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United Nations Development Programme

Berkeley Model United Nations

To the Delegates of the United Nations Development Programme,

Hello! My name is Benjy Malings, and I am honored to be serving as the head chair for the UNDP at BMUN 64. I will be joined this conference by my vice-chairs, Amanda Lee and Patty Midy. David McDonogh, who graduated in December, also assisted in the formulation of this topic synopsis.

The United Nations Development Programme is a global force for the coordination of resources and expertise in facing the myriad challenges of the developing world in the 21st century. Paramount to the success and long-term stability of these countries is a productive international relationship and a cooperation with forces beyond their traditional borders. Inherent in this assistance, however, is a tension between the right to conduct business as a sovereign state and the international obligation to respect human rights and uphold global standards of self-determination.

To that end, UNDP this year will be dealing with two issues which face head-on the conflict between human rights and national sovereignty. The first of these, the question of sustainable disaster relief, will require creative thinking toward programs that preserve the most amount of lives in times of great duress, while respecting and maintaining the local governmental forces on the ground. Too often, the international community offers a blank check for non-governmental forces to intervene, resulting in varying degrees of success with often little to no accountability. The second issue on the table this year for UNDP is that of long-term support of democratic institutions, specifically that of free and fair elections. UNDP plays a crucial role in providing technical and logistical support for elections, but more can be done to ensure that elections themselves are perceived as fair and as safe, and that democratic institutions are respected by citizens of those countries long after the actual elections are held.

Our goal for conference this weekend is to facilitate a debate that is lively and globally-minded, thinking of solutions that incorporate as much of the international community as possible and that avoid defaulting to the normative strength of traditionally powerful countries. The UNDP provides a platform for traditionally underrepresented countries to have a say in how the international community can best respond to their own pressing needs, and we intend to bring this spirit into debate this weekend.

Enjoy your researching, and we look forward to your position papers!

Yours,

Benjy Malings
Amanda Lee
Patty Midy

Table of Contents

Topic 1: Sovereignty, Accountability, Effectiveness + Disaster Relief

This topic intends to assess the current state of international disaster relief, with a critical eye toward issues like private/NGO org accountability, preservation of state sovereignty during int'l intervention, and determining effectiveness and long-term assurances in current practices.

Topic Background

Natural disasters in developing countries seem to be a never-ending news event that the world grapples with on a never-ending basis. Indeed, natural disasters so often strike developing countries that do not have the infrastructure to brace for large, catastrophic events. Many of these countries are also dependent on agriculture as a major part of the economy sector that is more vulnerable to the risks of weather-events. For most major natural disaster events, it is clear that growth is impacted, trade goes down vastly, and the most obvious metric- lives lost- always appears as the most crushing indicator of a disaster's true toll on a country. A natural disaster, when unprepared for, can have an absolutely devastating effect on a developing country (Strobl 2012).

The mechanisms for which these countries may respond to these events are also sorely lacking. While individual citizens have shown resilience and ability to prepare for natural disaster events, governments in these countries are, more often than not, simply strapped for the resources proper and necessary to make a full, meaningful intervention into ensuring a minimization of loss in lives and economic production. It is an an all too common torpe now to see citizens of remote areas most disaster-afflicted simply left to wait in anguish for any substantive form of aid, relief, and shelter.

Developing countries are often put into rather precarious situations. The extent to which they are able to better prepare citizens and infrastructure for incoming natural disaster events is often minimal, and the response time during the events themselves is woefully limited.

History of International Aid Organizations

In order to address and account for the deficiencies of individual government actions in responding adequately to natural disaster events, an array of internationally-created organizations have been established throughout the most recent centuries in order to set up infrastructure and resources to respond to disasters and events across the world.

Red Cross

Perhaps the most notable among these international organizations is the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Founded in 1919 in the wake of World War I, the international organization was proposed as an extension of the efforts of the American Red Cross, which had been in existence since several decades prior. The initial intent of this organization was to provide relief for citizens placed in situations of distress after times of war. Initially consisting of the cooperation between Britain, Italy, France, Japan, and the United States, the IFRC has since expanded to comprise of over 150 participating nations. The IFRC has grown to consist of one of the world's primary independent force in addressing humanitarian issues of all varieties, including immediate relief for natural disasters.

The IFRC's most prominent collaborator, the International Committee of the Red Cross, is a distinct, private entity (dating back to even before the formation of the IFRC) that has the mandate of international law to provide relief to victims of wartime disasters. The ICRC often engages in disaster relief as well. The IFRC claims to work on a bottom-up level in collaboration with local entities when responding to disasters. The IFRC claims primacy for the local organizations in the representative countries in times of disaster, only bringing in international collaborative forces when requested.

