Dear Reader...

This semester has been a semester of transition for JUIS, as we work to ensure a continued high-quality publication. We saw the first steps of integration with the Publications Committee – part of the Wisconsin Union Directorate – which I am happy to report we will be joining in the fall. Through uniting with other UW-Madison publications, we have already encountered a host of suggestions and new ideas for new directions.

I would like to extend special thanks to the committed staff of JUIS, including our graphic designer Jenny Kerastas and our new financial coordinator, Alexis Brown. I would also like to thank the wonderful Coddon family for their strong support for the journal; Geoff Larson, Operations Manager for DoIT Printing; Mark Lilleleht, Outreach Coordinator for Global Studies; and Sarah Horvath, director of Publications Committee, along with the rest of PubCom staff.

And of course our authors! We look forward to next semester and hope you enjoy the pieces!

Sincerely,
Alexander Hoppe,
Editor-in-Chief

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Millennium Development Goal 7
and Infrastructure Development:

a gateway to achieving the other millennium
development goals in sub-saharan africa

by JAMES P. HURLEY

THE YEAR 2000 WAS ONE OF GREAT
anticipation for much of the world: a world in pain and strife,
a world eager and hopeful for the future. The “Millennium
Declaration”, a United Nations General Assembly Resolution,
was adopted by 189 countries on 8 September 2000. Just
as the United Nations has two main goals, the “Millennium
Declaration” was also crafted into two main goals, at least in
their context and application in sub-Saharan Africa. First
and foremost the Millennium Declaration aimed at defining
a notion of development, in its broadest sense, for the world
that could be attained by 2015, or at least attempted. The idea
of development as an agent for positive change is critical to
realize, and will be expanded upon shortly. Furthermore the
Millennium Declaration solidified an international agreement,
and focus, on the ideals of equality, justice and peace among
all peoples of the world.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a set of eight
aims adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 2000; they
are a direct repercussion, and should be considered part and
parcel with the Millennium Declaration. They are measurable
by their very nature, save the final one, and are representative
of an international collaboration to foster a world that can
develop in a sustainable, peaceful and respectful manner. The
goals themselves will be discussed shortly, but it is important
to keep in mind that they were developed, and fashioned, in
such a way that the targets under each goal are quantifiable, so
that progress, or regression, can be measured over time. The
eighth MDG will prove to be the exception in this case, but will
be treated in its own rite shortly. Before delving into the issues
of sustainability the MDGs need to be laid out to the reader,
bearing in mind each of these goals will be examined in their
context with development and environmental sustainability
shortly. They are in order: (1) To eradicate extreme poverty
and hunger; (2) to achieve universal primary education;
(3) to promote gender equality and empower women; (4) to
reduce child mortality; (5) to improve maternal health; (6) to
combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) to ensure
environmental sustainability and; (8) to develop a partnership
for global development.

At first glance it is apparent to the reader that the aims and
scope of the MDGs are vast; they are a collaboration of 189
member states, each with their own agendas and ideas. The
“success” of their achievement is relative to the benchmarks
and the location of each project, but can be measured in a clear
and quantifiable manner. The focus of this paper however, as
previously highlighted, will be to examine the seventh MDG,
that of environmental sustainability, specifically in sub-
Saharan Africa, as a doorway to achieving the other MDGs,
through the integration of development in that same region.
With a stronger push from the international community for
sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa, the effective
implementation and measurement of the remaining MDGs in
the region will become a reality with greater ease.
“I am grateful for the support of an Iona College Honors Program American Express Scholars Grant, which allowed me to undertake this research.”

JAMES HURLEY...

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In recent research and scholarship the term “sustainable development” is often thrown around with only a brief introduction. The purpose of this paper, however, requires a thorough and in-depth look at this term, and how it came to be. The issue of sustainability, as a concept, really penetrated the international community in the 1970s through the early 1980s. The rapid global population growth paired with the ability of more people to consume the way westerners do, highlighted to the world that any additional development needs to occur so that we do not exploit all our natural resources. The definition that is most often quoted for sustainable development is development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

This definition grew out of the Brundtland Commission (formally known as the World Commission on Environment and Development), under the auspices of the United Nations in 1983 and has permeated world discourse to become the accepted norm.

The stated purpose of this commission was fourfold. The UN General Assembly resolution which created the World Commission for Environment and Development (WCED) cited, in section eight, that the goal was “to propose long-term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development”; “to recommend ways in which concern for the environment may be translated into greater co-operation among developing countries and between countries at different stages of economic and social development”; “to consider ways and means by which the international community can deal more effectively with environmental concerns”; and “to help to define shared perceptions of long-term environmental issues and of the appropriate efforts needed to deal successfully with the problems of protecting and enhancing the environment.”

This commission marks the first time that the discussion of sustainable development - as a global concern - was established by the General Assembly, the main representative organ of the United Nations. From this moment forward, the way in which the larger international community approached development would be forever changed.

The report that grew out of Brundtland established two important definitions in regards to sustainable development. The report, Our Common Future, was published in 1987, and was welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/187. The report cited sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” A need in and of itself is thought to be a general standard. In this discussion however, on the global scale, the term “need” should be defined, as to clarify diction. In a strict reading of Our Common Future a need, in the context of environmental sustainability is “essential necessities of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given.” This language allows the reader to interpret, and to a certain extent argue, what indeed a need is, based on what the individual thinks those living in poverty require. Certain aspects of the term “need” however are solidified: access to clean water, available food, and so forth.

Furthermore, in regards to the global scale, the physical environment, societal organization, and technological advances or limitations, which arise from the sustainable development question, need to be addressed when examining development issues. There is a clear indication in Our Common Future that the idea of environmental sustainability is difficult to articulate. It is difficult not because it is unknown, but rather because the
idea can vary greatly depending on what region of the world the discussion is entailing, and, more specifically, the availability of technology at the moment and the capacity for new technology in the future.

The discussion of sustainable development did not remain dormant for long at the United Nations following the adoption of Our Common Future. In 1992 there was a high level meeting in Rio de Janeiro on environment and development. The report that stemmed from this meeting reiterated the fact that humans are at the center of concern for sustainable development, as there is a right to live at peace with the environment applicable to all peoples. In this regard there was in 1992 a clear direction and environmental protection as “interdependent and indivisible.” The ramifications of this report in a very figurative sense gave the issue of sustainable development a human face and a human voice, from all parts of the globe, not just the industrial west. The report allowed the individual in society to see what role he, or she, has in development, and the effects that it has on his, or her, own life; putting a face on the development issue for the individual.

One of the most powerful ideas which the report presents is the eradication of poverty as “indispensable” to the implementation of sustainable development, a precursor of sorts to the MDGs. Furthermore, the resolution cited “peace, development, and environmental protection” as “interdependent and indivisible.” In this regard there was in 1992 a clear direction and focus of sustainable development continuing to be discussed and articulated on the part of the United Nations. As becomes problematic however, with any issue of the UN, is the issue of each member states’ sovereignty; it is up to each individual country to continue and expand the discussion and work for, and with, the MDGs in their own country. Despite this however, there has been increased pressure and support from the international community to help foster a world in which the MDGs can become a reality.

**SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

By way of background, the continent of Africa needs to be introduced. It is, according to both area and population, the world’s second largest and most populated continent (approximately 30.2 million sq km, or, roughly, 325% the size of the United States, and just about 1 billion inhabitants). Africa, and in particular East Africa, is a prominent location for scientific developments in regards to the early existence of humans. As of late, there have been discoveries of bones believed to be from hominids that lived in the area 200,000 years ago. The geography of the continent varies greatly; roughly 10% of the land, known as the veld, is farmable, and about 80% of the population lives on the veld. Another 10% of the land is rainforest, and the remaining 80% is desert. Out of these geographic areas diverse political lines have been drawn throughout history. There are, currently, 53 countries in Africa, minus the disputed Western Sahara territory. Within these 53 countries, UNESCO estimates, 2,000 languages are spoken by the population, from French and Arabic to various tribal dialects of other, more local languages.

The history of Africa has been studied by countless scholars, and for the immediate purpose of this paper, can be overlooked until the 1880s. Around this time there was increased contact between European powers and the African continent. This contact turned into a form of colonization which would be called “New Imperialism”; a form of colonization which exploited the people and natural resources for a monetary gain in the home country. Europe was beginning to industrialize - at rapid speed - and needed both markets for her goods and sources of raw materials to use for production. Africa was the answer. As a result, a “scramble” for Africa ensued by the European powers to create new markets for their goods and obtain a certain level of status in the eyes of the world.

The reality of the matter associated with this atrocity is simple; European contact, and attempted rule, with a people they know little to nothing about. In 1885, at the Congress of Berlin, the European powers effectively carved out the map of Africa, which looks very similar to today’s Africa; there was not a single representative from any part of Africa at this meeting. Never the less, the fate of the whole continent, up to, and including today, stemmed from the actions of this meeting. The exploitation of resources and people took place up to, and including, WWII. With the birth of the United Nations in 1945 and, in particular, the Trusteeship Council, there was a clear and directed aim at decolonization on the global scale.

Stemming for this background there are three main issues which need to be addressed in the context of the MDGs; governance, language, and tribal affiliations. Snowballing from Libya’s independence in 1951, the entire African continent has been purged of colonization, in the official sense. The geographic boundaries that were set up for European control at the Congress of Berlin are, largely, the same lines that each state was given their independence under. The leaders of Europe, in carving up Africa, paid no attention to the individuals in Africa. Thus, the national boundaries that
are in place today do not reflect the identities of the people. Therefore, governance from a capital city, which an individual does not recognize, or respect, becomes problematic.

From that idea comes forth the other two issues. The identity that most Africans hold lies with their tribe and family, not their state. The way in which African society is constructed, largely as a result of geography, creates a microcosm of the world in each tribe or family. The traditional people are largely subsistence level people and identify with each other over any larger entity. The reality of the issue is that each member, and each tribe, is too focused on their own existence and their own society, so much so that there is somewhat of a misunderstanding, or apathy, of what government, in the western sense of the word, actually is. Now, these generalizations are meant for context only and can, in and of themselves, have be topics of papers and books alike. They serve as illustrators of the issues of governance, geography, and society in Africa, and are background for the reader to weigh at their own accord.

