

Development case study
POLI 140
Winter 2020

In this assignment, you will become an expert on the development experience of a less developed country. Specifically, you will describe the history of economic growth in that country, analyze the extent to which the population has benefited from that growth, and provide an explanation for the pattern of development that you observe. The goal of the assignment is to invite you both to develop expertise about a country that interests you, and to deepen your understanding of the process of development by observing how it applies to a particular country in the real world.

To facilitate the project, the assignment is broken up into a series of steps, as follows:

Part	Assignment	Due date
1	Country selection	January 16
2	Development scorecard	TBD
3	Explanatory essay	February 18
4	Group presentation	March 5

Broadly speaking, these steps invite you to describe (part 2), explain (part 3), and communicate (part 4) how economic development has affected the citizens of a less developed country.

I divide the assignment into building blocks for three reasons. First, the sequential design provides multiple opportunities for feedback and revision, thereby encouraging progress over the course of the quarter. Second, each step of the assignment builds on the previous steps, allowing for increasing returns to your investment of time. (In other words, as you become more familiar with your chosen country, I hope that your research will become more rewarding and productive.) Third, the assignment is spread throughout the quarter, which may provide extra flexibility as you manage competing demands on your time.

The next page provides a brief description of each step of the assignment.

Part 1: Country selection

In the second week of the quarter, you will choose a “less developed” country that will be the focus of your case study. For the purposes of this assignment, “less developed” can be defined as broadly as possible to include any country outside of Western Europe, North America, and Australia/New Zealand. You may submit your country selection via Camino, by providing the name of a country and a brief explanation for your choice.

Part 2: Development scorecard

In this assignment, you will complete an analysis of the state of economic development in your chosen country, encompassing economic growth, economic development, economic inequality, and economic activity. There are two parts. In the first part, you will respond to a series of questions that will guide you through the four topics listed above. Most of the questions can be answered using data from sources such as the World Bank, the Varieties of Democracy Project, and the CIA World Factbook (all linked via Camino). In the second part, you will write a 300 word overview of the key findings of your research.

Part 3: Explanatory essay

In this essay, you will answer the general question – why is your chosen country rich, poor or in-between? More specifically, you should address this essay to explaining the state of economic development in your country as described in the previous assignment. I suggest that you open the essay with the overview of development that you wrote in Part 2 and then transition to a consideration of possible explanations. The essay should be 1500 – 2000 words in length and rely on serious sources such as scholarly articles, newspaper stories, and official reports.

Part 4: Group presentation

Finally, you will share your expertise with the class, in groups. I will create groups of 3-4 students based on your country selections. As a group of experts, you will create and present a visual summary of your collective findings from Parts 2 and 3, including both the state of development in your country (or group of countries, if necessary) and the primary explanation or explanations that your group supports. I am open to presentations using various media, including posters, slides, infographics and possibly videos, as long as your presentation is succinct. You should be able to present your summary in 5-10 minutes.