of children are underweight.
Nearly 2/3 of its population are under 18 years of age.
Thousands are infected with HIV/AIDS, yet Kenya must provide basic medical and sanitation services from a budget of \$2.6 billion (U.S.).
The per capita income is about \$340 (U.S.).
7. Since 1990, about 1 million people have moved from the countryside to Nairobi, the capital, which has industries and is the centre of tourism.
8. Corruption in government is widespread. All the problems facing Kenya are made worse by a crushing debt.

THE VULNERABLE ONES: WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The Position of Women

1. Many developing countries have male-dominated societies where females and children have lower status than men.
 - May have no legal rights or may be treated as property.
 - Women may be killed to satisfy a family's honour.
 - In some tribal societies, women and children may eat whatever is left after the men have finished, which can lead to malnutrition.
2. A woman in a developing country may have to work for over 12 hours a day to ensure the survival of her family. Women are often left to support the family when men migrate in search of work.
3. In much of the developing world, the rate of literacy is lower among women than among men.
4. Only 1/3 of girls in rural India go to school compared to more than 1/2 of boys. When a woman is married she is reborn into her husband's family, so there is an incentive for her to be married young.
5. Demographers agree that economic development and the fertility rate of countries are connected.
6. Study after study shows that better educated women have fewer children. They tend to marry later and have children later.
7. A World Bank report found that in places where women do not receive a secondary education, the average number of children was 7. When women have secondary school education, the figure drops to 3.
 - Children are more likely to survive.
 - Educated women know more about the importance of immunization, clean water, and good nutrition.
8. A study in Peru showed that the infant mortality rate dropped for every year of schooling the mother had.
9. The key to improving the status of women is education.
10. See Figure 14-16 p. 352 for Women's Literacy Rates

Women in Niger

1. Niger:

- African country almost entirely in the Sahara Desert
 - One of the world's least developed countries
 - Life expectancy is under 49 years, literacy is 14%, and 65% of the population survive on less than \$180 a year.
 - A recent drop in the price of uranium, its only major export, has reduced the country's export earnings.
 - Donor aid has been withheld until the military government returns the government to civilian rule.
2. Women are taking a larger role in the economy, making pottery, selling firewood, cloth.
 3. In a traditional Muslim society, they are bound to obey their husbands, fathers, brothers, and other male relatives.
 4. Polygamy (having more than one wife) is widespread, and the average marrying age for women is 15.
 5. The average number of children per woman is 7.4.

Children in Crisis

1. Children in some developing nations have few educational opportunities and are often exploited as child labour or trapped in the sex trade.
2. Since 1990, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has published an annual Progress of Nations Report (PNR) on the welfare of children.
3. The PNR started a new child-risk index that measures the risk of children in countries worldwide on a scale of 0 to 100.
The measure is based on 5 factors:
 - the mortality rates of children under the age of 5
 - the % of children who are moderately or severely underweight
 - numbers of children who do not attend primary school
 - risks from armed conflict
 - risks from the disease HIV/AIDS

4. Canada, the U.S., Australia, Japan, and other highly developed nations had risk scores of five or below.
5. Africa is the continent where children face the greatest risk. Africa's average score was 61, compared to Europe's average of 6, and the world average of 30. See Figure 14-18 p. 353.

Under-Five Mortality Rate

1. (U5MR) – principal measure of human development used by UNICEF.
2. In some African countries the rate is more than 50 times as high as in the industrialized world.
3. More than ½ of the under-5 deaths in developing countries are due to malnutrition.
4. Diseases such as measles that can be controlled by vaccines are often widespread.
According to UNICEF, 3 million children die each year of diseases such as gastroenteritis that are related to poor sanitation and lack of hygiene and clean water.

Children at War

1. Approximately 540 million children in the world live in dangerous and unstable situations.
2. Civil wars, land mines, ethnic cleansing, and other dangers affect children and their mothers.
3. According to the 1999 Amnesty International report, *In the Firing Line*, there were at least 300 000 children and young adults under the age of 18 who were actively engaged in 36 armed conflicts around the world, many of them in Africa.
4. In wars in Sudan and Somalia, 11- and 12-year-olds have been involved in battle.

Working Children

1. Abandoned children in cities live by their wits, begging, stealing, or selling sex.
2. 1996 – the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 were working, ½ of them in full-time jobs.
3. Nearly 153 million children were working in Asia, 80 million in Africa and 17.5 million in Latin America.
4. In Asia, child prostitutes number about 1 million. International sex networks take Latin American children and Southern Asian children to Europe and the Middle East.
5. There are no labour laws that regulate safety conditions or the hours that children work.
6. Craig Kielburger is a Canadian activist for the rights of children.