THE GATEWAY MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL

The purpose of the seventh MDG is to “ensure environmental sustainability”. In order to work towards this goal the UN has set four distinct targets under the general auspices of MDG 7. They are included below, but please note that target one, is one of the only targets that is not measurable, because one cannot, for a myriad of reasons, measure policy implementation by sovereign states. Please refer to table 1 to review these goals and indicators, as they are paramount to this discussion.

Environmental challenges are of paramount importance in Africa. This is particularly true because environmental challenges disproportionately affect people living in poverty and those living in rural areas. Most of the African population lives in rural areas and are dependent on natural resources to operate at subsistence level, thus advancing the notion that they are the hardest hit in regards to environmental issues. Africa is the only continent that cannot produce enough food to feed its people; therefore developing in a sustainable fashion so that Africa can provide for herself is fundamental for global security and population development.

It does, however, little to talk of developing in a sustainable manner to a tribe who does not have the resources to feed themselves, less alone think about development, and sustainable development at that. This legitimate concern has been discussed again and again by academics, students, the media, and the various offices and posts of the United Nations. It might be difficult to attempt a cultural shift on subsistence level farmers, from subsistence level to a more developed state, but it is imperative for the survival of the people of Africa, in the long run, that this conversation occur. One cannot ignore the faces of starvation, or the scourges of war, but the international community needs to examine the situation and look at the ideas that will better the greatest number of people in the long run; we need to work towards a better tomorrow.

As I discussed in the beginning of this paper, MDG 7 and its implementation is crucial to African society, government, and people. It is the “gateway” into all other MDGs.

The first MDG sets out to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, halving the population that lives on USD 1.25 per

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<td>Target 7A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</td>
<td>7.1: Proportion of land covered by forest&lt;br&gt;7.2: CO2 emissions, total, per capita&lt;br&gt;7.3: Consumption of ozone-depleting substances&lt;br&gt;7.4: Proportion of fish stocks with safe biological limits&lt;br&gt;7.5: Proportion of total water resources used&lt;br&gt;7.6: Proportion of terrestrial and maritime areas protected&lt;br&gt;7.7: Proportion of species threatened with extinction</td>
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<td>7B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss</td>
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<td>7C: Haze, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</td>
<td>7.8: Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source&lt;br&gt;7.9: Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>7D: By 2010, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</td>
<td>7.10: Proportion of urban population living in slums</td>
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day, and halving the population who lives in extreme hunger (benchmark 1990). In this regard MDG 7 affects MDG 1 because a vast population of Africans depend on the ecosystem in order to secure food; soil quality, water resources, crop species, and so on illustrate this. Those living in poverty around the world generally do not have adequate political rights to (a) natural resources or (b) markets. Because of these two inadequacies, those living in poverty tend not to have information that would help them protect their environment in the long run, and arguably they would protect it if they had the knowledge because they know how important the land is to their survival. Thus, if ensuring sustainable development was at the forefront of the agenda, the ecosystem, which so much of this particular population depends on for food, would be better protected as we move forward, and thus capable of continuing to feed the population who lives off of it, rather than depleting it any further.

The connection between MDG 7 and MDG 2 (achieve universal primary education) is simple. Time spent in search of water, fuel, and food resources drastically reduce the amount of time that children can spend in school. As education is the strongest contraceptive throughout the world, in practice this issue could slow down the rate of population growth in SSA (currently 80% of the population of SSA has not reached puberty), and relieve some of the stress the land is feeling. Furthermore, as time would continue, population control can only benefit the idea of sustainable development, and would do so undoubtedly in SSA. Additionally the lack of water and food resources discourages otherwise qualified teachers from teaching in these areas. As a result there is limited access to education in these particular regions; through fostering greater support for MDG 7, and developing water resources in the area there would be greater access to education, particularly for women and children.

In connection with MDG 3 (promote gender equality) it is apparent that women and girls in particular, are often burdened the most by water and fuel collection. Much of their time is spent in search of these natural resources that reduce the time they would be able to have for education, or literacy training. If there is a better way to get water and fuel sources distributed in SSA than these women and girls would have more time to participate in such programs, and they would also gain a better understanding of the rights they indeed hold in regards to their land. Developing infrastructure, in a sustainable manner, would allow women and girls, and all those burdened by water or energy collection, the opportunity to use their time in pursuit of education or literacy.

Poor sanitation and unclean water are two of the leading causes for poor health conditions in children under the age of five. Furthermore the leading cause of repository illness resulting in death for children under five in SSA is caused by air pollution. These facts, paired with the inability to boil water should illustrate to the world that simple actions can be put in place that would save the lives of millions of children each year. Should MDG 7 be made a national, and international, priority these causes of death are sure to be reduced, because there would be more stringent regulations on carbon dioxide emissions, and there would be an infrastructure in place to deliver fuel energy to where it is most needed, in the rural areas. In turn, the number of children dying under the age of 5 would decrease over time, advancing MDG 4.

In relation to improving maternal health (MDG 5) MDG 7 can have a positive impact for two primary reasons. If there were an infrastructure initiative put in place to develop sustainable water and clean fuel resources, there would be less of a chance that women would be forced to carry heavy loads of water from far distances or inhale polluted air. Both of these conditions make women less fit to bear children, and often times lead to complications during pregnancy. Furthermore the added benefit of additional energy resources, as a result of development, would allow the opportunity for refrigeration; paramount to improving health care in rural areas of SSA, or anywhere in the world for that matter.

The aspects that MDG 7 promotes in MDG 6 are concrete. Upwards of 20% of all diseases that burden developing countries stem from environmental risk factors. Preventable ways for either controlling or limiting disease is far more cost effective than treating the disease once it has infected an individual. In addition, new biodiversity-derived medicine has major potential for fighting these diseases. Therefore, the proper and adequate protection of the rainforest and other areas rich in biodiversity is crucial to fighting these diseases in the long run. It seems apparent that as development ensues the ecosystem - particularly the rainforests in Africa and elsewhere - need to be preserved.

The final MDG and MDG 7, I argue, actually have the strongest connection. The development of a sustainable infrastructure system in SSA, and in particular infrastructure associated with water resources and management, is key for any lasting impact to be seen in the area of the MDGs. The costs associated with these projects are astronomical; as a result there needs to be increased communication and awareness from both the private
and the public sector in the development and funding of these projects. Global problems such as climate change, loss of diversity, and so on, can only be achieved through partnerships between rich and poor countries and increasingly the public and private sector too.

The issue of water, in association with MDG 7, is fundamental in the discussion of development in SSA. Clean water is absolutely essential for human health and survival. Adequate sanitation, as well as proper hygiene practices, needs to be developed and fostered in order to guarantee human good health. Despite these prerequisites, 45% of the African population does not have access to clean water and sanitation services. Additionally, 150 million urban dwellers do not have systems of disposing waste.  

Of the 53 countries in Africa, 36 of them record daily freshwater usage less than the 50-liter standard set by the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO, in conjunction with the African Conference on Water and Sanitation in Addis Ababa, stated that the sanitation needs of the continent are only being met by 45% (as of 2003). Despite these inadequacies, however, Africa has a number of water resources that are not used to the fullest of their potential; the proper development of these resources could save Africa, quite literally. From 1990-2000 the average increase in water and sanitation investment from the international community to Africa was USD 4.8 billion. Despite this tremendous commitment, it still only reflects approximately 30% of the development assistance Africa needs to develop proper water resources and meet her sanitation needs. Money, time, and energy are the participants in the ultimate equation of water infrastructure development that will help to shape the Africa of tomorrow.

Water at its very core is the foundation for all civilization. In regards to MDG 1 (eradication of extreme poverty and hunger) water security is fundamental in the ensuring of proper food production and for the success of agricultural products through good irrigation practices. Additionally water is needed to foster industry and other types of economic development, which feeds the first target of MDG 1. Time spent looking for water and traveling to obtain water is time that children cannot be in school. Additionally the lack of infrastructure and safe water in rural areas in SSA deters otherwise qualified teachers from promoting education in the region. Transitioning into MDG 3, water collection in SSA is usually undertaken by women and children. By promoting and improving water infrastructure development, women and girls will gain the opportunity to spend more time in educational settings, rather than collecting water.

In relation to MDG 4 and 5, the lack of safe drinking water promotes waterborne diseases at a greater rate, which in turn often cause early childhood mortality. The lack of safe water and basic sanitation issues in SSA also severely limits the quality of the health care services that are rendered to the people, if they are at all. The United Nations Development Programme suggests that up to one fifth of the diseases in the developing world may be associated with water or other environmental risk factors. It goes without saying that water issues, as well as sanitation issues, are closely associated with MDG 7, and should be examined with great attention in the coming years. Maintaining ecosystem integrity is the foundation for ensuring sustainability, and thus there needs to be greater support given to the areas of water and sanitation as a tool to promote MDG 7, as well as the various other MDGs.

As this conversation slows it is imperative that the issue of climate changepartakes in the discussion. The absolute, and the per capita, emission of carbon dioxide in SSA is only 5.4% of that in North America. The contributions of Africa to the effects of climate change are fairly small, but the continent, as a whole, is one of the most susceptible locations on the planet that to the impacts of climate change. According to the African Development Bank the degree of local environmental degradation will undoubtedly affect the ecosystem of the region, and countless facets of life. The effects of the changes in the global climate will affect the small rural communities throughout the world disproportionately; they therefore need to have greater attention cast on them to ensure proper precautions are set in place.

The ideas associated with water, food security, development, and sanitation issues are all connected to sustainability and are in serious jeopardy as the reality of climate changes come to the forefront of the international community. Grain depletion if augmented without limit will serve a severe blow to the subsistence level farmers in SSA, and increased desertification along the south border of the Sahel will increase population pressure on an already limited amount of fertile land. Time holds many answers for the world and sub-Saharan Africa, but hopefully the UN and individual African countries will shape a better tomorrow.

CONCLUSIONS

Sustainability is a fairly new phenomenon in the international community, and thus causes the need for much discussion and consensus to occur. The world often calls for an immediate
solution to the sufferings of people, but if we, as a global community, are to prosper and advance development and better the lives of the most people, sustainability and efficient use of time is key to development. For development to occur however, without exacerbating the causes of climate change, sustainable practices must be put into place. The Millennium Development Goals are the best strategy for development the world has, and in order to ensure they - as a whole - are sustainable, the world needs to look at MDG 7 as a gateway to achieving the other MDGs. A better understanding and a greater awareness of development issues needs to occur not only by those in the international community but by all citizens of the world so that the issues of sustainable development can grow from the localities where they will be born.