Oxfam

Oxfam, similar to the IFRC, is a parent entity with collaborators across several countries established for the explicit purpose of international poverty relief. Based in the United Kingdom, Oxfam has 17 branches. While the international entity has only been around

since 1995, the original British relief system has existed since World War II. During times of natural disaster, Oxfam's affiliates work to bring resources such as water, food, and medical supplies to victims in need of relief. Oxfam, as a more private and closely knit organization than the IFRC, has often come under charges of lacking absolute political neutrality in its international aims.

Legal Theories of State Sovereignty and Disaster Relief

Disaster relief strikes many at first glance as a necessary moral duty for an international community. But the mechanics and logistics of the process aren't necessarily as clear-cut. From a legal standpoint, it is quite complicated to navigate the extent to which other countries may supply relief within the borders of another country, while also attempting to navigate laws and consent. Indeed, laws such as immigration flow and regulation of commerce mean that it is not always easy or even safe to give direct, aggressive forms of aid. Moreover, disaster relief often comes with stipulations and negotiations that put suffering countries in awkward positions, forced to accept relief for its peoples under circumstances that may not always end up favorable in the long run. Issues of obligation, recompense, and other externalities make disaster relief a thorny legal issue indeed. With the rise of Non-Governmental Organizations and their own separate standards of accountability, many states even see incentive to severely curb the influx of disaster relief, treating unknown and foreign entities as ultimately suspicious and seeking to take advantage of a state's resources in times of crisis.

J Benton Heath, writing in the International Law and Politics Journal, lays out the legal implications of the duty of a state to accept international disaster relief. Heath draws on Myanmar's 2008 Cyclone Nargis, and the extreme limitations placed on humanitarian efforts by the protective government at the time, limiting efforts to single cities at a time, eventually forcing a withdrawal and a massive exacerbation of crisis. This issue triggered an international debate, and the UN commissioned a review of existing international law to determine the boundaries and parameters of forced intervention into humanitarian crises. Military intervention was, as described by Heath, briefly on the table but ultimately rejected. Heath's argument goes on to eventually call for an interpretation of humanitarian obligations that would oblige states to consent to the receiving of aid.

Heath eventually hypothesizes three main effects for a basic "rule" governing the compelling of a state to consent to international aid, based on the state's ability to publicly convey its intentions and desires . The first is an "arbitrariness standard" that "creates a framework within which the affected government must publicly justify its conduct" (Heath 475). This would "allow the government to deny aid offers that carried

certain untenable conditions, but it would force the government to provide clear evidence and justifications for this statement" (476). The second effect would "firmly connect...the denial of humanitarian assistance to human rights, something that has not been done explicitly in any binding instrument" (476). Lastly, the rule would "the rule provide...an additional normative basis on which the Security Council may act under [the] U.N. Charter to force a state to accept aid in extreme circumstances" (476). All of these conditionalities form a proposed basis around which the international community could potentially insure that states fairly and humanely regulate the way that aid is carried out during times of crisis.

Private Versus Public Aid

Beyond the implication of government and government institutions in the administering of said, trans-national disaster relief also has a number of non-governmental players. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a unique role in disaster relief, and occasionally make up the majority share of the direction of funding in times of direct aid to afflicted countries. Yukie Osa does work examining the roles NGOs play in disaster relief in East Asia (2013). In her summative statements, Osa goes over the potential positives and negatives in terms of impact for the participation of NGOs in relieving disasters. Speaking to the positives, NGOs tend to be specialized and thus able to direct focus more intimately and on a small-scale. The nature of NGO participation means that smaller areas can be attended to more directly, and it also means that the direction of policy and strategies of care provision are flexible and more open to modification, as the sets of standards review end to be within smaller scales. Much of these positions are thus inherent parts of the negative impacts of NGOs in disaster relief as well, Osa claims. The specialization means frequent misappropriation of funds, leaving areas that don't have specialized groups to tend to them almost ignored or at least rather underrepresented. Furthermore, single issue groups, frequent in the NGO community, ensure that parts of disaster relief sugo unattended to in favor of more prominent aspects.

Transparency is also a major issue with NGOs. The political and economic motivations of intervention are often more easily shrouded under the guise of private organizations. Governments can strategically direct funding toward given groups that themselves don't have to display any sort of outright explicit alliance or political leaning. The extent to which governments can conduct proxy operations in areas of conflict or in areas of political turmoil, with disaster relief providing an opportunity to intervene under circumstances of crisis, is unclear and thus somewhat unmitigated with the rise of NGO participation in disaster relief.

