

Crafting Research Questions Class Participation Instruction 2

Complementary to the assigned readings of Hirschman and Chang this coming week, please read the article in September 11, 2005's New York Times, p. 14 of the front section, entitled, "Where poverty drove Zapatistas, the living is no easier," by James C. McKinley, Jr. Read this article after reading the Hirschman readings. Through the lens of Hirschman's discussion of "gloomy" perspectives, think about some simple research questions-methodologically neat-that this article evokes. To do this, you do not have to reject the article's overall gloomy report, which may well be accurate at an aggregate level.

In the same Sunday edition of the Times, look at the article on the front page of the Week-in-Review section about lessons learned for post-Hurricane-Katrina disaster relief from the refugee experience of donor agencies in Darfur, and other disaster-stricken poor countries. This article is but one example of the importance of reading and drawing from both the international and the U.S. domestic literature in helping you think about and develop your research topic-and, as we discussed in class, in bringing fresh perspectives to what you are seeing when you do the research and continue your reading. It is particularly important for domestic students to read the international literature, and for students with international topics to read the domestic literature. That is why the course includes both domestic and international research findings and cases.

In the same edition of the Times, finally, read the front-page long story entitled, "Breakdowns marked path from hurricane to anarchy." Save it and read it, later on, together with the readings assigned for the later session on inter-agency cooperation.

All three articles are examples of how you can run across clear research questions that arise from reading articles in the newspaper, listening to the news, in addition to your reading of the academic literature. It is good practice to get into this habit for developing your ability to formulate clear, simple, and important research questions.

If you are not able to buy the newspaper at such late notice, you can try accessing the articles at the [New York Times website](#). You have to register, but do not have to pay anything.