

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS 322  
Poverty and Development  
Introduction to Group Projects

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Office: Tu/Th 1:15- 2:15

*Third draft*

*Memorize this document!*

### **Group projects**

Each student will form part of a three or four person team that will research the development problems and prospects of a poor country. Within the first week or two, groups will form and choose a nation to research. Each group will make two major presentations, but they will also report to the seminar on a daily basis concerning how the concepts and theories discussed in class relate to their country.

In late March, each team will present in both written and oral form a background report that contains a basic profile of the nation in question, with emphasis on an identification of the country's development problems and potential. They may also present their first cut at a development plan to solve those problems and/or reach that potential. On the basis of their continued research and the response to their initial plan, at the end of the semester they will construct a more formal final report that presents a proposal to solve the identified problems. That proposal may be either a policy recommendation (designed for a national government or international institution) or a project initiative (for an aid agency, an NGO, or a business). It will be presented, in both written and oral form, in a role-playing exercise to enforce the realism of the proposal.

The group project has two purposes. First, it will provide the motivation to tie together the disparate strands of development theory with practical problems, enhancing the appreciation of both. Second, it will provide some experience in researching and presenting the kinds of briefings, reports, and informal meetings with teams which are typical of work in this area.

### **Team reports in brief**

1. Background report on country. What goals will the team try to accomplish with their proposal? What are the most important and most urgent problems? That is, how is your country doing in promoting development and alleviating poverty? What are the most promising general approaches to solve them?

2. Final report:

**BACKGROUND.** A revised and focused version of the background report becomes the introduction to the final proposal. It is likely that this material will be best presented in terms of key themes that will determine whether development succeeds.

**PROPOSAL.** The body of the report is a specific proposal that ties together perceived needs, goals, and strategies with available resources and capabilities and the interests of the organization to which the proposal is made.

Notes on methods:

1. Both reports should utilize the full range of research and presentation skills -- from thorough searching to dramatic presentation -- within the context of a thoughtful exposition of themes concerning those aspects of development relevant to the parties concerned.
2. Both should demonstrate familiarity with and application of the material in the course. For example, your description of your nation's development performance must include a discussion of the meaning of development and your analysis of its cause must include the elements stressed by development theory.
3. All assessments (especially statistical) should provide a comparative perspective. That is, report how your nation currently compares with similar nations and/or its past or future.

**Background report in detail**

GOALS: What goals will the team try to accomplish with their proposal? (What criteria will they use in choosing a proposal? What criteria is appropriate for evaluating its success?)

PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

- (1) • What is the recent record of development performance? (How does that compare with: similar nations, past periods, model nations, potential?) Be sure that this discussion reflects the full range of meanings of "development".
- (2) • How do you account for the nation's recent performance? Be sure that this discussion reflects the full range of theories of development.
- (3) • Given the current status of the country, recent performance changes (i.e. trends), and predictable future conditions, what is the likely course of development absent major policy changes? What are the main exogenous variables likely to influence that course? Be sure that this discussion reflects the full range of theories of development.
- (4) • In the present and foreseeable future, what are the major development problems in the country?
- (5) • What is the development potential of the country? Be sure that this discussion reflects the requisites of development derived from a full range of theories. What is the structure of the economy? What resources are available to cope with these problems?

CONSTRAINTS:

- What is the social and political structure of the nation and the state? How has it arisen?
- What major constraints affect development planning? What are the most powerful groups and forces that would be affected by changes in development plans?
- What relationship exists between the planning unit and the organization to which the proposal is directed? What constraints affect the specific proposal?

ROUGH-CUT PROPOSAL: What proposal(s) are you considering? (In order to get a helpful response, the more concrete the proposal, the better the feed-back)

### Schedule of assignments and dates

The intermediate assignments have been designed to build up to the final report. Many of the assignments are early drafts or building blocks for later ones, so that teams should always be looking ahead, completing each assignment in a way that will facilitate later ones. If you work smart, you won't have to work so hard.

On the left side of the table below are the components/sections/elements of the background paper discussed above. On the right side, are the team assignments that represent the early drafts on which that paper will be based. Note the interaction between the Background Paper and the intermediate assignments. Note also the interaction between the readings, lectures and discussions in the course and these assignments.