...endnotes...

4. GA Resolution 39/161 (1983) section 8, A
5. GA Resolution 39/161 (1983) section 8, B
6. GA Resolution 39/161 (1983) section 8, C
7. GA Resolution 39/161 (1983) section 8, D
14. This portion of the paper is intended to give the reader a better understanding of Africa and how some of the problems in her governance came to be. It is a reflection of various sources I have consulted (all of which are listed at the end of this paper) and general statistics readily available. In addition many of the ideas stem from guided discussions with Catherine Stratton, a professor of African history at Iona College in New Rochelle, NY.


...bibliography...


A Hegemonic Human Rights Discourse?

by ANNA NEWBY

SINCE THE AUTHORING OF THE UNIVERSAL Declaration of Human Rights over 60 years ago, a discourse of “universal” human rights has permeated institutions, organizations, and movements across the globe. Many scholars – such as anthropologist Talal Asad, among others – have argued that this discourse, which focuses largely on individual and political rights (rather than collective and economic ones), was produced from within the liberal, Western tradition, not a “universal” one. This dominant discourse, many argue, crowds out alternative conceptions of human rights. Challenging the notion that there is a single, “universal” set of human rights, many scholars and activists have called for a more nuanced and inclusive approach. This paper examines the vocabulary used by human rights activists in the West to criticize Egypt’s human rights record. Focused largely on the Egyptian government’s violation of individual and political rights, these critics have called less attention to broader violations of collective and economic rights in Egypt, which are not as explicitly or extensively codified in international human rights law. Thus, human rights groups are selective in their activism, which may not service alternative conceptions of human rights.

“UNIVERSAL” HUMAN RIGHTS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) defines universal human rights as “the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family,” recognizing “the dignity and worth of the human person…as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.” This declaration is the basis of the modern international human rights regime, which consists of the “principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area,” in this case in the area of human rights. The international human rights regime is sustained by a wealth of interrelated organizations, institutions, and grassroots movements throughout the globe. Amnesty International alone has over 2.2 million members in more than 150 countries, and the United Nations has at least 12 major bodies within its apparatus dedicated to human rights alone, on top of an enormous legal structure for human rights. As Talal Asad concludes, “human rights are now universal in the sense that virtually all states have formally endorsed them.” Thus, the international human rights regime – founded upon the UDHR – is well-established in the contemporary global community.

THE CONTENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DISCOURSE:

In large part, the UDHR – along with other related statements and documents – focuses predominantly on rights and freedoms for the individual. Articles 2-7 and 15 of the UDHR outline personal rights (such as the right to freedom from torture); Articles 8-12 detail the individual’s legal rights (such as the right to a fair trial); Articles 13 and 18-20 pertain to civil rights...
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(such as freedom of expression); Article 25 deals with subsistence rights (the right to a certain standard of living); Articles 22-24 outline personal economic rights (such as the right to work); Articles 26 and 27 assure social and cultural rights (such as the right to an education); and Article 21 guarantees certain political rights (like the right to vote).  

The individual, therefore, is the subject of a majority of the rights (between 17 and 21, depending on how they are classified) that are guaranteed in this foundational document. That is, most rights in the UDHR are directed at a singular, rights-bearing person, rather than a community. Numerous scholars have noticed this – Tony Evans, in his article “The Politics of Human Rights: A Global Perspective,” perceives a distinctly individualist and liberal undertone in the list of so-called “universal” human rights. He draws a link between the human rights discourse and a capitalist conception of rights and liberties, claiming that human rights are increasingly conflated with the rights associated with liberalism and laissez faire freedoms. Similarly, author Adrienne Roberts asserts that the contemporary human rights discourse focuses on the right to equal opportunity and free choice for private actors. Only to a lesser degree does the discourse mention group rights such as the right to public health, the right to clean and accessible resources, workers’ and producers’ rights, and the collective right to elect a sovereign and responsive government. Stephen Marks also points out that many countries in the West (including the United States) have strongly resisted codifying the right to development – a right for which the primary subject is the community, not the individual – as a human right. Likewise, Talal Asad notes that “deliberate damage done to the economy of another country…does not constitute a violation of human rights,” presumably because it is not meant to harm any one individual.  

Especially in the Third World, group rights such as the right to development and the right to a sovereign government and economy are of critical importance because they foster social security and empowerment, both for the individual and for groups. Thus, the international human rights regime’s focus on individual rights has allowed many collective rights to be marginalized. This is not to belittle the importance of individual and political rights – to the contrary, these rights are central to the functioning of democracy and other social institutions. It should be recognized, however, that the list of rights that the UDHR and other foundational human rights documents outline is far from exhaustive. ]

WESTERN ORIGINS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DISCOURSE

Despite their claims of universality, many scholars have asserted that international human rights norms have been produced, normalized, and disseminated by the West and do not necessarily reflect a “universal” conception of human rights.

According to Kevin Dwyer, an anthropologist and the former director of the Middle East office at Amnesty International, a common criticism of that organization is that it is “inspired mainly by the West’s Christian tradition [and] that it does not do justice to the precepts of Islamic civilization” or other non-Western cultures. Adamantia Pollis and Peter Schwab also famously argue that “human rights [are] a western construct with limited applicability.” Because the discourse around human rights originated in Western Europe and North America, they argue, they are essentially defined by what they refer to as “Occidental tradition.” University of Coimbra professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos is another outspoken critic of the notion of “universal” human rights: she writes that this
concept rests on a set of presuppositions that are “clearly Western and liberal,” pointing out that the UDHR was drafted “without the majority of the peoples of the world.” Tony Evans agrees, claiming that human rights documents are produced through political struggle – as such, the texts “may be little more than the assertions of those who benefit most from a particular conception of human rights” and do not represent a global consensus.

The Gramscian notion of hegemony is illuminative here. Gramsci posits that a dominant group or culture can use subtle yet pervasive strategies to transform its own values into the “common sense” values of all. According to the authors studied here, the world’s dominant actors shaped the human rights apparatus to serve their own interests, hence maintaining control “through a system of formal and informal norms and rules that legitimate and shape the actions of weaker states.” Implicitly, this ties into Foucauldian notions of “commonsense,” as well: while there is no a priori reason for a community to accept an authority figure’s particular discourse, the authority uses his position of power to advance certain vocabularies and perceptions of reality, thereby creating a particular perception of what is “normal,” and, by extension, “right.” Through this process, the community internalizes a certain discourse and appropriates it as its own, thereby legitimating a particular conception of human rights. Just as Edward Said writes that “geographical sectors as ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ are man-made,” so too is the dominant human rights framework constructed and perpetuated by particular actors in a particular time.

CHALLENGES TO THE DOMINANT HUMAN RIGHTS REGIME:

In the current human rights context, then, Western thinking has become authoritative, which potentially crowds out alternative conceptions of human rights. Lila Abu-Lughod sums up this problem excellently, noting:

- a strong international language with its base in the West,
- a language largely confined to an educated, professional, cosmopolitan class cannot imagine other ways of expressing humanity, getting rights, and living a good life.

Charging that “universal” human rights are actually Western ones, many scholars have challenged the human rights regime’s claims to universality. Kevin Dwyer, recognizing that we live in a diverse world, asks: “are notions of human rights different in different localities?” Talal Asad expands on this and observes that “human rights are in this curious situation of being a claim to universality and, paradoxically, being vested in a state and in certain particular interests.” That is, “ideas and practices concerning human rights are created by people in particular historical, social, and economic circumstances” and are as such highly contextual.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEBATE AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

The critiques of the “universal” nature of human rights has brought rise to alternative conceptions of human rights rooted in non-Western identities. The debate has been particularly vibrant as it pertains to the Muslim Middle East.Both Western scholars and Middle Easterners have explored the question of whether there exists a “Muslim,” “Arab,” or “Eastern” conception of human rights that essentially differs from the dominant Western discourse.

Why have human rights been such a frequent subject of debate in the Middle East? There are a number of possible answers. One reason has to do with the recent history of American interventionism in the region for the stated purpose of protecting human rights from authoritarian regimes. Some American leaders cast the 2003 invasion in Iraq, for example, in human rights terms, and have done the same for the current war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Other realities that have provoked human rights debates within the region include its history of brutal wars (such as the civil war in Lebanon, the Iran-Iraq war, and Israeli offensives in the Palestinian territories), as well as demographic trends like urbanization and a rapidly growing youth population that put pressure on Middle Eastern economies and social structures. In this atmosphere, people from different ideological backgrounds have explored alternative human rights frameworks, seeking a conception that seems more in tune with “Islamic,” “Arab,” or “Eastern” ways of thinking.

At one end of the ideological spectrum, some essentialists argue that there can be no shared conception of human rights between East and West because of the “clash of civilizations” (to borrow Samuel Huntington’s famous phrase) that characterizes East-West relations. Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, for example, famously declared: “We love death. The US loves life. That is the difference between us two.” At the other end, cultural relativists argue that the Western-dominated human rights vocabulary does not accurately represent the Muslim Middle East. Lila Abu-Lughod, in her critique of the Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards
the Rise of Women in the Arab World, points out that many of the problems and solutions outlined in the report are rooted in a Western construct of human and women’s rights which does not necessarily reflect the true needs of Arab women. She criticizes the report’s assumptions that work outside the household is liberating, that individualism and self-determination are more important than family ties and that religion corrupts public life, arguing that there are important cultural differences between Western and Arab populations. The dominant human rights vocabulary might also be troubling to people in the Middle East because of the lingering colonial legacy in the region’s memory. According to Dwyer, “[East-West] contact has forged complex, many-tiered, starkly ambivalent, and often actively hostile attitudes in many Middle Easterners towards Western traditions [and] Western forces.” So, some in the Middle East are hesitant to adopt Western constructs, perceiving them as neo-colonial or neo-imperial.

For Muslim scholars, a common criticism of the dominant human rights construct is that it is secular. In Islamic tradition, many scholars – like Muhammad Meddi Naciri, a member of Morocco’s Council of Religious Scholars – assert that human rights are “part of the very essence” of Muslims’ beliefs. For many Muslims, a secular human rights construct is not legitimate. Sociologist Sayed Yassin, director of the Al-Ahram Institute, explains that many Islamic groups declare: “we are a Muslim society, and as Muslims we have our own concept of human rights…So, why should we adopt a Western concept?”