The issue of public versus private disaster relief extends to the United States as well. Writing for Al Jazeera America in 2014, Josmar Trujillo addresses the problematics inherent in allowing private incentivization of disaster relief, focusing on the funding of efforts to relieve victims of Hurricane Sandy by JPMorgan Chase. Trujillo argues that the

favoritism displayed in funding often meant that groups that had no roots in the affected areas were getting funding, allowing for the conduction of operations elsewhere and the funding of overhead costs rather than the provision of long term jobs and the benefiting of locally sutatined groups. Trujillo worries that this sort of trend will be increasingly common in the field of disaster relief, where privately controlled logics of disaster relief mean that dentites actually stand to profit through strategic dispersion of funds and aid and an increasing devotion to short-term gains rather than long-term solutions.

Conversely, a 1997 paper by economist George Horwich in the International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters (one that is used as training material for FEMA employees, according to its website) takes a look of the relative efficiency of private sector responses to disaster and their growth in the United States. Horwich argues ultimately for a cooperation of government with these factors, urging an avoidance of duplicated services and instead a model of complementary cooperation, with government filling in gaps that the private sector in not incentivized to meet. The degree of innovation and solution development fostered through private incentives is, according to Horwich, highly desirable and best equipped via private disaster solutions.

In sum, the role of international coordination in disaster relief has been complicated and intensified in recent years, due to the twin developments of non governmental capacities in relief as well as the exacerbation of disasters by the effects of increasing changes in climate. These developments have posed a complicated picture of disaster relief, with the needs becoming greater than ever while the capacities for responses becoming almost too great to effectively manage and anticipate under international law. Clearly, the standards for intervention have yet to be set in stone. What is prioritized in every case, however, is the effective preservation of life combined with the respectful acknowledgement of state sovereignty.

Past UN/Relevant Regional Organization & International Action

UNDP

As it stands, the UNDP's two major goals in dealing with natural disasters in the developing world are that of risk reduction and promotion of early recovery. Risk reduction is the work that the UNDP does to ensure that a country's infrastructure, medical services, and agricultural sites are all prepared and ready in case of a major natural event. UNDP works directly with governments to ensure maximal disaster preparedness. These range from direct interventions into agricultural industries, including teaching farmers the best practices for land management and how to set up systems of preservation and protection during disasters, to teaching communities best practices for radio systems in order to distribute information and necessary instructions. The UNDP's website contains a variety of reports and post-event reflections, demonstrating a commitment to serving as a resource bank and a site of research upon best practices and future potentialities in this realm. The UNDP also intervenes in making legal recommendations for individual state policy to ensure best practices for disaster preparation.

UNDP's work in early recovery is the work that is done in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. UNDP is the main organ of the UN in terms of immediate disaster relief. UNDP works to coordinate its partnering organizations and its governmental contacts in order to provide a macro-level strategic approach to recovery, helping in the provision of services such as aid and medical supplies, as well as coordinating things like short-term employment and governmental capacity assistance. The focus during early recovery, as stated by UNDP, is both immediate assistance as well as the laying of groundwork for long term, permanent recovery. Again, much like its efforts in disaster preparation, the UNDP also maintains working groups and resource banks in order to provide the best information for adoption of relief practices.

United Nations "Cluster-Based" Approach

In the most general sense, the UN seeks to position itself as a coordinator and director of a series of highly specialized committees that focus on different aspects of disaster relief. The UN terms this to be a "cluster-based" approach, where the various sub-committees and organs on the UN all have different and unique roles to play in the provision of relief from natural disasters. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) may serve an important role in a disaster in how it helps farmers insure a minimization of crop loss, as well as helping insure the best possible distribution of food services in times of emergency.

In the context of this wide array of specialization and task assignments, the UN has made explicit the UNDP's role as a provider of long-term solutions that provide relief well after time of immediate distress.

UNISDR

The arm of the UN most responsible for the strategic planning and organizational mission of disaster preparedness and relief is known as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). Founded in 2000 as the result of a General Assembly resolution, the UNISDR is meant to oversee the implementation of an internationally drafted plan for disaster risk management and best practices for relief. The UNISDR also chairs the Interagency Group (IAG) within the UN that comprises the several committees who direct a significant share of resources toward disaster relief.