Components of background report	Class sessions and intermediate assignments.
Basic geography in all its dimensions will inform the report, but will not constitute an identifiable section of it.	Th January 24 <i>Team Assignment</i> : Learn the <b>basic geography</b> of your country. The posting is less important than acquiring a basic familiarity with your country and establishing good team habits.
Part 1. GOALS. What goals will the team try to accomplish with their proposal? (What criteria will be used in choosing a proposal and evaluating its success?)	Tu January 29 The <b>meaning of development</b> . <i>Paper 1</i> : What do we mean by "development"? To describe a nation's level of development, what statistical data will we need to gather?
Part 2. PROBLEMS & OPPORTUNITIES	DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION
(1) What is the recent record of development performance? (How does that compare with: similar nations, past periods, model nations, potential?) <i>Be sure that this discussion reflects the full range of meanings of "development"</i> .	Tu February 5 <i>Paper 2</i> : How developed is our country? (Static analysis of its current condition) Tu February 12 <i>Paper 3</i> : How is our country doing? (Similar to Paper 2, but with an emphasis on recent change and the likely future. See (2) and (3) below.) It should be informed by an understanding of <i>why</i> you would want to assess how it is doing. Use charts, graphs, and statistics.
Theories of Development/Underdevelopment	DEVELOPMENT EXPLANATION
Each theory of development offers a different list of requisites of development and, hence, hints at a different assessment of the development potential of each nation. Each theory of underdevelopment offers a different list of development impediments and, hence, hints at a different explanation for the recent development performance of each nation.	
(2) How do you account for the nation's recent performance? <i>Be sure that this discussion reflects the full range of theories of development.</i>	It will not be possible for you to do a definitive version of this component of the Background Paper until you have done more reading in development theory, but you should be alert to the commentaries of others. <i>Beware premature conclusions!</i>
(3) Given current status and recent trends, what is the likely future absent major policy changes? What are the main exogenous variables likely to influence that course?	Tu February 19 <i>Second draft of Paper 3</i> (optional), both to improve the previous draft and to incorporate the more extensive discussion required by components (2-4) of the Background Report. [See "Assessing Development Potential" with emphasis on historical extrapolation]
(4) In the present and foreseeable future, what are the major development problems in the country?	Previous papers should point the way. For example, on which of the dimensions of development does the nation do well/poorly? Why? But a definitive judgement must rest on one or more development theories.

<p>(5) What is the development potential of the country? <i>Be sure that this discussion reflects the requisites of development derived from a full range of theories.</i> What is the structure of the economy? What resources are available to cope with the major development problems?</p>	<p>February 12-March 11 Class discussions of the roots of assessments of national developmental potentials in alternative theories of development. BB assignments during this period:          What are the requisites of development from the standpoint of the radical school? the planning school?          Are your supplies of labor adequate? Land and water?          Does your country have a serious One gap? Two gap? Three gap?          March 18 Tu <i>Paper 4</i> (First draft recommended by 2/28) What are the major development problems in your country? What is the development potential of your country. <i>It will incorporate papers #1-3.</i> If you do this right, you will have completed *4* and *5* under “Goals and Opportunities.”</p>
<p>Part 3.CONSTRAINTS.</p>	<p>March 13 Constraints on the Choice of Development Strategy <i>Team BB assignment:</i> Identify what actors or forces could prevent the adoption or success of a given development policy.</p>
<p>Part 4. STRATEGIES AND ROUGH-CUT PROPOSAL</p>	
<p>March 27-April 1 Th/Tu <b>Background reports due: the development experience, problems and prospects of nations.</b>          Class presentations</p>	

**April 28 Final Project Due Date**

**Team assignments: TBA**

## **Role playing scenarios**

Each group will choose the role they will play in presenting their final report. This will enable them to see the importance of taking into account the whole range of development problems seen in the context of the politics of development. Some examples of the roles which may be selected, but other possibilities may be suggested.....

1. You are a team of IPE specialists on the faculty of the major university in a chosen Third World country. You will present to the chief executive of the country your proposal for the development plan of the country during the executive's term of office. The development plan must reflect your understanding of development theory, the particular problems of the country, the nation's capabilities for dealing with them, and the political problems associated with both selling this development plan to the government and implementing the plan if accepted.
2. You are a team of development specialists working for the U.S. Agency for International Development. You will present to the agency director your proposal for a development project in a country of your choosing, to be incorporated into the agency's budget request to Congress. The project plan must reflect your understanding of development theory, the particular problems of the country, the nation's capabilities for dealing with them, and the political problems associated with selling this plan to AID and Congress.
3. You are a team of development specialists working for a Third World government. You will present to a representative of an international funding agency (e.g. World Bank, IMF, regional development bank) your proposal for the development plan of the country during the next five years, to be financed by a loan from the agency. The development plan must reflect your understanding of development theory, the particular problems of the country, the nation's capabilities for dealing with them, and the orientation of the funding agency.
4. You are a team of development specialists working for a Third World government. You will present to a representative of a potential investor (probably a multi-national corporation) your case for locating their investment in your country. The plan must reflect your understanding of development theory, the particular problems of the country, the corporation's potential contribution to the nation's development, and the interests of the corporation itself.
5. You are a team of development specialists that have formed a start-up NGO. You will present to a representative of a private foundation (a potential donor) your plan to create a model development project to be funded by the foundation. The plan must reflect your understanding of development theory, the interests of the foundation, and the ability of the country to serve as a model for this type of development.