

Poverty is now more of threat than overpopulation to world development

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Poverty is the state of being extremely poor. It can hinder world development as countries in a deep economic state of poverty require aid/money from other countries, which takes away from their own development. Also when countries in poverty decide to borrow money from places like the IMF or World Bank, they come with conditions such as to cut spending on some of the countries own projects, which again slows down development. Modernisation theorists say that overpopulation is an obstacle to development as it prevents developing countries from adopting western forms.

Money is spend on food, rather than infrastructure and development. Malthus states that populations increase in size at a much faster rate than the ability of those same populations to feed themselves. This causes limits on food supplies, leading to famine and war as people fight over scarce resources. In turn, this causes poverty. Ehrlich says that high birth rates of developing countries have led to population explosions. This is responsible for problems such as desertification and deforestation.

He says “ the birth rate must be brought into balance with the death rate, or mankind will breed itself into oblivion”, meaning that the population will grow so fast that resources will run scarce, leading to extreme poverty, then, in extreme cases, death. Overpopulation can be said to be caused by poverty, religion and culture. Harrison mentions that, in the Latin culture, the macho male wishes to prove his virility, not only to himself, but his wife and others. They do this by getting women pregnant a lot, meaning that the streets are full of children.

Also, in Islamic and Catholic Religions, they are against contraception and family planning as children are gifts from God, and contraception may lead to promiscuity. Neo-Malthusian theorists have come up with solutions for overpopulation, these are: family planning, such as contraception and one child policies perhaps; Western Aid to provide clinics, education and money for infrastructure and agriculture - this links with Rostow's five stages of development; and finally, education for women, as five hundred thousand women die in child birth each year, and if women can read about risks then they are more likely to maybe get a job or not have so many children.

There are many criticisms of the Neo-Malthusiansim, one being that Western ways of reducing population and increasing development may not work everywhere else, and that statistics aren't always reliable. Also, increasing population may not always be a bad thing, Baserup says that it can lead to new development, advances in technology and an increase of food production to meet demands. Lastly, problems aren't always caused by overpopulation leading to poverty, but uneven distribution of resources instead.

On the other hand, you have Dependency Theorist Adamson, who says that poverty is the cause of overpopulation. He says to "look after the population and the population will look after itself", but surely this is not the case. If populations had stable Governments, equal distribution of resources and decent standards of living, then the country could spend money on developing infrastructure, but this isn't happening. Adamson says that children are economic assets, so the more the merrier.

Many children die at a young age, in Sub-Saharan Africa, a couple would have to have ten children to ensure that at least one son would live to thirty eight, but the ones that survive will be able to go out to work, but also will be able to provide welfare to their parents in old age. Economic prosperity is a natural contraception as it slows down birth rates, say Modernisation Theorists as it worked in the UK, as children become more expensive, but Dependency Theorists say that birth control programmes would fail if poverty is not tackled first.

Robey et al state that birth rates are falling despite there still being poverty, this is due to 51% of women at child bearing age using contraception. Dependency Theorists also say that health problems caused by poverty affect the population. Around eight hundred million children are malnourished and thirty thousand children die each day of preventable diseases. But countries that are in a low economic state have less money to spend on healthcare, so they borrow from the World Bank, but then have to cut national spending, and so can't really win.

Lastly, Adamson says that by focussing on overpopulation, we run the risk of ignoring the cause of power, which is unequal distribution of resources as the West over consume. The West "[consume] meat, which wastes the grain that could've saved them, last year we ate the children of Ethiopia and Bangladesh" says Hayter. This theory may sound harsh, but it's the reality that as the West is more economically developed, they feel that they can exploit LEDCs and almost control the resources to ensure their lives continue without any regard for the dying children in developing countries. In

conclusion, it is impossible to say whether poverty is more of a threat than overpopulation to development as the two issues go hand in hand.

Neo-Malthusian Theorists say that overpopulation causes poverty as it puts strains on resources meaning that less money can be spent on development as it's being spent on emergency supplies instead. However, Dependency Theorists say that it's poverty that causes overpopulation, as children are economic assets and can provide welfare to parents in old age, and due to the high infant mortality rates, having more children is necessary to ensure that at least one child would survive in those awful conditions.