Sixth Committee (Legal)

The UN's Sixth (Legal) committee has also done work to better define the role of international law in organizing and determining best practices for disaster relief. As recently as the end of 2014, the committee requested a forum on changes in the currents standards. Within the text of the discussions had over this issue, it is clear that sovereignty and human rights are held at an often uneasy balance. The UN's legal committee thus is a crucial part of disaster relief effort, in order to ensure the stability and

legitimacy of international efforts to insure the preservation of human life in times of crisis.

Case Studies

Haiti's 2010 Earthquake

In January of 2010, a massive earthquake struck the heart of one of the world's poorest nations, Haiti. The instant impact following the destruction of most of the country's already fragile infrastructure was beyond devastating. What followed was a massive, international relief effort that has been projected in some instances to cost several billions of dollars.

Much of the details of destruction, devastation, and death are well known. What is not as discussed is the chaotic and in many cases unaccounted for frenzy of organizations pouring in for relief. It is impossible to detail every aspect of the relief effort in Haiti, but several key examples point to the complications and nuances of coordinating international relief.

Problematics within the NGO/Private aid model, include Haiti's loss of sovereignty and the isolation of its own citizens in favor of aid groups. A 2013 article written by sociologist and scholar of "mobility studies" Mimi Scheller details the unintended impact of the relief effort upon the ability of Haiti's citizens to move freely and undisturbed through their own country. Scheller focuses on the systems of transportation that were both mobilized and immobilized in the wake of the influx of relief. Scheller describes a more or less blockading of Haiti's central airports, with transportation being cut-off to Haiti's citizens in order for aid relief groups to enter. The lack of authority in the country that could maintain the normal systems and procedures of transportation in Haiti meant that relief groups were able to enter freely and often at the cost of the mobility of Haiti's residents.

Scheller also describes complicated systems of surveillance and GPS tracking that were implemented by data services in the name of humanitarian relief. Companies like Google set up mapping systems across Haiti that tracked with great detail, various sites of need and relief. While claimed as a legitimate humanitarian effort, Scheller points out the complications of privacy law and the possible infusion of sovereignty in allowing Google to freely map and collect data on a massive swath of Haiti's services.

What Scheller's work ultimately achieves is a portrait of a country that has its sovereignty and structures of government and citizenship completely shattered in the wake of a disaster. Well meaning private entities were able to travel across Haiti freely and unmolested, all in the name of immediate relief and the ultimate preservation of as many lives possible.

The extent to which the Haitian relief efforts were successful in terms of long-term impact has come under fire recently as well. A report published by ProPublica in 2015 revealed how a Red Cross program in Haiti that was meant to fundamentally transform communities through the provision of new housing arrangements and that attracted almost half of a billion dollars only ended up building a total of six permanent homes. The ProPublica article details a string of bureaucratic, logistical failures that led to a rather wasteful practice in spending. This report brought increased scrutiny to the transparency and accountability of spending on private organizations in the relief and permanent solution-building for communities struck by natural disaster.

This does not mean that humanitarian aid flowing through Haiti has not been without potential successes. The Council on Hemispheric Affairs as detailed promising advances in microbanking in Haiti, as a path for permanent entrepreneurship to lead to economic growth and sustained communities. The promise of microlending, which sees private entities distributing foreign-donated funds in local communities in very small amounts, in order to provide initial funding for long-term products, allow for the potential of loan forgiveness and insures Haitian families against potential failure much better than international loan programs have. Microlending has been implemented in developing communities across the world, but as a longterm solution for disaster relief it is still being rolled out in Haitian communities.

Haiti is in need of innovative, long-term solutions, and has been for several years now. The influx of international responses to disaster relief was often chaotic, unpredictable, and unaccountable, and would leave Haiti's citizens often left behind in the immediate frenzy. There is certainly a need to look at Haiti as an example of mass response in times of an unprecedented crisis, and to find ways to better organize relief for long-term solutions and to insure maximum accountability.

Nepal Earthquake 2015

The massive earthquake in Nepal in early 2015 posed a major challenge to how the UN and the international community at large responds to natural disasters in every single traditional phrase of response. Nepal is a mostly mountainous country, made up of only a few major urban areas and mostly remote villages. This proved a massive problem for search and rescue efforts The first phase of basic life preservation was made extremely difficult by the limitations of transportation and the difficulty and general lack of knowledge of terrain. Entities like the National Geospatial Intelligence-Agency made attempts to step in and provide more comprehensive mapping of terrain for all workers to use, proving some measures of success.