Poverty on Aboriginal Reserves

1. The UN General Assembly declared 1995 to 2004 the International decade of the World's Indigenous People.
 - Aim was to address the problem of widespread poverty among many of these people around the world, including in Canada.
2. 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
 - Poor sanitation and water quality, substandard housing and health care are linked to high levels of infant mortality, infectious diseases, and safety concerns.
 - Warns of a rapidly growing population straining the resources of Aboriginal communities.
 - Points out that reserves are too small even to support existing numbers.
 - Most Aboriginal peoples in Canada have neither effective control over their existing lands nor sufficient access to lands and resources outside their reserves and communities.

3. Matthew Coon Come, leader of Canada's Assembly of First Nations, wants to address these issues.
 - He thinks that Aboriginal Canadians deserve a greater share in the benefits of Canada's natural resources.
 - He sees this as a way to remove dependence and achieve Aboriginal rights.

THE HEALTH CRISIS

Clean Water: A Basic Health Need

1. An estimated 1.2 billion people around the world lack safe water, a figure that is expected to double by 2025.
2. Irrigation for agriculture takes the largest share of water supplies in the developing world, much of it used for growing crops for export.
3. The World Health Organization estimates that 80% of the world's diseases are caused in some way by contaminated water.
 - Breeding ground for cholera, typhoid, malaria, leprosy, and bilharzia
 - Bilharzias – widespread waterborne disease in Africa. Parasites in contaminated water enter the body through ingestion or cuts, and breed near the liver or bladder. Damage to the liver affects the blood and urine, resulting in loss of energy and anaemia.
4. 1980s – designated the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade – nearly 1.5 billion people received safe water supplies, and over 750 million received sanitation facilities for the first time.
5. May 2000 – *E. coli* outbreak in Walkerton, Ontario, showed how the system can fail and result in tragedy for a small town. Over 2000 people became ill and several died from contaminated water.

The Scourge of Epidemics

1. Epidemics of tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and malaria are widespread in the developing world.
2. Tuberculosis and malaria cause over 5 million deaths annually around the world.

The HIV/AIDS Pandemic

1. destroys the immune system, which protects the body from disease.
2. The virus passes from person to person through sexual acts, blood transfusions, from used hypodermic needles, or from mother to child during birth.
3. There is no cure; even with the most expensive treatments, death is a certainty.
4. The latest research traces the origins of AIDS to a virus that spread from chimpanzees to humans in west equatorial Africa in about 1930.
5. In 2000, this *pandemic* – an epidemic that occurs over a wide geographic area – was affecting 35 million people in the world.
6. Every day, 16 000 people become infected worldwide, and 7000 die.
7. UNICEF reported that of the 14 million worldwide who have died of AIDS, more than 11 million have been Africans, $\frac{1}{4}$ of them children.
8. At least $\frac{1}{3}$ of all people living with HIV/AIDS are between the ages of 10 and 24.
9. Developed countries, such as Canada, have kept their infection rates for HIV/AIDS to less than 1% of the adult population, but in many sub-Saharan countries the infection is out of control. See Figure 14-24 p. 359.
10. In 2000, there were at least 8 million AIDS orphans in Africa.
11. In Botswana, life expectancy fell from 61 to 41 in the last decade of the 20th century. It is projected to drop to 39 by 2010.
12. Few countries in sub-Saharan Africa have the resources to provide large-scale programs for their infected populations.
13. In some hospitals in South Africa, AIDS patients occupy 70% of the beds. Zimbabwe spends $\frac{1}{2}$ of its health care budget on AIDS.

14. Canada has been one of the leaders in the establishment of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).
 - UNAIDS helps countries respond to HIV/AIDS, and helps health workers so they can educate people and limit the transmission of the disease.

SOLUTIONS

1. Since WW II, the developed world has been providing aid to the nations of South America, Africa, and Asia.
2. Foreign aid programs were chosen as the way to foster development in these countries, while at the same time countering the growing influence of the communist bloc.
3. The money spent on aid is still dwarfed by the amount spent on armaments in the world.
 - 1998 – military spending was estimated to be \$780 billion (U.S.), making it the world's largest industry.
4. UN aid agencies estimate that a fraction of this total would give universal access to basic social services in all developing countries.
 - For \$6 billion everyone could have a basic education.
 - \$9 billion would supply water and sanitation.
 - \$12 billion would ensure reproductive health for all women.
 - \$13 would provide basic health and nutrition.