In this tradition, Emory University law professor Abdullahi An-Na’im agrees that Muslims must approach human rights specifically as Muslims: “I speak as a Muslim. For a Muslim, the ability and the drive and the capacity to be self-determining is really at the core of my humanity [and rights as a person].” Interestingly, many Muslim scholars address human rights through the context of the individual/group rights dimension, outlined earlier. Salah ed-Din Jorshi, one of Tunisia’s leading religious intellectuals and a leading figure in the Islamic Tendency Movement says: “in order to have an Islamic view of freedom, of the individual, of human rights, you have to have a vision of the whole society.”

Dwyer cites numerous other scholars from Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco that agree that the interests of the umma supersede those of the individual. And Egyptian author Muhammad ‘amara asserts: “Islam has a moderate view of the human being’s place in the universe…in Islam, the umma’s interests take precedence.”

This is, of course, only a selection Middle Eastern scholars. Importantly, I do not intend to assert that there exists a cohesive and definable “Muslim,” “Arab,” or “Eastern” conception of human rights that differs from a particularly “Western” construct. By introducing a few of the multitude of ideas in this discussion, I hope to demonstrate that scholars are exploring alternative conceptions of human rights that they perceive to be more true to their faith and culture. To paraphrase Asad, everyone has a conception of the human, “but it’s not the same as the one you have.”

Recognizing that 1) the dominant human rights discourse has predominantly Western origins; 2) this discourse codifies individual and political rights more extensively than group and economic rights; and 3) there are alternative conceptions of human rights – some of which are rooted in some form of Islamic or Arab heritage, let us move on to an examination on how human rights reports on Egypt are framed.

HUMAN RIGHT REPORTS ON EGYPT

Egypt has been the target of much condemnation, especially from the West, for its human rights record. Since the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981 and the subsequent authoring of the Egyptian Emergency Laws, human rights activists (Egyptian and foreign alike) have charged that the Mubarak administration regularly violates international human rights law. Two points are important: 1) that the critics of the Egyptian government focus predominantly on its infringement on particular individual and political freedoms; and 2) that this focus imposes Western priorities of what rights are the most important. In the process, Western human rights groups pay less attention to the violations of social and economic rights in the country. Thus, Western human rights groups (as well as some local groups that have internalized this discourse) are selective in their human rights activism. In short, human rights groups focus on one small piece of the problem. Perhaps this does not service alternative conceptions of human rights, whether they emphasize group and economic rights, “Islamic” rights, or some other collection of rights.

1. criticisms of egypt...

Various organizations and institutions in the West have criticized the Egyptian government’s human rights record. In large part, these critics focus on the government’s suppression of individual and political freedoms. Human Rights Watch recently reported, for example:
In April [2009] Cairo security officers arrested Esraa Abd al-Fattah and others who used the social-networking website Facebook to call for strikes; and in May security officers in New Cairo stripped and beat Ahmed Maher Ibrahim for the same activity.”

This violates Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 22 of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, which guarantee the right to free expression. Amnesty International, in its 2009 report on Egypt’s human rights record, reports that: “Egyptian authorities clamp[ed] down on criticism and dissent [and] prosecuted journalists for defamation and other offences,” including Ibrahim Issa, editor of Al-Dustur newspaper, who published “rumors” about President Mubarak’s health. This was said to violate Articles 47 and 48 of the Egyptian Constitution, which guarantee freedom of the press and a space for constructive criticism. In the same report, Amnesty reports on “the government clampdown on political opposition groups, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood.” This was said to violate Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 24 of the Arab Charter on Human Rights, which guarantee the right to peaceful association and assembly. The U.S. Department of State, in its 2008 Human Rights Report on Egypt, states: “Jehovah’s Witness leadership reported that authorities monitored the homes, telephones, and meeting places of members of Jehovah’s Witnesses,” which was said to violate the right to freedom of thought and religion in Article 8 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The same report criticizes Egyptian law for not explicitly criminalizing domestic violence, spousal abuse, or “honor crimes” against women, which was said to go against the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Like many human rights groups’ charges against Egypt, a majority of the remedies proposed for the state’s human rights violations emphasize individual and political freedom. Abu-Lughod, in her analysis of The Arab Human Development Report 2005, observes that the report focuses largely on ways to liberate Arab women and encourage individualism and self-determination. The authors of the report “consider women’s education a key to emancipation and individualism [and] fail to appreciate the strong positive sentiments people in most communities in the Arab world…have towards their families.” As Abu-Lughod points out, “it is not clear that ‘individualization’ automatically enables women to realize equality or personal fulfillment.” The report’s emphasis on the individual, she concludes, demonstrates the report’s faithfulness to the “political dialect of (neo)liberalism.”

Thus, without conducting an exhaustive study of these reports, it seems that the general focus of many human rights groups’ reports on Egypt is on protecting individual and political freedoms for Egyptians. These rights remain of critical importance, of course, and violations of them constitute grave infringements on human dignity. This analysis is not meant to comment on the relative importance of individual and political rights vis-à-vis other types of rights. Rather, it highlights the fact that other rights are mentioned less frequently in many human rights reports on Egypt.

1. Selective Criticisms of Egypt...

In the multitude of reports about Egypt’s human rights record, consider the aspects of human dignity that do not receive as much attention, as well as what remedies are not proposed. As Charles Hirschkind and Saba Mahmood point out, there are a wealth of problems plaguing Middle Eastern societies that receive little attention, including tribal and ethnic conflicts and the unraveling of social fabrics due to the pressures of colonialism, post-colonialism, and globalization. Moreover, these reports do not mention the role of global financial institutions, multinational corporations and powerful states’ in helping to maintain the international hierarchy of power. As Abu-Lughod writes, the 2005 Arab Development Report excludes “any rethinking of economic practices and policy regarding redistribution, wealth inequality, property, the market, production, poverty, social welfare, and the labor market.” The report calls for “social safety nets,” rather than, say projects of land reform,” she continues. Furthermore, these reports do not point out the fact that the Egyptian government is $32 billion in debt, that its population is predicted to exceed 100 million by the year 2020, that its subsistence resources like fresh water and arable land are quite limited, or that 23% of the population lives below the national poverty line, all of which have serious implications for the attainment of human rights in the country. As Sociologist Sayed Yassin, director of the Al-Ahram Institute, observes: “you cannot keep the wealth in the hands of the few and give the mass of workers nothing but some words about political freedom.” Likewise, while the West has expressed a selective concern about the plight of Egyptian women that focused on the veil as a sign of oppression,” human rights groups have given less attention to women’s education. Regarding civil and political rights, ‘adel Hussein, the former editor-in-chief of Sh’ah (the newspaper of the Socialist Labor Party in Egypt) comments that rather than making the main
battle in Egypt revamping the current one-party system, political activists should aim to “deepen and enlarge mass participation in policy and public affairs.” Broadly speaking, therefore, the right to economic, social, cultural, and political autonomy and independence is rarely mentioned in human rights reports on Egypt.

Thus, human rights reports about Egypt tend to be selective. Advocacy groups hold up prohibitions on political demonstrations or censored newspapers as a quintessential sign of Egyptians’ unfreedom, yet ignore some of their more mundane needs like access to an effective state infrastructure. The dominant interpretations of the state of human rights in Egypt – while bringing to light grave violations and important social and political issues – are reductionist and fail to see the whole picture of life in Egypt. Moreover, this focus may not accurately reflect some of the alternative conceptions of human rights that emanate from the region. Rather, they reflect particular cosmopolitan, urban, middle-class perspectives based on a liberal conception of freedom and public life. This reductionist view has implications for the spectrum of solutions; as Abu-Lughod writes: “by completely sidelining vibrant contemporary alternative language of political economy and imperialism and by giving little space to social movements or collective resistance and struggles over power,” mainstream human rights reports eschew radical solutions. Likewise, Asad talks about alternative languages of justice, explaining that activists can appeal to languages other than human rights to work for social justice. Asad suggests that “maybe we can look at different kinds of languages that are available—that are not legal languages, legalistic languages.” This opens the door to using a religious vocabulary, a communitarian one, or something else altogether.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the contemporary human rights regime, while it claims to espouse “universal” ideals, is rooted in a liberal, Western tradition and emphasizes individual and political rights. Consequently, many reports on Egypt’s human rights record are selective, reductionist, and fail to see the whole picture of the state of human rights in Egypt. In light of this, perhaps a more inclusive conception of human rights is in order, one that takes into account alternative ways of thinking. After all, the human rights reports described above are not merely responses to observed abuses throughout the world; rather, they have a productive function and advance particular notions of what it means to be a human, a member of a community, and an actor in public and private life. Hmda Naifer, a professor in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Tunis, says importantly: “what is most important in all human life is to be able to change traditions.” This should include the tradition of human rights activism.
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AN INTRODUCTION TO BOLSA FAMILIA

Throughout modern developmental history, many countries in the so-called “Global South,” have eagerly looked to the developed North for direction in their struggle for sustainable development. Overwhelmingly, this Northward-looking strategy has done more harm to the South’s development than originally anticipated. Examples of such harm may be seen in the failure of many Northern-implemented structural adjustment programs throughout the Global South. Insofar as the North has essentially failed the South, it has become increasingly clear that the best strategies for development are those that originate in the very regions that need this development. Recognizing that successful socioeconomic and sociopolitical innovation can originate and flourish in the South, many countries in the global South have abandoned the Northern, neo-liberalistic strategies for development, and have turned to their own post-neoliberal strategies instead.

One of the most prominent and widely accepted strategies for socioeconomic development by means of poverty alleviation has been the implementation of conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs. Arguably one of the most successful CCT programs worldwide is the Bolsa Família program: a World Bank-backed conditional cash transfer program introduced six years ago by President Lula da Silva that benefits poor families throughout the Brazilian federation. The overarching goal of the program was and is to “alleviate income poverty… [and] break the intergenerational transmission of poverty…” However, achieving such a goal is undoubtedly very difficult and requires a lot of time and money in order for long-term success. While receiving general praise, the Bolsa Família program has also received its fair share of criticism. Therefore, in order to understand the implications of the Bolsa Família program in Brazil’s struggle with poverty reduction, and in order to develop suggestions for the improvement of the program, it is necessary to examine the history and logic behind the program, the degree to which it has been successful in reducing poverty, and the extent to which it has been criticized (and if these criticisms are valid). In doing so, one may gain a sense of the efficacy of such an innovative social welfare program, as well as develop new policies to improve the program’s overall effect.