The immediate needs of relief and supplies were majorly challenged by a government that, in the months following the earthquake, has been largely denounced as corrupt and inefficient. Many reports of aid being stuck in the nation's capital city of Kathmandu claim to be due to stagnant customs officials who insisted on normal processes of checking and who were faced with an unprecedented backlog of foreign supplies. The government has responded, claiming a lack of respect for the traditional rules of the country by private entities. The conflict here shows an ultimate failure of coordination and communication. However, the UN was able to coordinate vital services through the traditional organs described below. Many feel that the amount of aid has not been enough.

Anti-government rhetoric, often assumed by Western observers of disasters like this, is claimed by some to be somewhat overblown. Many on the ground observers saw legitimate participation and cooperation between Nepal and those who wanted to help, with the rhetoric of anti-government claims of corruption being trumped up into order to favor pro-business entities in the rebuilding process. The rebuilding process, from this point of view, has to to center on the empowerment of Nepalese citizens to rebuilding their own civil society, rather than relying on aid or temporary outside forces. No matter how unstable the bureaucratic actors may be, for them there is a balance to be claimed between governmental and public institutions, and the private nonprofit entites seeking to grow Nepalese economy once more.

As it stands, attempting to rebuild normal phases of life within the villages of Nepal is still posing a major challenge. Issues of sexual assault and human trafficking have become rampant in recent months, with women and children being routinely taken advantage of in areas of uncertainty and chaos. The transitioning to long-term solutions has not been widely reported, and the government of Nepal, which has long been ranked as one of the world's most corrupt, has a major challenge in front of them. Old traditions and old practices that are unsustainable for future earthquake continued to be put in place, as villagers have little access to information and resources for future development. Many have argued that more sustained attention beyond the immediate needs of disaster relief will need to be paid, especially in a country that is scientifically shown to be prone to another earthquake just as large in the near future.

Questions to Consider

1. In terms of long-term sustainable development after natural disasters, what is the balance to be struck between government sovereignty and private organizational intervention?
2. How can initial relief be prioritized while staying mindful of long-term development?
3. What role does preparedness play in the resources UNDP directs toward disaster response?

Topic 2: Elections + Democratization

This topic will seek to determine the proper role for the international community in promoting democratization in developing countries, specifically through the promotion of effective, safe, and fair elections. The issues at hand will include election monitoring, electoral assistance, and the balance between local customs and westernization. At issue more generally will be the role of elections in democratization in general, as opposed to more direct economic interventions.

Topic Background

Democracy has long been considered the standard-bearer of effective, accountable, and representative government for nation-states in the modern world. While not every country has taken on a fully recognized democratic state, the vast majority of states have introduced at least some degree of electoral representation and opportunity for its citizens.

This committee will not seek to debate over the merits of democracy itself. It will take as a founding assumption, as the UNDP does, that democratization is a net benefit for most developing countries. The question then is to grapple with the ways in which practices of introducing democracies can best guarantee the stability, longevity, and security of elected government. Clearly there may not be a single situation that will work for every country, but it is the hope of his committee that a set of standards can be formatted and introduced order to better ensure safe and long-lasting practices for countries in desperate need of an accountable system of government.

Democracy has been argued to be "integral to development" (Samarsinghe 20) and quite possibly linked to economic growth and social equity. Since the rapid decolonization of and gradual introduction of sovereignty within many countries in the developing world that began in the 20th century, simultaneous efforts have been made to introduce democratic forms of governance. Democracy is often seen to lend a country's

government a necessary degree of legitimacy, as well as keeping government accountable via systems of public representation.

However, efforts of democratization have also brought with them spats of violent outbursts through electoral competition within the developing world. The role of the international community in mediating safe, free, and fair elections while still preserving the sovereignty and dignity of states and electorates is very much still in play.

Before: Ensuring Stability Prior to Elections

According to Winrich Kühne (2010), countries should be relatively safe and secure prior to holding elections so that voters may turn out without fear of bodily harm. Countries should also have sufficient information and communication systems in order to provide resources for voter knowledge and in order to insure that elections are not held blindly. Finally, there needs to be an efficient state apparatus in place in order for the election to be verified and considered fair and legitimate. Without these factors being met, there is a strong possibility for elections being abused by parties, or of violence breaking out at the polls.

Safety is a major concern for electorates. Living under fear of retribution or possible intimidation, many voters simply refuse to show up to the polls on election day. Furthermore, in countries with relatively active insurgencies and lack of security populated election areas can be seen as prime targets for acts of mass violence. Such events strip elections of any and all legitimacy, as only those who are guaranteed safety in relatively secure areas are willing to show up to the polls. Forcing elections in a period where safety isn't guaranteed at the polling place poses a major security risk and a potential for loss of human life.

