

**SIS-649.001 Environment and Development (Spring 2014):
COUNTRY-SPECIFIC POLICY PAPER**

Summary of assignment

You are to particularize the general issues of environment and development covered in this class by becoming an expert on one Third World country (or region). Your task is to delve into the development-related "root causes" of the environmental problem in your country and then to suggest policy alternatives to resolve the problem. The paper is due at the start of class #13.

Further Details

As this is a research paper that is to culminate in a policy proposal, it should include:

I. An introductory or overview section that includes a brief summary of the research topic and a brief summary of your proposed policy recommendation.

II. The body of paper should then be split into sections that fill in the details:

A. Based on your research, what is/are the major environmental problem(s) in your country?

B. What are the development-related or anthropogenic (human-made) root causes of the problem(s)? The possible root causes covered in this course -- population/scale, misallocation, poverty, inequality and other issues of political economy, agricultural sector policies, macro-economic policies or national development strategies and/or economic globalization -- are all candidates. You need not grapple with this whole list. As you undertake your research, the causes that you need to focus on for your particular country should become clearer. And, of course, as no one course can cover all topics, you may also discover other root causes. Remember, however, the term "root" is defined to mean analytical causes, not surface (or descriptive) environmental problems.

C. Your policy proposal(s): What can be done? What are your ideas for how to resolve the root causes of your country's environment/development problem? In laying down the research or analytical basis for your proposal, you should explain how and why you arrived at this proposal. How does it flow logically from your delineation of the root causes? You may also want to indicate how one would go about implementing it.

Here too there is no one "correct" level from which to delineate policy changes. Some of you may focus your policy change section at a micro level. Others may look for changes at your country's national level. Still others may look to the international (or international organization) level. Some of you may be very pragmatic when it comes to policy proposals. Others may be visionaries.

III. A conclusion that wraps things up. (For some of you, this may be your policy section.)

This is not an easy paper topic in terms of research or analysis. (How boring it would be to have an easy research topic for a course such as this!) You will undoubtedly have moments of frustration as you research. Therefore, in addition to the main topics listed above, your paper

must also answer the following: What is lacking in your paper? In other words, what are the limitations of your research or knowledge? What further information would have allowed you to delve even more deeply into these issues? What if any questions did you try unsuccessfully to answer in your research? What issues remain outstanding?

This paper is a key part of this course and it is expected that you will spend a significant amount of time throughout the semester working on it. This is not a course where you can wait until the last week to begin research. You should be prepared to discuss informally your country research and analysis throughout the semester as part of regular class discussions. In addition, of course, the bibliography and the paper itself should reveal the effort and time you invested in it.

Note that a well-researched paper should not be based solely on online sources. You are expected to also use library sources, including peer-reviewed academic journals.

Remember that in this class your paper also serves as a final examination. Therefore, it is expected that your paper will also demonstrate that your outside research and critical thinking are building on and integrating the foundation of knowledge you have gained through class readings and discussions. (To repeat: your paper must demonstrate that you have done class readings and attended class. You might want to keep this in mind as you do the assigned readings each week.)

Optional food for thought: In real life, a policy paper typically implies that you have examined various policy options and various obstacles that confront each. You might therefore want to reflect on the question of "choices" in your paper. The following questions may help:

- How do the different interests of the different sets of "actors" or institutions we have discussed in class (North, South, government, non-government) come into play? Feel free to use your "micro-politics" background to disaggregate groups within your country further.
- Does your policy prescription represent a consensus or compromise among these interests? Have you found an "our-common-future" solution to your problem (that is, a resolution that all are likely to support)?
- If not, why have you decided one or more particular sets of interests deserve priority? How will your proposal be implemented if it is not based on consensus?

Possible Collaboration

Collaborative efforts can be wonderful learning experiences and produce commendable results. Therefore this assignment could be turned into a collaborative effort between two of you. If you are interested in pursuing this route, you should discuss this with me as soon as possible to be certain the country choice is an appropriate one for collaboration. Note also that collaboration implies that both authors receive the same grade.

Format: Your paper should be in proper academic format, according to the following guidelines:

1.) Minimum length is **25 pages of text (maximum of 40)**, using 12-font Times New Roman. For collaborative papers, the minimum length is 40 pages (maximum of 60). These minimum lengths assume about 250-300 words of text per page with that "normal" 12 font and normal

margins [1-inch] per side. Double space; do not add extra spaces between paragraphs.