COUNTRY CONTEXT: a new perspective on Brazil

Before examining the Bolsa Família program in detail, it is important to consider the socioeconomic and sociopolitical context in which it was established in order to appreciate the contextual complexities both necessary and inherent in the establishment and success of such a program. Therefore, it is best to analyze the modern emergence and self-proclamation of Brazil as a globalized social democracy around the late 1990s as the key to understanding Brazil’s renewed efforts toward the development of new, innovative social policy. The very term
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‘globalized social democracy’ guarantees global, social, and democratic factors that help to set up the basic foundation for the creation of a social welfare program.

The globalized in globalized social democracy means that Brazil has opened itself up to international trade and investment, which automatically implies an almost immediate increase in economic growth. As stated in The Economist, “[The Brazilian] economy has grown at an average of 4.5% since 2004”; while relatively low in comparison to China’s, this growth is, in fact, quite substantial in a country where GDP had been contracting only a year earlier (2003). More importantly, the fact that Brazil has been growing so rapidly signifies an increase in budgetary expenditure that could be allocated for more socially proactive projects (such as Bolsa Família).

The second aspect of globalized social democracy that helps to explain the environment in which innovative social policy could flourish is the fact that globalized social democracy suggests a greater role for the state with respect to the promotion of social justice. In that, the Brazil government has seen social progress as a means for greater socioeconomic development. In order to begin that progress, therefore, the globalized social democracy looks to the advent of visionary social policy as a starting point for fulfilling its ultimate goals of poverty alleviation and social equality (mainly by reducing income inequality and improving infrastructure, healthcare, and education).

The third part to globalized social democracy that provides Brazil with an environment conducive to the implementation and success of progressive social policy is the fact that Brazil is a federation based on full-fledged democratic participation. The deepening democracy in Brazil implies a certain sociopolitical stability. This stability of the state, along with the active involvement of its citizens regarding social policy decisions (such as is the case with the Partido Trabalhador – both a political party and a social movement) is what has allowed for Bolsa Família and programs like it, not only to come into being, but to succeed. Today, Brazil is a much different Brazil than that of fifteen, or even ten years ago; because of the emergence of globalized social democracy, it has changed for the better in that it has become a Brazil for the progression of its people.

ORIGINS OF THE BOLSA FAMILIA PROGRAM

The history of the Bolsa Familia program, interestingly enough, began prior to the Lula presidency, during the presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. In the late 1990s, Cardoso founded and implemented the four predecessor social welfare programs to Bolsa Família: Bolsa Escola (1995; the first national cash transfer program targeting “families with school-age dependents”), Bolsa Alimentação in conjunction with Cartão Alimentação (CCTs established to provide money for food and healthcare for pregnant women), and Auxílio Gas (a program established to provide money for cooking gas). These programs were implemented in an effort to lessen the social burden on families throughout the country, and were the predecessors to the Lula-implemented Bolsa Família.

After winning the presidential election in 2003 on the platform of social welfare and by projecting himself to the Brazilian masses as the “father of the poor,” Lula consolidated the aforementioned programs into the greater Bolsa Família program. Bolsa Família was to be the principal program of Lula’s Fome Zero (Zero Hunger Initiative), his plan for
completely eradicating hunger in Brazil. The significance of consolidating the four individual programs into one was that it maximized the potential for success of Bolsa Família as a comprehensive and more efficient version of the previously instituted CCTs. The families that once received the benefits of the four aforementioned programs could now, essentially, receive the same benefits by only dealing with the bureaucracy and conditions of one such CCT program. The main curiosity in this, therefore, is what makes the Bolsa Família program unique as a new form of social policy. In order to understand this, an explanation of the details of the program will follow.

**BOLSA FAMILIA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN BRAZIL**

The Bolsa Família program, identified globally as a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program because it gives money, (between fifteen and ninety-five reais [six to fifty-five dollars] per family per month) in the form of a debit card, to those families who fall below a certain poverty level (in Brazil this is a monthly income of less than one-hundred-twenty reais [around seventy dollars] per month) under the basic conditions that the children in that family attend primary school regularly (85% of the time) and keep their immunizations up to date from infancy to age six. In implementing a program of this kind, Lula and the Brazilian government sought to alleviate the problems of hunger, absolute poverty, and social inequality in Brazil's most needy areas while simultaneously promoting education and health as vehicles for creating a better Brazil. The program, while constructed and implemented by the Brazilian government, receives structural assistance (in the form of managerial strategy) and financial assistance (in the form of direct aid and loans) from the World Bank. This assistance is imperative in that it emphasizes the fact that Brazil has not completely discredited the benefits of aid coming from the North, but rather has used this aid to further the country's own socioeconomic agenda in a seemingly constructive way. The apparent success of this North-South relationship exemplifies the possibility of North-South, horizontal partnerships as powerful instruments in the eradication of poverty, not only in Brazil, but on a global scale as well.

Furthermore, the fact that the program has been implemented nationwide emphasizes the grand aspirations of the Lula administration to alleviate poverty not solely in specific regions of Brazil, but throughout the entire country. In implementing the program throughout Brazil, the government decided to work directly with municipalities in order to bypass the corruption and bureaucratic mess that would have undoubtedly arisen if it had attempted to implement the program on a state-wide level instead of on a municipality-wide level. In doing so, the government was able to avoid dealing with power-hungry governors of each state. In leaving the governors of each state out of the direct implementation of Bolsa Família, not only was the center able to work directly and more efficiently with those it was serving in the municipalities, but, in being left out of the implementation, the governors were in no way able to take credit for the eventual (be it only in the short-term) success of the program (something that the Lula administration has been criticized for itself).

Accordingly, in using a national database of poor families throughout Brazil, known as the Cadastro Único, the government and its municipalities were better equipped in directly targeting those who were in most dire need of the program's benefits in each and every municipality across Brazil, and making sure that these people were the ones who received the majority of the benefits. Overall, the structure and implementation of the program has been successful enough to produce visible results of poverty alleviation throughout the country. A more detailed examination of the significant aspects of the program that contribute to its success and a measure of the degree of success of the program follows.

**IMPORTANT FEATURES OF BOLSA FAMILIA AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT HAS BEEN A SUCCESS**

First of all, the most obvious and arguably the most important outcome of the implementation of the Bolsa Família program is the fact that, from its full-fledged emergence in 2003, to 2008 (latest data), it has benefitted over twelve million families and cut extreme poverty in Brazil in half. The World Bank and Brazil's Minister of Social Development, Patrus Ananias, highlight the success of the program as having “made a decisive contribution to the unprecedented reduction in poverty and inequality,” and that it has reached “a significant portion of Brazilian society that has never benefited from social programs.” They also see the growth and inherent sustainability of the program as praiseworthy.
both the government and the individual municipalities work together to first identify the most needy populations, and then to implement the program accordingly and so as to maximize its efficiency. Similarly, the partnership between Brazil and the World Bank also plays a significant role in the program’s success – mainly in that this partnership affirms the international acceptance of the program as a valid tool for poverty alleviation by providing the country with resources to support, manage, and expand its Bolsa Família program.

The structure and implementation of the program is based on the use of the Cadastro Único system to identify and register needy populations, and the simultaneous use of resources provided by the World Bank and Brazil’s own fiscal and human resources to deliver the benefits to these populations. Such comprehensive implementation has allowed for a more precise and efficient establishment of immediate delivery of relief to the most needy. Maximizing the manpower allotted to the implementation of the program and minimizing the bureaucratic mess that usually comes along with the execution of such a far-reaching program has proved essential to the success of a program of its size.

Supporting this argument The Economist, boasts that, “[Bolsa Família] is surprisingly well administered for a program of its size and complexity.” The fact that the program is based on a simple design of one-time, single family registry through Cadastro Único (by means of technological organization) and the use of a single card system, whereby each family collecting benefits receives a debit card usable at automatic transaction machines throughout the country, emphasizes the incredible and increasing significance of technology in complementing the efficacy of the program. Without an electronic system to organize the beneficiaries and the amount of benefits each family receives on a monthly basis, it would be nearly impossible to implement the program in an orderly and non-corrupt fashion.

The fact that the program provides families with extra income for food and other necessities, serves to make living in the more rural parts of Brazil, such as the most impoverished northeastern region, more bearable. As a result, fewer people are likely to migrate to the overcrowded urban centers to look for employment. Subsequently, this boost in income, in and of itself, creates a greater domestic market demand for more goods, and, therefore, helps to uplift local economies. Also, the very fact that the program has grown from serving almost sixteen million people at its start to forty-six million people (or 25% of Brazilian residents) in 2006 reveals a certain level of success if one was to focus solely on the sheer amount of people the program serves.

Finally and maybe most remarkably, is the extent to which the Bolsa Família program has influenced the international community. Developing nations worldwide have looked to Brazil’s conditional cash transfer program as a source of inspiration and as a model for the development of their own social welfare programs; in the case of Latin America, every country, “except Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua has some version of the [Bolsa Família] program.” Even New York City, the epitome of development and modern thought, has implemented a similar version of Bolsa Família in order to help children in poor families. This shows that even if its success is only short-term, Brazil is definitely doing something right, something that seems to be working for the people who most need something to work for them.

CRITIQUES OF THE BOLSA FAMILIA

Although Bolsa Familia appears to be, and arguably may be, one of the most successful attempts at twenty-first century welfare policy creation, the program is not without domestic and international criticism. In order to summarize, and occasionally validate, these criticisms in an orderly fashion, the examination of the critiques of Bolsa Família will begin with more general dissatisfactions and conclude with the investigation of more specific claims.

general critiques…

Perhaps the most general criticism of the Bolsa Familia program, is that it is only a short-term, quick fix for absolute poverty – one that assuages the wrath of poverty in a way that creates dependency more than self-sufficiency. The logic behind this criticism is two-fold. First, instead of making beneficiaries more self-sufficient by providing them with more income and, therefore, with more financial security, the program actually impedes self-sufficiency. While Bolsa Família does provide financial assistance if the conditions of it are fulfilled, the very fact that the program gives these families money without providing a means for turning this menial financial security into more sustainable sources of financial stability makes the program successful only to a certain, surface-level extent. Many believe that this is directly due to a lack of linkages to other social welfare programs such as those promoting job creation, microcredit, etc., along with lags in the quality of basic infrastructure, healthcare, and education. According to Ricardo Paes de Barro of the Institute for Applied
Economic Research in Brazil, the program is “surprisingly isolated from other programs” – a statement that coincides with The Economist whose? statement that, “With virtually all of Brazil’s poor families in its [Cadastro Único] database, Bolsa Família could be used to give them [beneficiary families] priority access to 150 social programs…” – programs which empower citizens and help them to help themselves.  

