



Establishing means to ensure the economic independence of former colonised nations

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Student Officer: Sal van der Schaar

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Issue: Establishing means to ensure the economic independence of former colonised nations

Name: Sal van der Schaar

Position: Main Chair

Introduction

Since the end of colonization, all formerly colonized nations have struggled to various degrees economically and socially. Many believe that Western countries, as the main perpetrators of this problem, have a responsibility to these countries in assisting them economically and releasing them of their current dependency on other countries.

Counteracting this dependency would allow these countries to exert their political freedom, allowing their representatives to speak on their citizen's behalf, instead of on behalf of a different country. This research report will tackle this pressing issue, and hopefully, by solving this issue, it could make the world a better place.

Definition of Key Terms

Foreign dependency/ Economic dependency

the global power structure in which weaker countries are economically reliant on stronger countries, allowing the stronger countries to exercise significant control over the weaker countries' economic and political behavior.

Middle power

in international relations, a state that holds a position in the international power spectrum that is in the "middle"—below that of a superpower, which wields vastly superior influence over all other states, or of great power, but with sufficient ability to shape international events.

Extreme Poverty

Classified as when a person earns less than \$1,90 (INT) per day. Cases of this are found all over the world but are most commonly found in Sub-Saharan Africa.

LDCs

Least-developed countries (LDCs) (sometimes referred to as less-developed countries) are underdeveloped countries that face significant structural challenges to sustainable development. The UN's list of LDCs currently comprises 46 countries.

General Overview

How did we get here?

There are many instances of countries suffering under the effects of colonization, and some that seemed to have had no negative consequences at all. Take America and Latin America. One became one of the most powerful countries in the world, namely the United States of America. Another poor and underdeveloped. The question that arises is of course, what is the difference? It all has to do with the institutions put in place by the colonizing powers. In this case, it's the British versus the Spanish. The Spanish colonial institution was based largely on the exploitation of the indigenous peoples, called 'extractive institutions'. This destroyed the continent and placed inherently racist systems in place that affect the countries to this day. In America on the other hand, the population was not dense enough for these highly exploitative institutions, although the British at first did most certainly try, and so they had to go in a completely different direction by attracting other colonizers to work and invest in the land. This in part ensured the success of the Americas. Naturally, when the British discovered Latin America-like circumstances in countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, they did not hesitate to put equally exploitative institutions in place. It is no coincidence that such African countries are unequal as to Latin American countries. Thus, colonialism has had a mixed effect on the colonies, ranging from creating more inclusive institutions than the countries that created them in America, and allowing that country to become the most powerful in the world, to putting institutions in place that were so horrible and exploitative that they damaged the country and any future prospects it may have had for centuries. It must be stressed that the fact that colonialism, in some contexts, had a positive effect on development, does not attempt to justify colonialism or absolve any countries of the devastating effects that it had. Because that is what

colonialism was, a devastating and destructive force and one of the worst parts of human history. But to fix the problem, it must be looked at in its entirety, only then can we make the world a better place.

The situation as it stands now

As of 2017, 696 million people are living in extreme poverty, 430 million of them living in sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region in the world, with over 40% of the total population surviving on less than \$1.90. Countries that suffer from poverty the most have had increased civil and political unrest, or suffer from natural disasters. Many Sub-Saharan countries suffer from both. Besides past institutions and inequality as discussed before, what are the main issues for poor countries now?

The main problems for poverty currently

Conflict, is one of the most common driving forces behind poverty. Large-scale, protracted violence that we've seen in areas like Syria can grind entire societies to a halt, destroying infrastructure and forcing people to flee. In its tenth year of conflict, Syria's middle class has been all but destroyed, and over 80% of its population now lives below the poverty line. But even small bouts of violence can have huge impacts on communities that are already struggling. For example, if farmers are worried about their crops being stolen, they won't invest in planting. Women also bear the brunt of the conflict, which adds a layer of inequality to all conflicts. During periods of violence, female-headed households become very common. And because women often have difficulty getting well-paying work and are typically excluded from community, decision-making, their families are particularly vulnerable.

Hunger, You might think that poverty causes hunger (and you would be right!), but hunger is also a cause — and maintainer — of poverty. If a person doesn't get enough food, they'll lack the strength and energy needed to work (or their immune system will weaken from malnutrition and leave them more susceptible to illness that prevents them from getting to work).

The first 1,000 days of a child's life (from womb to the world) are key to ensuring their future health and likelihood of staying out of poverty. If a mother is malnourished during pregnancy, that can be passed on to her children, leading to wasting (low weight for height) or stunting (low height for age). Child stunting, both physical and cognitive, can lead to a lifetime of impacts: Adults who were stunted as children earn, on average, 22% less than those who weren't stunted. In Ethiopia, stunting contributes to GDP losses as high as 16%.

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Poor healthcare systems, Extreme poverty, and poor health often go hand in hand. In countries where health systems are weak, easily preventable and treatable illnesses like malaria, diarrhea, and respiratory infections can be fatal — especially for young children. And when people must travel far distances to clinics or pay for medicine, it drains already vulnerable households of money and assets and can tip a family from poverty into extreme poverty.