Number your pages with text starting on page 1; I will not accept papers without them. (For further tips on how to do this, see the “Important Formatting Steps...” document in BB’s Assignment folder.)

2.) Citations: You are to use numbered footnotes or endnotes (**not** parenthetical citations). A word of caution: It is **crucial** that you know citation rules concerning the differences among common knowledge, paraphrasing someone else's fact/opinion, and direct quotations. Be sure to go through the required book by Davis to review this (and, if you have any questions or still do not understand, see me or an expert at AU’s writing lab or among the library staff).

3.) Bibliography of works cited: In addition to your citations, you are to include a bibliography that includes only works used in your citations. Your bibliography should demonstrate that you have become an expert on your country by employing a combination of class readings and outside research. Remember that the correct bibliographic format is different from the correct citation format. For those of you who need more specifics on formats, I recommend Kate Turabian's A Manual for Writers... (sold in the Campus Store) or the World Development journal style-sheet (posted on Blackboard under “assignments”). Alternatively, you can refer to the relevant AU library links for other accepted formats.

4.) Outline: You must begin your paper with an outline or table of contents (1 page or less, with page numbers that mesh with the paper’s text) to demonstrate your paper's internal coherence. You must begin the outline with your paper’s thesis statement which presumably summarizes your root causes and your policy proposal. You must also split your paper into sections or subsections that match your outline.

5.) No need for fancy covers. Correct grammar and spelling are necessary.

Note: Read the above requirements carefully. Papers that do not fulfill these logistical/format and substantive requirements -- for example, without outlines, thesis statements, citations, work-cited bibliographies, library research, 25-pages of text etc. -- will be penalized grade-wise.

Steps to be Taken

- 1.) Submit the name of the country of your choice to me (in writing) at the start of class 4.
- 2.) In class, we will discuss the set-up for the two final classes devoted to paper presentations.
- 3.) **The final paper is due at the start of class #13.** (Note that this is **not** the last day of class; see syllabus for precise date.) With rare exceptions for serious personal or medical problems (with documentation), extensions will not be granted. Check your syllabus for penalties for late papers. (Important warning for our computer age: Be prepared for viruses and technological failures. Constantly back-up your files and in more than one location – really!)
- 4.) A final addendum to your paper may be due on the last day of class or during the exam period. This will be explained further in class.
- 5.) Do not pass in your only copy of the paper. Keep an electronic copy for yourself -- just in case something happens to my copy.

Ten Research Hints

Note that many of the sources mentioned below are available on-line.

- 1.) On Blackboard for this course (under “Assignments”), you will find a document providing advice on online research tools helpful for this course.
- 2.) Look at the material I have put on reserve and on Blackboard for this class and for SIS-650. Explore the library’s reference section where (among other sources) you will find current and past editions of WRI’s *World Resources*. These, like WRI’s website, are filled with country-specific environmental data.
- 3.) You may want to look at what the country-specific national reports written for UNCED, Rio-plus-Five, and subsequent such meetings, such as Bali and Copenhagen etc., entailed.
- 4.) Of special note is The Journal of Peasant Studies. Many articles in this journal are written by interdisciplinary environment/development scholars and practitioners from the South. (You may also want to flip through this journal for help in choosing your country.)
- 5.) Some environmental organizations, such as the World Wildlife Fund and the World Resources Institute, have in-house libraries. They do not always encourage outsider use of the facilities, so be sure to call in advance and to be very persuasive. Using your "professional" identity (if you have one) rather than your student status may help.
- 6.) On the development situation and various indicators, many of you go to the World Bank’s World Development Report. But do not confine yourself to this; there are other great sources. Look at the annual UNDP Human Development Report (and/or other development indices). For much potentially useful information, see the Social Watch website and annual report. Again, see the “research tips” document for this class.
- 7.) Interviews may prove to be wonderful sources for your paper. Some possibilities: country experts who work at the many environmental organizations headquartered in Washington (or around the world), country desk officers at AID, Treasury, the World Bank, etc. Interview relevant Humphrey Fellows at WCL. Find classmates or colleagues with useful contacts and useful information. Make new friends. Network. Be creative and energetic, but also be pragmatic and call it quits when someone clearly does not want to respond to multiple inquiries by you.
- 8.) Talk to your colleagues in this class. Share research ideas and sources.
- 9.) See me for ideas. Depending on your country and the amount of effort you have put into initial research, I may have some further hints.
- 10.) Have fun!