

Geopolitics Final Assignment 2: Sanitation & Economic Growth

Abstract

The immediate response to selecting 2 Sustainable Development Goals, would be governed by our emotions combined with the privileges of our lives. To write this essay through our position, perspective, and data available is going to shed light to these dire needs showcasing the urgency of achieving the SDGs in time by 2030, in fact, earlier, by the time you finish reading. This essay will firstly discuss SDG 6, clean water and sanitation, as not much needs to be conveyed in order to understand the basic necessity that humans need water to survive, our bodies are made up of 60% water. Do not mistake SGD 6 to be applicable solely, this essay shall also raise awareness that SDG 1, 2, 3, and 4, fall under the same category as the fundamental essence of human prosperity. Since we do not relate to such circumstances gratefully, SDG 8, Decent work and economic growth, will be the second topic that would be majorly aimed for the rest of the world, especially as we live in the age of information and technology.

SDG 6

In exploring Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), Clean Water and Sanitation, for achievement by 2030, it is evident that this choice is anchored in its foundational significance to human existence. For instance, there is enough research on how clean water directly influences the health, attendance, and overall well-being of school-going children. SDG 6 has a checklist of targets, including universal access to safe drinking water (Target 6.1) and proper sanitation for all (Target 6.2) which acts as a catalyst for poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, as well as educational growth/progression.

It is absolutely crucial to spotlight platforms like [waterfootprint.org](https://www.waterfootprint.org) here as such initiatives become vital allies in spreading the word about water consumption patterns and environmental impact, which directly aligns with SDG 6's core mission of ensuring water and sanitation availability for all. Waterfootprint.org significantly chips into this by giving a deep dive into global water footprints, which breaks down the total volume of freshwater used directly and indirectly in producing goods and services. This grasp on water footprints perfectly ties into SDG 6's targets of boosting water efficiency, cutting down on pollution, and making sure everyone gets fair access to water resources. This focus on data-driven decision-making and empowering stakeholders within this initiative stands as a positive force in our collective push to make SDG 6 a reality whereby we can actually secure a future where water resources are protected and accessible to each and every individual, at least by 2030.

SDG 8

SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth, is like the unsung hero of global development, quietly tying together a bunch of crucial goals. It's not just about economics; it's the reason for livelihood that syncs up with kicking poverty's butt (SDG 1), ensuring everyone's got enough to eat (SDG 2), keeping us healthy (SDG 3), and nurturing ourselves with quality education (SDG 4). Moreover, GDP is the go-to metric for economic bragging rights but SDG 8 asks us to rethink that game. It says, "Sure, economic growth is great, but let's not forget about the quality of work behind it." It basically emphasises the importance of decent jobs, fair wages, and overall well-being as integral components of sustainable economic growth. And then there's the million-dollar question: degrowth. Can we pull off this whole "shrinking the economy" idea without causing chaos? This SDG 8 invites us to consider all sorts of alternative paths. While it still champions growth, it also acknowledges the need for a thoughtful approach, balancing economic progress with environmental sustainability and social equity.

The beauty of SDG 8 lies in its role as the link in connecting various SDGs. It's not just a standalone goal; it's the glue that makes the others more relatable. When we talk about decent work and economic growth, it's not just abstract economics. It's about jobs that matter, fair compensation, and an economy that respects people and the planet. Picking SDG 8 to achieve by 2030 isn't just about economic metrics; it's about laying the groundwork for a world where growth means progress for everyone.

Global South & North

In hindsight, down in places like India and Africa, where development is on the rise, hitting SDG 6 is a bit like walking through a tricky maze. Economic growth often means more industries, more people in cities, and, naturally, more water use. But we cannot compromise on clean water and sanitation. Here's where a collective effort can come into fruition. The Global North, having been regarded to have faced these challenges, should be able to share their research on their challenges and successes ranging from smart water tech to wastewater solutions. It is all about finding solutions that work locally and respecting the unique journey of each region.

Referring back to "Policy tools and instruments for a New Fair Deal for climate, trade and development", SDG 8 is like saying, "Alright, we want to grow, but let's do it right." The Global South wants a piece of the economic pie without wrecking the planet. It's about green technologies, fair wages, and saying no to the old-school 'take, make, dispose' model. The Global North, being the experienced elder sibling, can step in with investments, technical knowledge, and a little push toward circular economies, all while keeping in mind that simply criticising on the southern emissions is not going to result in anything but petty fights between these nations. The Global North cannot just drop solutions, because it is about sharing the

wisdom while letting the Global South take the lead. It's a team effort respecting, exchanging ideas, and ensuring that the journey towards clean water, fair work, and economic growth is a global success story.

Challenges: SDG 6 and geopolitics of food security

Delving in this mission for clean water (SDG 6), but then, entering the world of Zero Hunger (SDG 2), and basically it is like adding a whole geopolitical twist. Geopolitics, the global power play, starts interfering with our water goals, and why would it not, you can't choose between water and food. This is prone to international trade dramas, armed conflicts, and climate change throwing curveballs. These fights directly mess with any nations' water and sanitation plans. Competition for agricultural resources, which is often a consequence of geopolitical rivalry, echoes the challenges faced in achieving SDG 6. International trade, which is vital for food security, introduces vulnerabilities through politically motivated supply disruptions. Armed conflict, a driver of food insecurity, creates a ripple effect, leading to social unrest and violence. Which further creates disruptions with food and water access, stirring up even more problems. It's like understanding the behind-the-scenes stuff that affects our mission for clean water and sanitation. Because, in the end, it's not just about pipes and systems; it's about navigating the global chessboard to make sure everyone has a sip of clean water.

SDG 8 & Resilient Cities

Now, as we navigate the complex terrain of national culture and urban resilience, it's like peeling back the layers of a global story. With climate change, population surges, and globalisation throwing new challenges at cities, the need for urban resilience is more pressing than ever. The work of Madison Cilk at The University of Vermont gives more insight into the interesting link between national culture and the resilience plans cities are crafting. It's not just about concrete and policies; it's about the beliefs and attitudes that shape a nation's identity. 71 resilience plans from 27 countries analysed through the lens of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. In essence, it dissects the cultural DNA of these cities to understand how it influences their resilience game economically.

National culture doesn't always take centre stage, instead, a common thread emerges. Cities, irrespective of their cultural differences, are leaning towards inclusivity, future-oriented strategies, and prioritising quality of life over profits in their resilience efforts. It is like these cities are rewriting their fundamentals in line with sustainability, finding the common ground despite their diverse backgrounds. In reality one thing will lead to the other in order to reach economic growth within this aspect, be it better jobs and salaries pushing to reach the urban resilience goal. Finally, in the grand narrative, Cilk's work does in fact highlight the shared ethos which goes beyond cultural boundaries, painting a picture of cities gearing up for a resilient and inclusive future with the essential foundations and principles of SDG 8.

Conclusion

As the countdown to 2030 ticks, SDGs 6 and 8 aren't just numbers on paper; they're our survival manual. Imagine a world where water is a luxury, jobs are a rarity, and our economic engine runs on inequality. The horror? It's not fiction; it's the stark reality that we need to believe in if we don't turn these goals into our heartbeat, FAST. Especially, if we want to make a change, people will not bring this change unless it is not communicated vivaciously to almost scare them.

References

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