



Resource Management



Global inequalities in the supply and consumption of resources

read

quiz



The Big Picture



Overview

The consumption of resources across the world varies significantly. High-income countries (HICs) typically consume more than low-income countries (LICs). The main challenge is not having enough resources, but the existing resources are unevenly distributed. As a LIC develops, so too does its demand for resources. This growth in demand, along with population growth, leads to a shortage of resources.



Food Inequalities

In many regions of Europe, Asia, and both North and South America, favourable climate, fertile soil, and advanced technology contribute to a surplus of food production, allowing the majority of the population to fulfil their daily dietary needs. On the other hand, in Africa, the harsh physical environment, coupled with low technology and political turmoil, result in a less dependable food production system. This leads to widespread undernourishment, as many individuals do not have access to sufficient food, and undernutrition, meaning a lack of a balanced diet and essential nutrients.



Water

The unequal distribution of freshwater around the world is largely due to varying climates. Areas such as Africa and some parts of the Middle East are particularly susceptible to water scarcity and droughts, leading to a disproportionate amount of time and effort spent on procuring water. This can have a substantial impact on both economic growth and overall social well-being.



Energy

The distribution of energy resources, particularly fossil fuel reserves, is highly unequal. The presence of coal in Europe played a major role in supporting early economic growth and enhancing social well-being. While renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and water are more evenly distributed in theory, the high cost of development has made it difficult for many low-income nations to take advantage of these resources.



Summary

The global trade of food, water, and energy helps to balance supply and demand. However, this mainly involves HICs that are able to afford imports. In contrast, many LICs particularly those in Africa, have not seen significant benefits from the redistribution of resources.



UK Resources

The UK is privileged to possess a resource surplus, which has been a major contributor to its early and sustained economic development and relatively high standard of living for its citizens.

Food: The UK enjoys a temperate climate, with ample rainfall and moderate temperatures. Thanks to fertile soil, mild topography, and advanced technologies, the UK is one of the most efficient food producers in the world.

Water: Although there is an imbalance of supply and demand within the UK (with a surplus in the north and west and a deficit in the south and east), water availability is rarely a concern.

Energy: The UK possesses substantial reserves of fossil fuels (previously coal and now oil and gas), operates several nuclear power plants (utilising imported uranium), and holds potential for various forms of renewable energy including wind, solar, and hydroelectric power.