



Elizabeth Walsh

A native of Louisiana, Elizabeth Walsh spent her freshman year at Penn working to better understand the causes and challenges of urban poverty by volunteering at LIFT, a community resource center. After witnessing how policies and legislation affected the assistance programs she referred clients to through LIFT, she was encouraged to become more familiar with the policy process. During her sophomore and junior years, Elizabeth worked at the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger on issues of food insecurity in the region. In her first role as a student leader, she trained peers to assist in the completion of SNAP applications in city health centers; she then went on to become a policy intern, generating support for policies that addressed food insecurity. Simultaneously, while working as a policy intern she teamed up with the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania to evaluate its discharge system and ability to meet the needs of its food insecure patients. In her junior and senior years, she was also a member of Social Impact Consulting where she most recently worked with the Department of Health to create a sustainability plan for its Healthy Food Carts initiative. Elizabeth studied the post-apartheid policy process in Cape Town, South Africa during a semester abroad and then determined to engage in a capstone project on the country's domestic energy crisis in relation to its international commitment to climate change. Elizabeth graduates as a double major in International Relations and Political Science.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Is South Africa's Foreign Policy on Climate Change Inconsistent with Domestic Energy Policy? Did South Africa's Domestic Policy Shortcomings Affect its Ability to Host COP-17?

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Ana Viden, School of Arts and Sciences, International Relations Program

South African President Jacob Zuma supports multilateral work on climate change and has made ambitious statements to the international community on South Africa's commitment to reducing its own emissions. The country's post-apartheid neoliberal macroeconomic policies have prioritized growth and foreign direct investment over redistribution, doing everything possible to attract and sustain investments. South Africa's energy policies have selected big business and industry to receive huge subsidies for cheap power mainly from coal, making South Africa the world's 13th largest emitter of carbon. However, by hosting the Conference of Parties 17 (COP-17) in November 2011, South Africa continued in its effort to attract confidence from the international community in its ability to reduce emissions and serve as a leader among developing countries. Using Robert Putnam's Domestic Politics Framework, the capstone paper analyzes the constraints and interests at play both domestically and internationally that South Africa worked to balance before and during the conference. Despite divergent energy policy and climate change rhetoric, South Africa effectively hosted COP-17. Under South Africa's leadership, both developed and developing countries agreed to continue working toward legally binding emission reductions in the Durban Platform adopted at the conference.