

***Selection Procedure***

We will select countries at the beginning of class on Friday, September 5. The order of selection will be determined by lottery. You should come to class on Friday prepared with a list of 3 to 5 countries (or more) that you would like to study for the semester; when it is your turn to select you may choose any country that has not already been chosen. You may wish to explore the availability of information for countries of interest prior to Friday's class.

Only students officially registered for the class (or for whom the instructor has signed an official add form) and who are present at 9am on September 5 will be allowed to participate in the country selection. Students who arrive late, miss class, or add the class later will be allowed to choose among remaining countries on a first-come, first-served basis.

***Suggested Choice Criteria***

The only restriction on country choice is that you may not choose the United States. However, in practice it will be very difficult to complete the analysis for countries for which the available data are limited or of poor quality. The countries that have been members of the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) for several decades are likely to have the best data. But you need to recognize that there will be anomalies such as issues of discontinuity (changes in how the variable is measured) in some variables for nearly every country.

The ideal country would have continuous annual and quarterly data for all (or most) macroeconomic variables from 1950 to about 2012. A conservative choice on the basis of data availability would be one of the advanced nations of Western Europe, Canada, Australia, or Japan. The absolute minimum sample length would be 20—25 years, which means that re-unified Germany and the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe would be difficult (but not quite impossible) choices.

You will want to choose a country about which enough has been written for you to learn about major events affecting its macroeconomy. Most countries that satisfy the minimal data-availability criterion will also have sufficient documentation to inform you about the basic macroeconomic history of the country, but it is worth verifying this.

Finally, a country that has experienced significant changes over time may provide interesting opportunities to study the effects of those changes. However, it may also make quantitative analysis more challenging. Countries that have experienced extensive structural change over

time (such as China) may require that the sample be truncated or analyzed in multiple segments, which limits the number of usable observations.

### ***Resources to Explore Countries***

There are many papers and books written about the major economies of the world. These can be found through Google Scholar or (a better source) the EconLit database (link available at <http://library.reed.edu/databases/#E>), which indexes scholarly books and articles in economics. Member countries of the OECD or the IMF (International Monetary Fund) are also covered by regular “surveys” by those organizations. For the OECD surveys, search “OECD survey country-name” from the Reed Library Web site. For IMF regional and country reports, visit <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/region.asp> and examine the Country Reports links (by year) on the left.

Macroeconomic data are published on a regular basis by the OECD, the IMF, and other international organizations, as well as national governments. The Reed Library subscribes to many of these datasets, and to a data aggregator called ProQuest (<http://datasets.proquest.com/>) that provides a uniform access format to data from many sources (including international organizations). The advantage of using data from international rather than national sources is that they are more likely to be measured in a way that is consistent with other countries.

Before deciding, you should explore the availability of data and historical information for the countries in which you are interested. If you are unsure about issues of information availability, you may consult with the instructor or with Reed’s data librarian Ryan Clement.

If you begin working on a country and decide within the first few weeks that you just cannot find the required information and data, you may change to another country that has not been selected, but you will have to catch up with all of the research tasks for your new country.