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New Poverty Data, 1981-2004

Global poverty rates continued to fall in the first four years of the 21st century, according to new international poverty line estimates by Chen and Ravallion that are based on data from over 500 household surveys spanning a hundred countries. The proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day fell to 18.1 percent in 2004, leaving an estimated 969 million people living in extreme poverty. The research shows that while poverty as a share of total population has been declining along both the \$1- and \$2-a-day poverty lines, the actual headcount of poor people under \$2 a day has been on the rise through most of the period, with not much progress in reducing their numbers in the developing world outside of China, even under \$1 a day. Progress in reducing poverty is seen largely after the year 2000, with the number of extremely poor people dropping below a billion (from 1.25 billion in 1990). This research feeds into the World Bank's 2007 World Development Indicators, also featured in this issue.

Poverty papers

New research on what sustains peace in post-conflict countries

Countries recovering from conflict must receive well-planned assistance to promote economic growth and stable government that is capable of providing essential services, and to avoid slipping back into civil or external war. But an overwhelming 40 percent of these states do slide back into conflict within just ten years. To help countries escape this conflict trap, the development community needs to adjust assistance policies based on the latest research, as well as country-specific analysis. Highlights from a World Bank conflict research project undertaken with the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo and the Center for the Study of African Economies at Oxford (presented at an April 30-May 1 conference in Washington DC) include findings on where conflict is likely to occur, how to discourage the availability of small arms, and various steps that countries and donors need to take to establish the right macroeconomic agenda and build the foundation of lasting peace.

- Featured article: Summary of research findings
- Conference papers
- World Bank Conflict Research Website

China's Missing Girls – Son Preference or Hepatitis B Infections?

Public policies in China have tried to reduce the son preference that is widely believed to cause the country's overall skewed sex ratio. World Bank researcher Monica Das Gupta finds evidence that parents' preference for sons is indeed responsible for China's "missing girls", countering a recent study that supported the idea of Hepatitis B infections having much to do with the female deficit. Had that theory been true, policy might well have shifted toward building more immunization programs. Das Gupta's evidence is drawn from both demographic and medical data, neither of which supports the Hepatitis B hypothesis. Her findings show that governments in Asia have been right to focus their policies on changing the cultural roots of son preference.

Research brief

Research on young democracies, and more, in new issue of the Research Digest

In a new article in this quarter's issue of the Research Digest, Philip Keefer shows that in poor democracies, measures of governance, schooling, infrastructure, government spending as a fraction of national income, and the business climate are generally about the same as or worse than those in poor non-democracies. This finding is inconsistent with the common assumption that competitive elections should make politicians notably more responsive to the concerns of the general public. Keefer also presents new evidence showing that countries with fewer continuous years of competitive elections are more reluctant to provide public goods (education, access to information, high-quality bureaucracies, the rule of law), more enthusiastic about private goods (jobs in the public sector, pork barrel infrastructure), and less restrained in the exercise of rent seeking and corruption. The findings of this research point to the importance of reforms that increase political credibility—policies to increase publicly available information about policy outcomes, and to relax government controls on information.

Research Digest (new issue)

Global Monitoring Report 2007: Confronting the Challenges of Gender Equality & Fragile States

Released mid-April during the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings, the 2007 Global Monitoring Report on

the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) assesses the contributions of poor and rich nations and international financial institutions toward meeting universally agreed development commitments. While progress on the first goal of halving poverty is on track everywhere except in Sub-Saharan Africa, efforts to attain goals related to child mortality, disease reduction, and environmental sustainability are falling short, according to the report. Fourth in an annual series, this year's report highlights two key thematic areas—gender equality and empowerment of women (the third MDG) and the special problems of fragile states, where extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated—where attention will need to be focused to meet critical development goals by 2015. The report also noted little or no increase in official aid to developing countries in 2006.

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World Development Indicators 2007

As in previous years, World Development Indicators 2007 provides a detailed picture of the world through data. It includes information on health expenditures, transport and other infrastructure services, the quality of public sector management, internet access, access to improved water sources, and carbon dioxide emissions. This year's report also includes new data on the performance of governments—governance indicators that assess the strengths and weaknesses of public institutions. The report lists the most recent Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) data for the 76 countries eligible to receive grants or credits from the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's funding arm for the poorest countries. CPIA evaluations are carried out by the World Bank annually as a basis for allocating concessional resources. CPIA indicators measure the extent to which a country's policy and institutional framework supports sustainable growth and poverty reduction and, consequently, the effective use of development assistance.