The second reason why the program has been criticized as providing only as a short-term alleviation of poverty is because it has been suggested that the program has been frequently used as a political tool of the Lula administration. While this could qualify as an entirely separate criticism, it readily plays into the idea that the program is only a quick fix, hand-aid like policy in that it has been used to increase the approval and chances for re-election of the President and his government (as seen in the 2006 election). According to Lula and Social Policy by Marquez and Mendez, through Lula’s utilization of what has been deemed “new populism,” the president has been allowed to secure support from the Bolsa Família beneficiaries on a semi-clientelistic basis (this support, however, will only continue if the benefits are maintained).  

Sewall, in his Conditional Cash Transfer Programs in Latin America, agrees to a certain extent, in stating that, “Despite official ‘pre-election’ measures taken by the MDS [Ministry of Social Development], it is clear that Lula promoted his connection to Bolsa Família to gain political capital in advance of the 2006 election.” In fact, Lula was re-elected in 2006 with the support of “two-thirds of the population that lives on less than $500 per month…” The legitimacy of such claims are readily refuted by the direct and indirect re-emphasis of the fact that Lula is greatly and specifically concerned with the eradication of hunger and poverty throughout Brazil, not only for his political advancement, but because he understands the reality of poverty himself. The extent to which this is true is somewhat inconsequential because Lula will not have the chance to run for office again seeing as the Brazilian presidency has a two-term limit. So, while Lula may have used the program as a populist tool for re-election in 2006, the fact that the program still exists, and is, in fact, flourishing, suggests that Lula has stuck to his promise of its continued and expanded implementation. However, in considering the nature of politics and of political strategy, the criticism of this program as having been implemented as a means of securing the popular vote in the past (with the possibility of it being a sincere program as well) must be considered and certainly seems viable.

Another major and incredibly valid criticism of the Bolsa Família program is that it presupposes well-established healthcare and education systems in which beneficiary families must partake. The problem with this is that these systems are not held to, or, for that matter, do not even have the resources to, achieve the high standards needed to make a real impact on the future of the people using them conditionally. Essentially, the critique is that the program fails to “address structural problems that underpin poverty”; instead, it just temporarily anesthetizes people to the immediate effects of poverty by providing them with money to, for example, buy more food or perhaps a television. This suggests that the government should have been allotting and should continue to allot a certain budgetary percentage to invest in basic infrastructure, health, and education so as to improve the quality and existence of each. In doing so, the government would not only enhance the quality and existence of these basics, but also amplify the immediate benefits of having better systems for socioeconomic progress. The World Bank, a hesitant critic of the program, agreed with this particular criticism and has stated that, “investments are clearly needed on the supply-side to improve the quality of Brazil’s education and health system, and to fill the gaps in coverage of pre-primary and secondary school.” In focusing this investment on the country’s most needy areas, the government would essentially be helping to level the playing field by empowering inhabitants of these regions to compete with those from the more well-off.

Finally, another general criticism of the program is that, although it does serve the most needy people in the country in a relatively efficient matter, it is not serving nearly as many people as it should. As stated by Marquez and Mendes, “Although the program benefits a sizable portion of the Brazilian people, a large sector of the population, those making the minimum wage, are ineligible for these benefits – on the grounds that their income is too high… [however,] the minimum wage remains far below the real minimum income needed for the sheer survival of a family…” This argument, while plausible in a way, seems like it is asking a bit too much of the government in the short-term; those making the claim should recognize the immediate need to raise those who are in absolute poverty out of such a state before all others may receive the benefits as well. In that, the government has expanded the program greatly since its emergence in 2003 and seemingly will continue to do so for as long as the program can readily sustain itself – thereby increasing the number of people served over time.
specific critiques…

More specific critiques of Bolsa Família include the notion that compliance to the conditions of the program is not well monitored, that some people who do not qualify for the program receive its benefits, that the program incentivizes people to have bigger families, and that it disincentives employment. The first claim that compliance to the conditions of the program may not be very well monitored has to deal with the fact that due to the size and the very nature of the program, monitoring 100% compliance to it is both difficult and virtually impossible. Besides the basic structural complexities involved in checking that the conditions of the program are being met by all those benefitting from it (the responsibility of which goes to both the World Bank and the Brazilian government), the fact that many of the municipalities report 100% compliance 100% of the time is something that is inherently suspicious and that highlights a certain uncontrollable element inherent in compliance monitoring. These false reports of 100% compliance are mainly the results of teachers who report perfect attendance of Bolsa Família student beneficiaries because they understand that the families of these children have, essentially, become dependent on the program; if the students are frequently reported as absent, then the benefits of the program are taken away from their families and the families have nowhere else to turn. This, therefore, emphasizes, to a certain extent, the dependency of these families on the program, and also the moral dilemma teachers face in having to report attendance to the municipalities. Monitoring the perfect compliance to the conditions of the program is, therefore, quite a difficult task.

The second specific claim against the program has to do with the fact that, according to some, many undeserving or unqualified people somehow make it into the Cadastro Único database and receive the benefits of Bolsa Família—this is known as “[benefit] leakages to the non-poor.” Even if these leakages are apparent, The World Bank does not deem this criticism as something to worry about as long as the leakages are minimized. To a certain extent, The Bank even sees these leakages as acceptable if and when the benefits go to the “very near poor” and if the costs of these benefits are justifiable. Overall, one of the basic goals of the program is to expand itself and serve as many people as it realistically can, so, eventually, this critique may become invalid.

The third specific claim against the program is that, because the program operates on a sliding scale of benefits according to the size of the family, the bigger the family, the more money that family will receive from the program. This, according to some critics, provides an incentive for people to create an even greater socioeconomic burden on the government by having more children. This claim, along with the final claim that the program disincentives employment because families become solely dependent on Bolsa Família for survival, are not well supported and are readily refuted by the Brazilian government and the World Bank as being ultimately unfounded.

Overall, due to the fact that the Bolsa Família program has received criticism on both a general and specific level, and because the program is relatively new (it has operated for six years now), it is really too soon to call it a long-term success in poverty alleviation and human capital investment. Only time will tell the extent to which the program has made a significant improvement in the socioeconomic makeup of the Brazilian population, but as of now, this success is limited to the short-term.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Because the program has, in fact, greatly reduced poverty severity nationwide, and because it has been growing rapidly over time, its emergence may be seen, by and large, as a good point of departure in the journey towards the total eradication of absolute poverty in Brazil. As proved by the aforementioned critiques, while a conditional cash transfer program may be the best strategy for poverty alleviation available today, there is definitely room for improvement. Accordingly, various suggestions may be made in order to assure the future success and sustainability of the program.

First and foremost, it seems imperative that Bolsa Família increasingly be coupled with other social welfare programs in Brazil in order to maximize the benefits gained from implementing such an extensive program. The Minister of Social Development in Brazil, Patrus Ananias, agreed with this in his statement, “that Bolsa Família is meant to lift people from extreme poverty, not to subsidize them forever, and now that a quarter of the population is receiving it, the ministry is putting more emphasis on job training [amongst other things] for recipients.” This would lessen direct dependence on Bolsa Família by supplying these same families with resources to foster self-sufficiency by means of job creation, microcredit, etc.

Additionally, the government should focus on infrastructural investment in the education and healthcare systems throughout the country in order to ensure that education and health services are up to par and can be utilized appropriately.
stated in the World Bank project report on the program, “Any demand-side program such as the conditional Bolsa
Família income transfer program should be complemented by significant investments in the supply and quality of
schooling [amongst other things such as healthcare and basic infrastructure] in Brazil.” 50 To provide these kinds of
investments in human and structural capital, however, the government will have to maintain high levels of economic
growth – the ultimate goal being high, sustained growth with continuous increases in the provision of positive socioeconomic
change throughout the country (again echoing the very nature of a globalized social democracy). According to Monica Haddad’s
Bolsa Família and the Needy: Is Allocation Contributing to Equity in Brazil, it is this “combination of economic
development and social policies [that] may lead Brazil to a new developmental stage in the coming years.” 51

Fortunately, some of these investments and much of this growth have already begun and have been augmented by aggressive
economic programs [such as the Program for the Acceleration of Growth (PAC est. 2007)], a decrease in inflation, a higher
minimum wage, an increase in formal jobs and greater access to credit. 52 Ultimately, what has been seen and as stated by the
World Bank, is that, “Rapid achievements on the social side… have consolidated] broader support for economic responsibility and difficult reforms, thus strengthening the foundations for growth and for even faster social progress in the future.” 53 This growth and social progress may then be translated into
furthering the expansion of the Bolsa Família program and its conditions (for example, requiring higher level education completion, requiring more use of the healthcare system, and perhaps making families provide proof of efforts in their development of self-sufficiency) – all of this, of course, would assume higher quality systems and infrastructure.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overall, as mentioned in Bolsa Família: Changing the Lives of Millions in Brazil, “The results of Bolsa Família show
that it is possible to deal with poverty and income inequality in a sustained manner, integrating millions of people into
the economic and social mainstream of the country without sacrificing economic development.” 54 This success,
whether short-term or long-term, must be acknowledged as a revolutionary turning point in the development and
implementation of progressive social policy in a developing country. Only time will tell if this success will be sustained
and even increased, as well as if the tradeoffs between equity, growth, and democracy (inherent in the development of any
modern country) will persist, or if they will find a healthy balance in progress socioeconomic policy.
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49. Tracy Beck Fenwick: 121.
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55. Sara Miller Llana: 3 of 3.
57. Monte Reel: 2 of 3.
58. Cecilia Rocha: 56.
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Saddam, the Revolution, and War

origins of the iran-iraq war in perspective

by ALEXANDER SHERBANY

INTRODUCTION

From 1980 to 1989, Iran and Iraq fought one of the longest, bloodiest, and costliest wars of the twentieth century. With sustained bouts of combat over the course of nine years, it claimed nearly half a million lives and left over a million wounded.¹ The cost of the war in lost economic activity is estimated at over one trillion dollars.² Reflecting well the magnitude and intensity of the violence between the two Gulf powers, the Iran-Iraq war has become known as the first great war of the Third World.³ This status makes it especially worth studying as a possible forerunner to future conflicts in the Middle East and other developing regions with power dyads characterized by enduring rivalries.

