
International Studies & AAE 374
Growth and Development of Nations in the Global Economy

Guide for Reaction Paper on

Oxfam’s “Finding the Moral Fiber”
&
Anderson and Valenzuela’s “The WTO’s Doha Cotton Initiative”

Due at the Beginning of Class on Wednesday, October 1, 2008

The two readings for this reaction paper focus on US cotton subsidies and their impacts on West Africa. The Anderson and Valenzuela piece is analytical and academically removed, using simulation models to predict the effect of subsidy reforms and other changes in West Africa. The Oxfam piece is more political, both in the sense that it talks about the politics of cotton subsidies and also because it is an unabashed advocacy piece, arguing for a particular policy changes. Among other things, the Oxfam piece talks about the inequality of power in the WTO system, something that Tina Rosenberg also discusses in her article that we read for the first reaction paper.

Please prepare a 2 page reaction paper on the two readings, addressing BOTH of the following two questions:

1. Should the US completely eliminate its cotton subsidies? In answering this question, make clear whether you are basing your argument on global well-being, well-being of the US, of some people within the US, the well-being of West African nations, or some other configuration of norms and interests. A good answer will use information from one or more of the papers to buttress your answer. Some of you may want to consider the GMO (genetically modified organism) twist offered by Anderson and Valenzuela who note that the benefits of US subsidy removals for West Africa will disappear if the region fails to adopt GMO cotton.
2. Do you think that the US will eliminate its cotton subsidies? That is, speculate on what you see to be the US domestic political economy of cotton subsidies as well as the international political economy of the WTO and trade regulation.

These are both massive questions, and obviously there is no single or correct answer. Do not try to consider everything—take a single perspective and develop it. The point of this assignment is to get you informed and thinking about this issue. We will devote Monday’s class to a discussion of this topic.