Insuring the infrastructure for information systems in an electorate is another key feature of preparing for ensuring fair elections. Without access to information, electorates are open to systems of corruption and the way the electorate makes decisions will be more open to corruption. Information systems go a long way in ensuring fair elections, as they can help inform citizens not just have the candidates, but of the best practices for getting to the polls and ensuring that they are registered to vote. Things like

transportation, poll locations, and the eventual government that will be put in place can also be dispersed in order to better prepare an electorate to vote.

Lastly, state-led bodies for independent verification can grant further legitimacy to the assumed results of an election. Without systems in place to ensure that the votes are counted equally and accurately, claiming legitimacy for an election's results can prove a difficult task. Countries also need judicial and police systems that may address accusations of fraud and individual cases at the polling places. Without systems of enforcement, stories of corruption and fraud may spread and increase doubt among electorate that their vote will count in the first place. These bodies include traditional structures such as election commissions and electoral complains systems; both are vital institutions that could be established with the help of international aid.

All of these are practices are held to be crucial for implementation of democracy long before elections are actually held. To rush a country into elections is to risk, if these scenarios aren't met, an increase in chaos and instability in the long term.

During: Creating Fair Electoral Processes

Winrich Kühne's paper also lays out a roadmap for the essential features of elections in democratizing countries that need to be agreed upon in order to ensure free and fair elections.

First among these, voter registration, happens in the lead-up to election day itself. Voter registration is as liable to corrupting influences as elections themselves. Countries with ideologies of ethnic superiority often work hard to ensure large segments of the eligible population are kept off of the voting rolls entirely. Furthermore, voter registration can be a hotbed of corruption as well, with political parties attempting to register the names of the dead or otherwise nonexistent figures, in order to cast fake ballots through registered names. These twin issues of citizenship and corruption demand, according to Kühne, a possible necessity for international regulation.

For stable election processes, countries need to delineate and decide among the best electoral systems. The most common include proportional representation and first-past-the-post systems, the benefits and drawbacks of each being dependent on the

population makeup of the given country. First past the post (otherwise known as winner takes all) causes potential ethnic strife, as the representation of different groups is not fulfilled in the electorate when only the candidate with the most votes gained attains seats. Furthermore, proportional representation creates candidates who do not necessarily represent the interests of a wide enough segment of a district, creating politicians with little to no mandates and avenues of power.

After: Ensuring Acceptance of Results

In a position paper intended for potential USAID donors to direct their efforts toward promoting sustainable democratic states, S.W.R. de A. Saramsignhe gives an overview of several important factors to monitor--economic development, political culture, and "learning to do democracy" (22).

Economic development is rather straightforward. Essentially, countries with democratic governments that also oversaw times of prosperity and relative income growth will be more likely to succeed. Thus, international efforts to direct economies toward directions of growth and engagement would be rather well suited to promote a sustained democracy. States with democratic institutions, but faltering, mismanaged economies, would be more susceptible to an overturning of governmental systems.

Political culture refers to the orientation a society has toward democracy. This method of analysis relies on using culture within a country to determine the stability of democracy and the predispositions a given set of people may have to accept governmental institutions. The reasons for this method lay around issues of appropriation, where methods and mechanisms of democracy are imported directly from one culture to another, even in the face of potential incompatibility. In other words, a Westernized version of democracy looks very different from a traditionally Islamic form of democracy and to claim cross-applicability for democratic systems across both cultures is a recipe for failure, in that legitimacy and political culture will not be developed.

The idea of potentiality of democracy and the concept of "learning" refers to a practice of democratization that requires a certain degree of patience as well as the introduction of key institutions that may not be widely accepted at first, but ultimately

allow a country to “learn” democracy in spite of pre-disposed cultural elements. Economic development as well as the growth of political institutions such as parties and elections all force a country to adapt to democratic ways of thought, rather than democracy gradually working its way through the culture itself. This all hinges on a building of legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens adopting democracy, and empowering individuals to see the benefits of participating in the electorate. Taking a combined view of political culture and economic growth, the idea of a “learned” democracy insists on the rapid creation of structures and reforms in order to promote a democratically orientated state.

Past UN/Relevant Regional Organization & International Action

Electoral Assistance

UN Resolution A/RES/46/137, passed by the general assembly in December of 1991, lays out the central mission of the UN's electoral assistance program. In it, the GA recognizes the crucial nature of elections and free and fair systems of representative government in order to prevent the goals of international development, while simultaneously conceding that no one single political system can work across global lines and that the UN should, only in the most extreme circumstances, work to oversee elections themselves.