For some women, pregnancy and childbirth can be a death sentence. In many of the countries where Concern works, access to quality maternal healthcare is poor. Pregnant and lactating mothers face a multitude of barriers when seeking care, from not being allowed to go to a clinic without a male chaperone to receiving poor or even abusive care from a doctor. This is especially true for adolescent girls aged 18 and under, leaving mothers-to-be and their children at increased risk for disease and death.

Bad access to clean water, Currently, more than 2 billion people don't have access to clean water at home. This means that people (which is to say, women and girls) collectively spend some 200 million hours every day walking long distances to fetch water. That's precious time that could be used working or getting an education to help secure a job later in life.

Contaminated water can also lead to a host of waterborne diseases, ranging from chronic to life-threatening. Poor water infrastructure — such as sanitation and hygiene facilities — can compound this, or create other barriers to escaping poverty, such as keeping girls out of school during menstruation.

Climate change, Climate change creates hunger, whether through too little water (drought) or too much (flooding), and its effects contribute to the cycle of poverty in several other ways including disproportionately affecting women, creating refugees, and even influencing conflict. One World Bank estimates that climate change has the power to push more than **100 million people** into poverty over the next decade.

Many of the world's poorest populations rely on farming or hunting and gathering to eat and earn a living — for example, Malawi is 80% agrarian. They often have only just enough food and assets to last through the next season, and not enough reserves to fall back on in the event of a poor harvest. So when climate change or natural disasters (including the widespread droughts caused by El Niño) leave millions of people without food, it pushes them further into poverty and can make recovery even more difficult.

Lack of education, Not every person without an education is living in extreme poverty. But most of the extremely poor don't have an education. There are many barriers to education around the world, including a lack of money for uniforms and books, a bias against girls' education, and many of the other causes of poverty mentioned here.

But education is often referred to as the great equalizer because it can open the door to jobs and other resources and skills that a family needs to not just survive, but thrive. UNESCO estimates that 171 million people could be lifted out of extreme poverty if they left school with basic reading skills. Poverty threatens education, but education can also help end poverty.

Poor public works, Imagine that you have to go to work, but there are no roads to get you there. Or heavy rains have flooded your route and made it impossible to travel. A lack of infrastructure — from roads, bridges, and wells, to cables for light, cell phones, and internet — can isolate communities living in rural areas. Living off the grid often means living without the ability to go to school, work, or the market to buy and sell goods. Traveling further distances to access basic services not only takes time but also costs money, keeping families in poverty.

Isolation limits opportunity. Without opportunity, many find it difficult, if not impossible, to escape extreme poverty.

ISOLATION LIMITS OPPORTUNITY.

Lack of government support, Many people living in the United States are familiar with social welfare programs that people can access if they need healthcare or food assistance. But not every government can provide this type of help to its citizens — and without that safety net, there’s nothing to stop vulnerable families from backsliding further into extreme poverty. Ineffective governments also contribute to several of the other causes of extreme poverty mentioned above, as they are unable to provide necessary infrastructure or healthcare or ensure the safety and security of their citizens in the event of a conflict.

Lack of jobs might seem like a no-brainer: Without a job or a livelihood, people will face poverty. Dwindling access to productive land (often due to conflict, overpopulation, or climate change) and overexploitation of resources like fish or minerals put increasing pressure on many traditional livelihoods. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for example, most of the population lives in rural communities where natural resources have been plundered over centuries of colonial rule — while conflict over land has forced people away from their source of income and food. Now, more than half of the country lives in extreme poverty.

Lack of reserves, All of the above risk factors — from conflict to climate change or even a family illness — can be weathered if a family or community has reserves in place. Cash savings and loans can offset unemployment due to conflict or illness. Proper food storage systems can help if a drought or natural disaster ruins a harvest.

People living in extreme poverty usually don’t have these means available. This means that, when risk turns into a disaster, they turn to negative coping mechanisms, including pulling children out of school to work (or even marry) and selling off assets to buy food. That can help a family make it through one bad season, but not another. For communities constantly facing climate extremes or prolonged conflict, the repeated shocks can send a family reeling into extreme poverty and prevent them from ever recovering.