This paper focuses mainly on the factors that are important for explaining Iraq's decision to invade and the outbreak of war in 1980. This inevitably involves questions of who or what was responsible, with some implications for how the conflict might have been prevented. The bulk of this paper, however, is devoted to assessing explanations for the origins of the war. Narrowing the scope to this substantial question allows for more in-depth analysis. In presenting my argument, I first address the long-term roots of war in territorial disputes and ethno-religious differences. I then proceed to three images of the causes of the war which correspond loosely to the famous typology developed by Kenneth Waltz.⁴ None is meant to be representative of the full breadth of accounts within each image, but the categories provide a general organizing principle that enables clearer visibility of the tension between competing explanations. If anything, however, this analysis confirms the limitations of the typology because I find that the Iran-Iraq war may be viewed most usefully as an interaction between the second and third images.

The popular view of the Iran-Iraq war tends to emphasize Saddam Hussein's personal quest for glory, or his slightly broader ambition to "play a preeminent role in Gulf security."⁵ Yet as the most important event precipitating the Iraqi decision to invade, I argue, the Iranian Revolution acted jointly through regime transition and temporary state collapse to increase the short-term attractiveness of invasion based on the limited, preventive objectives of reclaiming territory and dealing a setback to the long-term growth of Iranian power in the Gulf. The window of opportunity created by the changing power distribution would not have been so urgent had the character of the Iranian regime not been transformed along Shia revolutionary lines. Iraq would not likely have invaded a country three times its size and population if this regime change had not been accompanied by the severe weakening of the Iranian military during the period of disorder. Thus, the combination of long-term threat perception with short-term military opportunity emerges as a crucially powerful force for the outbreak of war in 1980.
ROOTS OF CONFLICT

In reviewing the potential causes of war and assessing their relative explanatory power, it may be helpful to distinguish the long-term roots from the more immediate causes. There are certain underlying conditions that provided fertile ground for armed conflict between Iran and Iraq in the twentieth century, including a long historical rivalry characterized by cultural tensions and territorial disputes.

First, it is important to understand the factors that placed armed conflict between Iraq and Iran into the realm of reasonable likelihood. There are, after all, certain pairs of countries between which war does not seem remotely possible at a particular point in history. In the case of Iran and Iraq, it is difficult to ignore the Persian-Arab rivalry, which extends back to the days of the Ottoman Turkish Empire and the Safavid Persian Empire; this contributed heavily to mutual hostility and mistrust throughout the centuries of periodic conflict prior to the Iran-Iraq war. In the twentieth century, as ethnic and religious identities were tugged towards the nation-state, the heterogeneity of each country exacerbated the security concerns felt by leaders who attempted to maintain control over their often arbitrary post-colonial borders and counter internal instability with profoundly nationalist ideologies.

The territorial dispute over each country’s borders within the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, Iraq’s only route of access to the Gulf, heightened the stakes for the Persian-Arab rivalry and increased the potential importance of cross-border ethnic or religious similarities that could transcend state borders. Iraq, especially southern Iraq where the crucial port of Basra is located, had traditionally been a Shia stronghold but found itself under the control of the Sunni, secularist Baath regime which rose to power in 1968. The Arab province of Khuzestan in Iran was the rough equivalent for the Iraqi side, a pocket of potential cross-border identification that elites may have perceived as a strategic pawn for mobilization during war.

Yet many of these conditions existed for a long time without the eruption of full-scale, state-organized violence. As Hosseini Razi notes, there are several difficulties with popular explanations for the war that predominantly emphasize territorial disputes or long-simmering ancient hatreds:

First, in their search for causalities, the authors have been rather selective in the data they perceive… in presenting the idea of ancient animosities, these authors conveniently overlook the considerably longer periods of cooperation. In stressing cleavages, they neglect religious and cultural affinities… They also tend to underestimate the common interests of the two states in oil… It is not surprising to find many references to previous differences on the [disputed] Shatt al-Arab territory but almost no reference to the Sa’dabad Pact of 1937 to bring about [security cooperation]…

These conditions had existed for at least several decades without war breaking out, despite several border incidents.

Moreover, the war was preceded by perhaps the best chance for stable peace the two countries had seen since Iraq became an independent nation-state in 1930. Prior to the signing of the Algiers Accord in 1975, each country had supported Kurdish separatist
groups in the region as a way of undermining the other’s sovereignty. After the signing of the agreement, relations improved considerably. Although some early historians of the Iran-Iraq war describe the period from 1975-1979 as one of “watchful tension,” the evidence suggests that it was a period of relatively cordial relations. Trade ties grew, the number of Iranian pilgrims visiting holy sites in Iraq increased substantially, and the countries cooperated extensively on internal security concerns such as the Shia threat to internal stability. In an ironic move, the Iraqi government even agreed to expel the Ayatollah Khomeini, who had been exiled by the Shah for criticizing his rule. One chronicler refers to this period as the time during which Iraqi-Iranian relations were “at their warmest.” As late as the spring of 1979, even after the insurrection in Iran, the official newspaper of the Baath party was expressing its desire for friendly relations. A critical purpose of analysis is therefore to determine why relations deteriorated after the signing of this major agreement.

**CAUSES OF THE WAY: three images**

It may be helpful to view the more immediate causes of the Iran-Iraq war in three images, borrowing from Waltz’s famous typology. The first image of the Iran-Iraq war, finding its origin in human behavior, tends to focus on the leadership of Saddam Hussein and the extreme personal attributes that may have influenced the foreign policy decision-making of the Iraqi government up to the onset of conflict. The second image concentrates at the level of the internal structure of the two states, but in particular the transition of the political regime in Iran from secular nationalist autocracy to semi-republican Shia theocracy. The third perspective, finally, is concerned with the structure of the international system; specifically, I find the changing power distributions over the decade prior to the Iraqi invasion, and the window of opportunity opened by the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, to be the most persuasive view of the origins of the war.

**the first image: saddam’s grand ambitions…**

There are some conflicts, such as World War II, that appear to originate to a significant degree in the unique beliefs and ambitions of one particular leader. Some even argue that if Hitler had received a death sentence instead of a prison sentence in the 1920s, the Second World War would not have occurred. In this image, likewise, assassinating Saddam Hussein would have been a realistic way of preventing war. Dictatorship, as opposed to democracy or highly bureaucratized oligarchy, can magnify the importance of one erratic individual in determining a country’s foreign policy decision-making.

Personality-driven or “voluntarist” explanations of war, however, are not equally persuasive across all cases. The Cold War, for instance, could not likely have been prevented by the death of any particular person and indeed persisted through several transitions of power on both sides. The Iran-Iraq war is more predisposed to voluntarist explanations because for most of the decade from 1979 to 1989 the leadership of each country did not change, making it difficult to assess what changes in policy might have occurred otherwise.

Voluntarist assessments of responsibility for the Iran-Iraq war generally accord primacy to the individual leaders of the countries at the onset, Saddam Hussein and the Ayatollah Khomeini. Considerable attention continues to be given to the Iraqi dictator’s regional ambitions and delusions of grandeur. Rubin and Clawson, for example, two contemporary historians of Iran, seem to imply that Saddam’s insatiable personal greed was the decisive factor in the invasion:

*Saddam Hussein, a man with vast ambitions, went on the offensive both in response to Khomeini’s vitriolic propaganda and also to take advantage of Iran’s domestic instability. Iraq’s invasion will go down in Middle Eastern history as one of the greatest miscalculations of the twentieth century. Saddam’s attempt to seize the oil-rich Khuzistan province ended in disaster.*

Adding to the perception of ruthless ambition, Saddam began to construct a classic cult of personality as he rose to prominence in the Baath Party in the 1970s. Ordering hundreds of statues and portraits to be erected in his honor, Saddam appeared to see himself as a modern-day Saladin leading the Arab world in defense against myriad crusaders. Hosseini Razi classifies his decision to invade Iran as “less than rational” for three reasons:

*First, insofar as the protection of the regime from the internal threat arising from the ideological appeal of Iran to the Iraqi Shiites is concerned, the regime had already gone a long way toward abating it by September 1980…The second major reason is that untenability of the argument that Iraq attacked for fear of being invaded by Iran…Third, it is clear*
that defense has an advantage over offense in the contemporary world… how could Iraq hope to defeat Iran? 23

Thus, in this view, the Iranian regime was neither significantly threatening nor significantly vulnerable in 1980. Saddam’s misperception of Iranian strength and opportunistic ambitions precipitated the war.

Yet these images of Saddam’s “grand ambitions” fundamentally exaggerate the responsibility of his personal proclivities for the war, and underestimate the legitimate security concerns that Iraq faced after the Iranian Revolution. If Saddam’s grand ambition had been the destruction of Iran as a major power, he might have pressed for war much earlier when the revolution was in its early stages or at least adopted a hostile stance. 24

Instead, the Iraqi government’s reaction was largely positive. It did not attempt to exploit the civil disorder in Iran, and it reaffirmed its support for the Algiers status quo. 25 At the end of July 1979, Iraqi authorities invited the Iranian premier to visit Iraq and referred to Iran as a “brotherly nation,” praising the revolutionary regime for pursuing a policy to underline the “deep historical relations” and Islamic ties connecting the two countries. The Iranian regime did not respond to these goodwill gestures in kind. 26

the second and third images: state, revolution, and war...

The second image of the war emphasizes the internal character of the state as a determinant of war. In this view, war is caused by “bad states” rather than “bad men” per se, and prevention of war entails the difficult task of preventing rule by malicious regimes. 27 Like many social revolutions, the Islamic Revolution 28 in Iran transcended the dichotomization of state and international system. It is possible, however, to distinguish two key components that affected the Iraqi government’s decision to invade.