This resolution also calls for the establishment of a specially designated "focal point" that would oversee the international needs of elections and electoral assistance, and it also urges the establishment of funding mechanisms for countries seeking to develop resources for comprehensive electoral implementation.

As a result of this resolution, the major organ for these operations is the UN Electoral Assistance Division, which operations under the auspices of the UN Department of Political Affairs. As operates practically, the UN combines multiple departments of operations in order to provide a full range of services termed under the umbrella of "electoral assistance". These range from direct peacekeeper intervention for security purposes, to logistical support and informational distribution. The UN assists upon, at best, a "supporting role" within elections, and takes great care to not intervene directly.

In extreme circumstances the UN has, however, directly overseen electoral processes. In 1992, the United National Transitional Authority in Cambodia took direct responsibility for voter registration and electoral organization. The election was considered rather successful, and was done in the situation of a major regime change and a change in overall state structure.

Similarly, in 2001 the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor helped organize the first elections after a nationwide referendum for independence. The UNTAET helped seat members of the new parliament who would then draft a constitution to provide the political framework for this new country.

UNDP

The UNDP is another major organ for creating electoral resources across the developing world. The nature of the UNDP's work surround long-term field operations in developing countries, seeking to expand the best practices and institutions to ensure a vibrant and active electorate and a government equipped to deal wit the processes of counting votes and registering voters. The UNDP has provided several publications outlining important priorities in electoral assistance, including establishing the youth vote and attending to the needs of several different African countries. The central theme throughout all of these works is that of long-term commitment, lack of direct intervention, and a focus on empowerment of communities not easily reached by traditional channels. Through this direct field environment, the UNDP is often best suited to ensure long-lasting electoral reforms and changes, ensuring that the elections themselves are able to run as smoothly as possible.

A 2012 report from the UNDP's evaluation office found that the "UNDP is most relevant for its role as an impartial provider of electoral assistance, which supports processes and institutions so that they better reflect democratic values and international obligations" ("Evaluation xii") while it warned against the confusion of supporting processes and supporting governments themselves, leading to a widespread view of inappropriate "closeness" between UNDP and governments. The report's central recommendations surround consistent application of normative standards within the levels of individual countries, where the needs of on the ground representatives often overshadow larger goals. The report ultimately recommends, among other things, that "UNDP should intensify efforts to build the shared sense of purpose among headquarter, country-office and project teams, and to improve their understanding of the UNDP approach and programming options for electoral assistance"("Evaluation" xvii). Clearly, striking a balance between international normative standards and the needs of individual countries is one of the more crucial issues facing UNDP's electoral assistance program.

Case Studies

Election Supervision

The Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, prepared jointly across several intergovernmental organizations, defines election observation as the following:

> "the systematic, comprehensive and accurate gathering of information concerning the laws, processes and institutions related to the conduct of elections and other factors concerning the overall electoral environment; the impartial and professional analysis of such information; and the drawing of conclusions about the character of electoral processes based on the highest standards for accuracy of information and impartiality of analysis. International election observation should, when possible, offer recommendations for improving the integrity and effectiveness of electoral and related processes, while not interfering in and thus hindering such processes" ("DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION" 2)

International election observation then, it is clear, is one of the primary international vehicles for guaranteeing electoral fairness. It is a multi-state expression of desire while simultaneously allowing states to operate on their own will, and allowing people to decide upon their own political fates without coercion. The Declaration of Principles, drafted in 2005, sets out a standardized list of best practices that include the basic conditions for government structures that need to be met before electoral observation may commence, as well as the most proper and fair ways to conduct the process of observation itself.

The practice, while internationally accepted, arrives with several flaws as well.

Judith Kelley, author of *Monitoring Democracy: When International Election Observation Works, and Why It Often Fails* (2012), writes about the benefits and limits of internationally monitored elections. Kelley points to a clear correlation between election

monitoring and improved results in terms of freedom of corruption and voter registration. Kelley also discusses the effect monitoring has on election preparedness and standards of conducting accessible, fair elections. Kelley also notes that monitoring only goes so far, as Russia still to this day conducts clearly corrupt elections even in the face of helpless observers.

But the real problematics Kelley points to come in the form of the intentions and limitations of organizations who seek to monitor elections but are reliant on both the political infrastructure they operate within as well as their sources of funding. Kelley notes situations where election observers were asked to delay their findings for political expediency, at the request of a US embassy who was not in favor of the soon to be published results. Kelley also highlights that, in times of scarce funding, organizations monitoring elections can become much too reliant on the very governments they are meant to check in the first place.

