**Policy Brief about Marriage, Gender, or Youth in Africa**

Given the growing significance of Africa in U.S. foreign policy in terms of security (terrorism) and natural resources (oil), the U.S. is rapidly expanding its knowledge of African societies and its military aid to and presence in African countries. You have been hired as a consultant by the U.S. State Department to help it develop its policies on marriage, gender or youth in Africa. One of the reasons you have been hired as a consultant is because the State Department is interested in an expert who is not blinded by ethnocentrism or an American perspective on marriage, youth, and gender (note Helen Regis’s comment on ethnocentrism, p. 45), but discerns the situation as Africans do and can communicate that perspective to the State Department.

First, you want to present the State Department with accurate information about the situation on the ground among ordinary Africans. Then, you want to discuss the potential problems or points of social tension. Finally, you want to outline any steps the State Department could take to support particular practices or particular groups of people, keeping in mind Keim’s concerns about “help” and “development.”

Choose **one** of the topics to focus your policy brief on: marriage, gender, or youth.

**Organization of the Paper**

*Executive Summary*

This section outlines your main points and recommendations in less than 200 words (for the people who don’t have time to read the rest of the policy brief).

Note: even though this section comes first in the paper, write it last because it will be a summary of the following three sections.

The next three sections repeat and expand on the executive summary.

*Background Information*

In this section, you should make three to five major insights about what you see going on in terms of your issue (marriage, gender, or youth) from the readings and materials presented in class—*Fulbe Voices* (Domaayo in northern Cameroon), the film “Awa” (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso), *Aya* (Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire)*,* and *Hope is Cut* (urban Ethiopia). To be convincing to State Department officials, these statements should be backed up by specific examples with citations. Note similarities and variations across these contexts.

Note: be sure to concentrate your energy on the wording of your three to five major points, so that they are supported by your examples and represent what you think is going on. Specificity, accuracy, and nuance matter a lot here.

*Analysis of Problems or Points of Concern*

Is there a problem or point of concern? Is there the potential for social conflict or unrest related to the issue? Do some groups benefit from the current arrangements and others suffer?

*Recommendations for U.S. Foreign Policy*

Here, you want to summarize the points Keim raises about the problems with “help” and “intervention.” Then arguing against his points or using them to make a proposal, make an argument about whether or not the State Department should do something, and if it should, what it should do.

What might the State Department do? It tries to persuade government and elected officials to pass certain laws or enact certain policies. It also engages in media information campaigns (including social media campaigns) around certain issues (such as around smoking in this country). Sometimes, it also funds particular organizations (NGOs) or programs who are working on particular issues. You could make recommendations along these lines, or come up with other, innovative ideas.

It is fine to say that the State Department should do nothing, or continue to monitor the situation, but you should explain why you are making this recommendation.

*Bibliography*

Here, you should cite the resources you used to develop your argument. I do not expect you to draw on outside readings; but you should cite the books and films you used. You may use whatever citation format you are familiar with (Chicago, APA, or MLA), but be sure you are consistent in your citation format and that you cite different kinds of resources (e.g., books and films) correctly.

*Self-Reflection as a Writer*

Finally, you should write a short paragraph to me, your teacher, describing how you have used my comments on your reading response papers to improve your writing on the policy brief.

**Due: Wednesday, March 11th**