

EXAMPLE I: POLITICAL SCIENCE

PSC 302-Political Science Research Methodology and Design

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Homework Assignment 2:

Research Problem, Question and Hypotheses for Final Research Design Project

Due Date: March 8, 2015. Assignment must be typewritten and submitted via Webcampus.

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment, like all assignments in this course, is to help you successfully complete your Final Research Design (which is a thorough plan for conducting research.)

- **Knowledge:** This assignment will provide you with knowledge on how to develop a research purpose statement, empirically driven research question(s) and testable research hypotheses. You will also be able to identify library databases to obtain peer reviewed research on your topic and synthesize this information to compose a concise but well-developed introduction to your final research design topic.
- **Skills:** You will practice the following skills which are essential to your development as a political science student, including: a) collecting and evaluating the necessary information from primary and secondary sources; b) summarizing the most relevant information for your topic; c) composing a well-organized, clear, and thorough introduction to your topic of interest

Task: To complete the assignment you will do the following:

In In 300-500 words submit a political science thesis statement, a research problem, empirically driven research question(s), and **at least four** testable research hypotheses.

Important definitions and an example are contained in the attached GUIDELINES document. Assignment format is 12 pt. Times New Roman, Double Spaced and 1 inch Standard Margins.



GUIDELINES

Structure and Important Definitions

Title of Project

Thesis Statement-This is an introduction to your project. It provides some background information regarding your topic and at the end of it you tell me the purpose of your project study.

Research Problem/Study Purpose-This is where you provide a statement of the problem you're addressing in your study. It is generally a two to three sentence version of the final sentence of your thesis statement. You are just restating it here as well but it is a little bit more fleshed out here.

Research Questions-The easiest way to present research questions is to take your research problems and turn them into questions. For example:

- Research Problem-This study examines the relationship between state failure and terrorism
- Research Question-What is the relationship between state failure and terrorism?

Research Hypotheses-These are testable predictive statements of what you hope to find if you were to do this research (I will explain more about the difference between a research design and a research paper/project as the semester progresses). What I mean by testable is it is a statement that indicates you can prove or disprove it or not and again what I mean by predictive is that it tells me what you hope to find or expect to find if you were to do this research. For example:

- The probability of terrorism increases when a state fails
- The probability of terrorism increases when a state completely collapses
- The probability of terrorism increases, but only marginally when a state declines

See an example on the next page.



GUIDELINES:

Example:

Climate Change and Conflict in Syria: Water Scarcity Wages War

Thesis Statement

The variability of precipitation in the Middle East, mismanagement of water resources, and a lack of efficient agricultural equipment in Syria have created a vulnerable period of drought in the largely agrarian state. Severe drought has caused widespread poverty and has forced population migration within the state, as rural farmers struggle to adapt to urban environments, often blurring previously upheld ethnic boundaries. The desperate nature of poverty and famine brought on by the drought has fueled complicated rifts between ethnic sects of the Syrian population, facilitating a civil war. Thus, the purpose of this study is to assess the impact environmental degradation has had on the propensity for conflict in the ecologically fragile nation of Syria.

Statement of Problem

Environmental degradation acts as a leading variable in both the cause of conflict and the facilitation of the continuation of conflict in the modern Syrian state.

Research Question

What is the relationship between environmental degradation and conflict in the modern state of Syria?

Research Hypotheses

H1: There is a positive relationship between environmental degradation and conflict in the modern state of Syria. As environmental degradation increases in severity, competition over scarce resources, and thus conflict, positively correlates.

H2: Regional conflicts within the state of Syria are predominantly based around scarce water resources.

H3: Environmental degradation facilitates famine in periods of conflict within the Syrian state. Populations negatively affected by conflict are further impacted by lack of water and food resources brought on by environmental degradation.

H4: Continued water scarcity will make Syria more susceptible to conflict. As the relationship between environmental degradation and conflict are positively correlated, Syria will be more susceptible to internal and external conflict competing over control of water resources in the future.