Douglas Anglin's 1998 report in *African Affairs* addresses the limitations of international observation in having much of an effect in the sustaining of democracy itself after the election cycle has ended. Similar to what has been discussed before, Anglin stresses the need for a development of election commissions and vibrant civil services within countries accepting electoral observation. Without guarantees of sustenance of democracy, Anglin sees international observation as little more than a formality that does little to actively promote development through political empowerment. Inherent in this critique is the stresing of a long-term, rather than brief, presence of election monitoring. This would require agents in place throughout the election cycle, observing and assisting during processes of registration and staying after the election itself to oversee potential issues in the development of democratic institutions. This long -term thinking is often hampered by international funding, Anglin notes, and so thus the international community must be willing to contribute the fiscal resources it it is to be serious about parlaying election observation into long term stable democracy.

Adding to potential pitfalls of international electoral observation, Beaulieu and Hyde (2009) have demonstrated that international observation has led, in some cases, to an increase in new forms of electoral corruption that are traditionally undetectable by the

normal processes of observation. This issues is exacerbated by the international legitimacy granted to these elections through the international processes, as well as the excess in funding that goes toward countries holding elections. Furthermore, these elections, when corruption is highly suspected, often involved boycotts of opposition parties, further risking the actual legitimacy of the elections at hand. Beaulieu and Hyde do not go so far as to say that electoral observation is thus untenable, but they make the case for a system that is more mindful of the governments being observed, and also a system that is mindful of it's own impact on the domestic interpretations of legitimacy. Legitimizing a still corrupt government can lead to frustration and mistrust among opposition groups, and a destabilization of the political system at large.

Bangladesh

To assist in the development of further, internationally applicable solutions, it would be useful to examine the UNDP's direct actions in Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Electoral Commission (BEC). These solutions, published in a 2011 project document, while small individually, all led to a successful and highly respected election process and the infrastructure for continued support and flexibility in facing new challenges.

First among UNDP efforts in Bangladesh was a modification of the electoral roll system, with the inclusion of photographs of voters. This effort was one that created a "new, credible, and inclusive voter register". This project, known as PERP, began with UNDP funding and support but continued well after UNDP's ending of involvement. This kind of action was instrumental in creating elections that could be seen as free of fraudulent registered voters and would be meant to counteract actions such as ballot stuffing and illegitimate voter registration often conducted by corrupt party officials in developing countries ("Project Document" 1).

Much along the same lines of legitimacy and (literal) transparency was TBB, or Translucent Ballot Boxes. This measure was extraordinary simple yet sent an equally extraordinary message. The process insured that ballot boxes would be translucent, and thus theoretically free from improper tampering, as well as provided with the proper seals for security in order to ensure the safekeeping of public votes("Project Document" 1).

A more technical project was the CSSED, or the Construction of Server Stations for Electoral Databases. This project provided for the construction of 478 sever stations in order to "facilitate a permanent voter registration process and ensure the integrity of the register" ("Project Document" 3). The drive toward incorporating modern technology into the legitimization of the voter process is an important one, and one that would crucially implemented with the direct support and technical knowhow of international cooperation through the UNDP.

In order to maintain and ensure future growth, UNDP currently officially recommends a holistic approach to election assistance. In other words, if one aspect of election preparation is left unnoticed, the entire system risks collapse. This, of course, requires long-term commitment and significant support and material resources. Furthermore, the areas that UNDP sees as most central to further improvement in Bangladesh include the increasing training and professionalization of election commission staff and leadership, further decentralization and growth of local-level electoral bodies with the capacity for legitimacy, development of a more modern and robust communication system to provide better information to voter and to increase transparency in government processes surrounding elections, continued development of technological capacities, and further reforms surrounding transparency with voter rolls and other aspects discussed earlier.

As should be clear by now, election reform and management is a complex, thorny task that requires diligent attention to many aspects of civil society and government life. The balance between UNDP support and eventual government self-sufficiency is one that must be minded closely as well.

Questions to Consider

1. What areas of civil society and government reform would the UNDP stand to gain the most from advocating for?
2. Should the UNDP begin the practice of direct election monitoring, despite the possible risks? If so, what are the best practices that can be instituted to ensure a fair and impartial process?
3. How can the UNDP help citizens hold elected governments accountable after elections to ensure that democratic participation is solidified and that future elections will continue undisturbed?

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