**Reasons why some countries in the world are poor.**

* Geography. Land-locked countries are at a disadvantage economically, as are islands (especially when they are isolated). Deserts, mountains, tundra, and sometimes rainforests (or jungles) are often negative factors. Plains and fertile land are positive, as are navigable rivers and bays and harbors that can be used as ports. Harsh weather is a negative factor. Proximity to or a border with a wealthy country is better than proximity to a poor country. The same as related to whether one’s neighbors are at war of peace. In Mexico, the states located on the northern border (US) are wealthier than the states on the southern border (Guatemala, Belize). Turkey and Jordan have to deal with Syrian refugees and political problems much more than other countries that are more distant. Large countries are generally more economically viable than small countries. Cities in the ‘rust belt’ of the US have seen a decline due to their climates as manufacturers, homeowners, retirees, and others have sought more benign climates and lower energy costs.
* Resources are important. Some of the richest countries in the world have large oil reserves, for instance. A recent study shows that Mexican states with oil have a higher standard of living than Mexican states without oil. North Dakota’s economy has boomed since the recent discovery of oil. There are many other resources—gold, gas, coal, fish, iron ore, diamonds, beaches, forests—oil is just an example. Resources are closely related to geography.
* History. Colonialism was generally bad for the colonies and good for the colonizer. It has been a long struggle to overcome the exploititive nature of the relationship, including low investment in education and industry. One of the cultural legacies from colonial Spain that Latin American have had a hard time overcoming is corruption in government; racism is another. In Africa, tribalism has played a factor in keeping countries poor—this is partially due to the way colonial powers drew the borders of these countries. Wars are harmful in many ways—the more recently a country has suffered through war, the more difficult it is to build its economy. Some religions (Christianity in general, Protestastism more specifically), promote economic growth more than others.
* Government & politics. For the most part, countries that have capitalist economic policies and democratic governments do a better job at developing their economies than countries that do not. North & South Korea are good examples of countries that have made important decisions involving government and politics with greatly varying economic results; by almost any other measure, they are very similar (since 1945).