Foreign Aid

1. **Multilateral aid** is funded by a number of governments, and usually involves large-scale programs like dam building.
2. Often, bilateral aid is **tied aid**, given with conditions attached.
 - More than 30% of Canadian bilateral and multilateral aid is tied to Canadian purchases.
3. Developing nations receive foreign aid from various sources:
 - through international bodies such as the UN, national government agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency

- (CIDA), and many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing religious groups, service organizations such as Rotary International, or other non-profit organizations, such as Oxfam.
- Many agencies of the UN are dedicated to improving the living standards of people in the developing world
 - E.g. UNICEF worked to fight iodine deficiency disorder, which causes mental retardation and stunts growth. Can be prevented with the addition of a few grams of iodized salt to the daily diet.
 - 1980s – more than 60% of primary school children in Bolivia suffered from iodine deficiency.
 - 1996 – Canada contributed 88% of the budget for UNICEF’s salt iodization program in Bolivia.

Canada’s Foreign Aid Program

1. CIDA distributes aid projects through UN agencies, directly to governments, and through NGOs.
 - It supports foreign aid projects in more than 100 of the poorest countries of the world.
 - Its objective is to work with people in developing countries and to develop the tools for them to meet their own needs eventually.

2. NGO aid projects often provide direct assistance to people. Initiatives range from well-known, large organizations such as the Red Cross and Doctors without Borders to smaller groups dealing with local projects.
 - In Bangladesh, women – many of them landless labourers or wives abandoned by husbands – work on a CARE scheme repairing dirt roads for a 3-year period.
 - A portion of their wages of \$1 a day is held back and then given to them as a lump sum to invest.
 - Most are able to stop the cycle of poverty, improve their living conditions, and provide for their children’s education.

1. In recent years, governments have followed the lead of NGOs in promoting small-scale, sustainable projects that are appropriate to the local environment and that can be maintained locally.

2. Wells with simple pumps replace irrigation projects, tools are made from local or recycled materials, and local people are given the means to sustain their own development initiatives.

3. The amount Canada contributes to foreign aid has been decreasing for the past 2 decades.
 - 1984 – Canadian government pledged to reach the UN aid target of 0.7% of GDP by 2000.
 - By 1998, Canadian development assistance had reached a 30-year low, dropping to 0.27% of GDP.

Should Canada Link Its Foreign Aid to Human Rights?

1. Afghanistan – a landlocked country of about 26 million people, is one of the poorest countries in the world.
 - 1979 – Soviet troops invaded – between 1 and 2 million Afghans, 90% civilians, were killed. 6 million became refugees.
 - Soviet invaders spread mines, slaughtered livestock, committed atrocities such as rape.
 - The U.S. supported the resistance fighters against the invaders.
 - When the troops left in 1989, civil war broke out.
 - The Taliban (Religious Students Movement) took over 2/3 of the country – they confiscated all weapons and stopped the civil war in the areas they controlled.
 - The Taliban enforced their strict interpretation of Islamic law.
 - The rules were harshest towards women.
 - were not allowed to appear in public without being covered head to foot in a *burqah*
 - had to stay at home behind blacked-out windows
 - The only women allowed to work were doctors in women's hospitals.
 - While some schooling was tolerated, in 2000 the ban on female education remained in force.
 - women found guilty of adultery were stoned to death.
 - Religious police patrolled the streets.
 - People found guilty of offences such as failing to attend prayers, displaying photographs of living creatures, or possessing cassettes or videotapes could be publicly whipped.
 - Thieves faced public amputation of hands and feet.
2. A UN Food and Agricultural Organization report in June 2000 warned that millions of Afghans had little or no access to food and that the situation would deteriorate because of a severe drought.

3. However, some claimed that the poor human rights record of the Taliban government of Afghanistan should be an issue in granting aid to that country.
4. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN-sponsored agreements, such as the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, call for protection of the political, legal, and social rights of women.

The Case for Denying Aid

1. Those in favour of denying aid say the best way to change the practice of these governments is to deny aid whenever human rights violations occur. Also, there is no guarantee that the aid will get to the poor and underprivileged.

The Case for Giving Aid

1. Those opposed to denying aid point out that different cultures have different interpretations of rights.
2. People must be allowed to follow their own culture's teaching with regard to rights and toleration – including the treatment of women.

GLOBAL PROBLEMS, LOCAL SOLUTIONS

1. Billions of dollars in aid have been spent in developing countries, much of it without improving conditions for the poor.
2. Dictators or local elites are often the ones who benefit most.
3. The most successful forms of aid have come from programs that consult the local people and listen to their suggestions, giving the help of outside donor agencies if required.