Dependency on larger countries

Now with an understanding of how countries are this poor, we can look at what economic dependency means. In short, it's when a country is trading, both export and import-wise, so heavily with another country that that country gains massive leverage over the country. Some experts believe that these foreign dependencies are an extension of the colonial trade network, once more circling back to the damage of colonialism, as these countries were tailored to produce raw resources. Upon gaining independence, few former colonies had modern industrial economies or trained and educated workforces that could compete in the global market. So with no other option, these former colonies continued to export raw resources, which then got sold back to them as manufactured goods by industrial countries for profit. This cycle not only makes countries dependent on industrial countries but also keeps them locked in this endless cycle, with little chance to escape. Dependency on foreign aid can also play a significant role in shaping the economy and politics of the recipient country. Although foreign aid can have positive economic and political impacts, such as increasing political participation and local public expenditures on social programs in developing countries, donor countries often use promises of aid (or threats of stopping aid) to pressure recipients into adopting the political or economic policies preferred by the donor. Once again illustrating the danger of countries having so much power over one another, especially when no other choice has been made available. An excellent example of this manipulation is China's so-called 'Neo-Colonialism', discussed in an issue.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
1494:	Treaty of Tordesillas dividing the world outside of Europe in an exclusive duopoly between the Spanish and the Portuguese empires.
1565	St. Augustine, Florida, founded by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, becomes the first permanent European settlement in North America.

- 1602** The Dutch East India company was established. They had a charter monopoly in several areas in Asia. Between 1602 and 1796 the VOC sent almost a million Europeans to work in the Asia trade on 4,785 ships, and netted for their efforts more than 2.5 million tons of Asian trade goods.
- 1787 Britain creates Sierra Leone.
- 1791-1804 Haitian Revolution and abolition of slavery by the French First Republic.
- 1857 Uprising in India against British occupation, which leads to the creation of the British Raj.
- 1884-85 Berlin Conference (UK, France, Germany) which sets the right of conquest for the scramble for Africa.
- 1945 Proclamation of the independence of Indonesia and Vietnam
- 1959 Independence of Morocco and Tunisia.
- 1960 Independence of French colonies in Africa.
- 1960 The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was adopted by the UNGA.
- 1962 Establishment of the UN Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24).
- 1970 Independence of the former Portuguese colonies.
- 1970 Declaration on Principles of International law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

2001 French law recognizing slavery and the Atlantic slave trade as crimes against humanity (Taubira Law).

Major Parties Involved

World Bank

The world bank is responsible for international loans to countries, and therefore inextricably linked to this issue. A large problem for LDCs in particular is regarding loan acceptance. A country that obtains loans from the World Bank, for example, must agree to adjust its economic structure, liberalize its economy, and increase its international financial accountability. Moreover, paying off the debt from loans often leads to balance-of-payments difficulties for the recipient, further sustaining and deepening its economic dependency.

The United Kingdom

As one of the most powerful countries engaged in colonialism, many believe that the United Kingdom has a moral obligation to help with this issue. And they seem to echo this sentiment. The United Kingdom is Europe's leading aid donor, with 5 out of their top 7 countries who received this aid being former United Kingdom colonies.

The Republic of France

Together with The United Kingdom, Portugal, Belgium, Spain, and Germany, they agreed to spend the bulk of their official development assistance (ODA) budgets on their former colonies. For France, the world's fourth largest donor, ODA is aimed at its former colonies in Africa. The share of grants in the overall French ODA however, is modest. In 2013, out of the €9.8bn for public development aid, only €312m was in the form of grants for bilateral projects, or 3.2% of the French budget.

Possible Solutions

Delegates are faced with the difficult task of solving this issue. It is complex and has many sides to it. Besides that, it is also an issue that is intertwined with a long line of historical

events. In order to solve this issue delegates could consider one of the following possible solutions.

Promoting Trade: One of the most effective ways of promoting economic independence is by encouraging trade. This can be achieved by reducing trade barriers, promoting free trade agreements and creating preferential trade agreements that benefit former colonized nations. The international community should work towards promoting fair trade practices and reducing trade barriers that have been historically used to exploit these nations.

Encouraging Domestic Production: Domestic production should be encouraged to reduce the dependence on imports. This can be achieved by promoting entrepreneurship and small business development in former colonized nations. This will help create jobs, promote innovation and increase the domestic production of goods and services. The international community should provide support for these initiatives through financial aid and technical assistance.

Developing Infrastructure: Investment in infrastructure is essential for economic development. The international community should invest in infrastructure development in former colonized nations to facilitate economic growth. This includes investments in transportation, energy, water, and communication infrastructure. The development of infrastructure will also help attract foreign investment, which will further promote economic development.

Addressing Debt: Many former colonized nations are burdened with debt owed to international creditors. This debt is often the result of exploitative loans that were taken out during the colonial period. The international community should take steps to address this debt burden and provide debt relief to these nations. Debt relief will free up resources for investment in economic development and reduce the dependence on international creditors.

Promoting Education: Education is a critical component of economic development. The international community should invest in education programs in former colonized nations to provide the necessary skills and knowledge for economic growth. This includes

investments in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, vocational training, and adult education programs. Education will help reduce poverty, promote entrepreneurship, and improve the standard of living in these nations.

Addressing Corruption: Corruption is a major impediment to economic development in many former colonized nations. The international community should work with governments in these nations to address corruption by promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance. This includes investments in anti-corruption programs, public sector reform, and strengthening of democratic institutions.

The economic independence of formerly colonized nations is critical for sustainable development and poverty reduction. Delegates, therefore, need to ensure proper cooperation in order to achieve this goal.

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