[Indicators](#)

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New Policy Research Working Papers

These papers, and all older papers, are also available using the Document Search on the Bank's Development Economics Research website and on the Social Sciences Research Network.

[4181. Financial services and trade agreements in Latin America and the Caribbean: An overview.](#) (Constantinos Stephanou, Marilyne Pereira Goncalves)

[4182. The welfare effects of a large depreciation : the case of Egypt, 2000-05.](#) (Aart Kraay)

[4183. Youth unemployment, labor market transitions, and scarring : evidence from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2001-04.](#) (Erwin R. Tiongson, Jean Fares)

[4184. Stock market development under globalization: whither the gains from reforms?](#) (Sergio L. Schmukler, Juan Carlos Gozzi, Augusto de la Torre)

[4185. Insurgency and credible commitment in autocracies and democracies.](#) (Philip Keefer)

[4186. A kleptocrat's survival guide : autocratic longevity in the face of civil conflict.](#) (Gary Milante)

[4187. Post-conflict aid, real exchange rate adjustment, and catch-up growth.](#) (Klaus Schmidt-Hebbel, Linda Kaltani, Ibrahim A. Elbadawi)

[4188. Substitutability and protectionism : Latin America's trade policy and imports from China and India.](#) (Gerald Willmann, Peri Silva, Marcelo Olarreaga, Giovanni Facchini)

[4189. Youth well-being in Brazil : an index for cross-regional comparisons.](#) (Joana Severo Leon, Vicente Cassepp Borges, Silvia Koller, Wendy Cunningham, Debora Dell'Aglio)

[4190. The aftermath of civil war.](#) (Marta Reynal-Querol, Norman V. Loayza, Siyan Chen)

[4191. Post-conflict justice and sustainable peace.](#) (Scott Gates, Helga Malmin Binningsbo, Tove Grete Lie)

[4192. Ethnic polarization and the duration of civil wars.](#) (Marta Reynal-Querol, Jose G. Montalvo)

[4193. Horizontal inequalities, political environment, and civil conflict : evidence from 55 developing countries, 1986-2003.](#) (Gudrun Ostby)

[4194. Oil and the propensity to armed struggle in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.](#) (Aderoju Oyefusi)

[4195. Using the global positioning system in household surveys for better economics and better policy.](#) (David McKenzie, John Gibson)

[4196. Political leadership, conflict, and the prospects for constitutional peace.](#) (Colin Jennings)

[4197. Current and forthcoming issues in the South African electricity sector.](#) (Luiz Maurer, Zeljko Bogetic, Ioannis N. Kessides)

[4198. The pricing dynamics of utilities with underdeveloped networks.](#) (Ioannis N. Kessides, Omar O. Chisari)

[4199. New evidence on the urbanization of global poverty.](#) (Prem Sangraula, Shaohua Chen, Martin Ravallion)

[4200. Price structure and network externalities in the telecommunications industry : evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa.](#) (Atsushi Iimi)

[4201. Infrastructure and trade preferences for the livestock sector : empirical evidence from the beef](#)

[industry in Africa](#). (Atsushi Iimi)

[4202. Weaponomics : the global market for assault rifles](#). (Phillip Killicoat)

[4203. Latin Americans of Japanese origin \(Nikkeijin\) working in Japan : a survey](#). (Junichi Goto)

[4204. Formal finance and trade credit during China's transition](#). (Tian Zhu, Lixin Colin Xu, Robert Cull)

[4205. Local elections and consumption insurance : evidence from Chinese villages](#). (Yang Yao, Lixin Colin Xu, Li Gan)

[4206. Does "good government" draw foreign capital ? Explaining China's exceptional foreign direct investment inflow](#). (Bernard Yeung, Colin Xu Lixin, Randall Morck, Joseph P. H. Fan)

[4207. Short-term and long-term effects of United Nations peace operations](#). (Nicholas Sambanis)

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[4211. Absolute poverty measures for the developing world, 1981-2004](#). (Martin Ravallion, Shaohua Chen)

[4212. Local conflict and development projects in Indonesia : part of the problem or part of a solution?](#) (Michael Woolcock, Rachael Diprose, Patrick Barron)

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[4219. Government expenditures on education, health, and infrastructure : a naive look at levels, outcomes, and efficiency](#). (Lourdes Trujillo, Marianela Gonzalez, Antonio Estache)

[4220. Evaluating the trade effect of developing regional trade agreements : a semi-parametric approach](#). (Souleymane Coulibaly)



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