Poverty is not just a financial state. Being poor affects life in many ways. The human poverty index uses indicators that capture non-financial elements of poverty, such as life expectancy, adult literacy, water quality, and children that are underweight. The 30 territories of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development use a different index which includes income and long-term unemployment; and not water quality or underweight children. This implies that the poor in richer territories are materially better off.

The highest human poverty index scores are in Central Africa, the lowest are in Japan.

Territory size shows the proportion of the world population living in poverty living there (calculated by multiplying population by one of two poverty indices).

“My field experience of the complexity and variety of country situations made me chary of stylised generalisations about ‘the third world’.”

Angus Maddison, 2002