First, it must be conceded that the Shah had been the head of a pro-Western, monarchical regime, already quite unlike the radical, pan-Arab nationalist, pro-Soviet Iraq. The rise of the revolutionary Khomeini-led theocracy in Iran, however, was critically different. It involved not merely a transition to a new political system, but a reconceptualization of the entire international order by political elites. The domestic political order became the incarnation of Khomeini’s ideology of viyaliit-al-faqih (rule of the Islamic jurist), but in theology and practice it transcended the boundaries of the “Western-imposed” nation-state. 29

The Iranian threat was not an illusion; the regime’s ambition to “export” the Islamic revolution abroad was a critical threat to the security of the Gulf states. Uprisings occurred in Saudi Arabia and other countries, which felt threatened by the radical Shia movement in Iran and began to collaborate with Iraq. 30 Iraq, which had repressed its majority Shia population for years and shared a long border with Iran, was particularly vulnerable to revolution. Iran viewed the very existence of Iraqi regime as illegitimate and called repeatedly for its overthrow. 31 As the Iranian historian Reza Ghods notes:

The Ba’athist Iraqi government promoted a secular Arab vatan, or nation; the Islamic Republic sought a religious umma, the unity of all Moslems based on religious conviction. 32

In late 1979, the Iranian leadership directly challenged the terms of the Algiers status quo by “resuming its support for the Iraqi Kurds, providing material support to Shia underground movements in Iraq, and initiating terrorist attacks on prominent Iraqi officials.” 33 This thoroughly revisionist foreign policy included a failed attempt to assassinate the Iraqi Deputy Premier on April 1, 1980. 34 By August, after a series of border clashes, the Iranian Interior Ministry had released this statement:

“The Iraqi Ba’th will soon be destroyed thanks to the wakefulness and positive efforts of the dedicated and revolutionary Iraqi Muslims, and that the roots of oppression and cruelty will soon dry up and will consign nefarious Saddam to the trash heap of History.” 35

The ideology and elite rhetoric associated with the Iranian Revolution increased Iraq’s threat perception dramatically, leading it to consider the use of armed force to contain the danger.

The second major component that drove Iraq’s foreign policy decision-making was the sharp decline in Iranian military power, which created a short-term window of opportunity for invasion. In a full-fledged social revolution, involving the collapse and subsequent transformation of the state, the coercive apparatus is thrown into disarray. Khomeini’s purges of the army and otherwise willful neglect of the military compounded these problems. Cashman and Robinson note that a “stunning shift” had taken place in the dyadic military balance, which led Iraq to believe that an invasion of Iran would be “short and easy.” 36
The military balance, roughly two to one in Iran's favor [due primarily to its three-to-one manpower advantage and its American arsenal], had now shifted dramatically. Compared to Iraq's army of 242,000 men, by late 1980 Iran's army was about half of its former size – roughly 240,000 men instead of the 415,000 it had in 1979... The term of enlistment was halved and training was neglected... Military spending fell from about 15 percent of GNP to about 7.3 percent. Meanwhile, U.S. military support ended... Nevertheless, Iraq could not expect this state of affairs to persist forever. Under the Shah, Iran had built up its forces rapidly. This had led to a classic “security dilemma” in which Iraq felt threatened by Iranian attempts to bolster its own security. It could anticipate that Iran's demographic and economic strength would soon set the distribution of power back in its favor, giving it free reign to incite a Shia revolt in Iraq. Heightened threat perception, in conjunction with a temporary flux in the balance of power, thus interacted as the chief motivation for Iraq's decision to invade on September 22, 1980.

CONDUCT AND CONCLUSION OF WAR

Iraq's conduct of the war casts further doubt on the proposition that Saddam's primary purpose was to gain personal prestige, and Iran's extreme political objectives provide more evidence of the link between the revolution and its foreign policy. There is no evidence that Saddam had anticipated anything other than a limited war to reclaim full rights to the Shatt Al-Arab and conquer part of the Arab province of Khuzestan. Saddam was eager to sue for peace, even on terms favorable to Iran, after realizing his misperception of the Iranian willingness to fight. Once Iran had resisted the initial invasion, its demographic strength put Iraq on the defensive for most of the war and military operations assumed the character of a Shia crusade bent on toppling the “illegitimate” Baath regime.

During the war, however, ethno-religious differences did not play as great a role as had been expected by either party. Cashman and Robinson argue that in the context of the Iran-Iraq war, cultural and racial differences are best understood as “baggage that can be mobilized by political elites during a time of war.” The perception among elites in both Iran and Iraq that Iraq's Shia majority could be mobilized easily by Khomeini and the Iranian mullahs overestimated religious allegiance and underestimated loyalty to the nation-state. Perhaps the best demonstration of this misperception during the war is that when Iran carried the war into Iraq in the summer of 1982, it got far less support from the Shia in Iraq than it had expected to. The fact that political elites thought that the “cultural baggage” could be mobilized, however, contributed to Iraqi feelings of insecurity and to an Iranian confidence in the counter-offensive that led to its repeated assaults on Basra starting in 1982.

The Iranian regime viewed the war as an extension of the religio-ideological revolution that defined it, making it difficult to resolve. Total victory, on which Iran had staked its providential legitimacy, was a matter of almost existential importance. Indeed, Iran's goal of overthrowing the Iraqi regime increased the likelihood of a protracted struggle. As Shahram Chubin notes, “[i]n unlimited wars, where the issues are not territorial and subject to negotiation... only a complete military victory suffices to achieve the goal.” Iran repeatedly rejected the calls from the UN and Iraqi diplomats for a ceasefire. This prolonged the fighting throughout multiple Iranian offensives, launched after the repulsion of Iraq's initial advance. By 1989, Khomeini was in poor health, and moderates such as Hashemi Rafsanjani were gaining power in Iran. When the country finally acceded to UN Resolution 508, Khomeini compared it to “consuming poison.”

Had Khomeini in fact met his end before the revolution, or had the attempts of the United States to instigate a pro-Shah coup been successful, the war might never have occurred. Avoiding a revolution that would put a revisionist, ideologically driven leadership in control was perhaps the last chance to prevent a war. Once it had begun, neither the superpowers nor the Gulf states had a compelling reason to hope that a decisive victor would emerge from war and thereby establish regional hegemony.

CONCLUSION

This paper has focused mostly on an account of the origins of the Iran-Iraq war. Two causes, both of which originate in the Iranian Revolution of 1979, emerge as particularly important for understanding why war broke out when it did. The combination of the rapidly changing power distribution associated with the revolution, and the new revisionist political objectives of the regime in Tehran, offers perhaps the most critical explanation for the outbreak of war in 1980. The increase in the threat level occurred, I have argued, largely because of Iran's intention to exploit the Shia revival to its advantage and overthrow the Iraqi regime. Thus, real changes
in polarity, short-term windows of opportunity, and vital perceptions of insecurity were at the forefront of what might seem in retrospect Saddam Hussein’s belligerent prologue to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991.

This account is consistent with neo-realist theories of war which see the source of interstate conflict in the anarchic international system. No superpowers emerged as hegemons who could provide a semblance of arbitration in the anarchic situation. Yet the Iran-Iraq war also demonstrates the ability of certain events to transcend the three images frequently used to categorize causes of war. Revolution, in particular, is associated with changes in polarity (the third image) and the internal character of the regime. The Iran-Iraq war illustrates that this has important implications for increasing threat perception and creating the windows of opportunity that provide an opening for war.

...endnotes...


6. I do not discuss the impact of culture on war at length, but it is worth observing that both the United States and Canada are predominantly white, Christian democracies with a common political culture, language, and shared history as former British colonies. This similarity makes war much less likely, if not impossible, because the threat extends beyond the physical harm threatened by a state’s armed forces. If ways of life matter to those who live them, perhaps calculating a threat involves at minimum assessing the irreconcilability in way of life (i.e. culture and political system) and the power of the adversary.


8. I refer here to the efforts of the Arab nationalist Baath regime in Iraq and the Iranian nationalist Pahlavi dynasty.


12. Razi, 698.

13. This continued to some extent after the signing of the accord, and was restarted in earnest during the war.


15. Cashman and Robinson, 276.

Rienner, 1994), 87.


18. Workman, 87.

19. These scenarios are meant to correspond only loosely to Waltz’s typology. Waltz’s image of human nature as a cause of war, for instance, is broader than the analysis of individual leaders in my first image might suggest but shares the same perhaps superficial feature of focusing on “man” rather than the state or international system.

20. Steven Walt (lecture, “The Road to World War II,” Harvard University, Cambridge, March 24, 2009). This is, of course, a much greater claim than to say Hitler’s worldview was important; the standard implied by this view is that Hitler’s unique person was a necessary cause of the war.


22. Cashman and Robinson, 283. Some suggest that Saddam may have been insane or mentally ill, but most scholars agree that this is not likely.

23. Razi, 707-712. It is important to note that “less than rational” can still be relatively rational if high standards for rationality are imposed. See James D. Fearon, International Organization 49, no. 3 (Summer 1995). The debate over rationality matters in part because if Saddam’s decision was within the realm of basic rationality, his particular personality does not warrant the attention it has been given. For a defense of Saddam’s rationality, see Cashman and Robinson, 283-287.

24. In the 1970s, Saddam had a significant degree of command over Iraq’s foreign policy as the deputy of the aging President Al-Bakr and a leading general.


27. See Waltz, 13.

28. This popular name itself indicates the potential for the revolution to transcend the boundaries of the nation-state in which it originated.


30. Cashman and Robinson, 290.

31. Cashman and Robinson, 279. See also Karsh, 87.

32. Ghods, 223.

33. Karsh, 87.

34. Karsh, 87.

35. Workman, 88. Note that offensive rhetoric can exaggerate the feelings of insecurity that are closely associated with heightened threat perception.

36. See Cashman and Robinson, 280 for a thorough discussion of why the Iraqi leadership labored under such a massive misperception.
An Analysis Of The Relative Success and Failure Treatment and Policy Regarding the Aids Epidemic in Southeast Asia:

thailand and burma

INTRODUCTION

At the time when HIV/AIDS was first being discovered in Southeast Asia, the disease was already sweeping through pockets of Africa, Western Europe, and the United States.¹ HIV/AIDS rapidly became an intercontinental foe beginning in the late 1980s, forcing many to take notice – and action. While some countries reacted immediately, even practicing a cooperative approach to policy-making, others turned their heads as the disease ravaged major portions of their respective populations. In the countries of Southeast Asia, as elsewhere, HIV/AIDS affected and claimed many, without discrimination by political or cultural boundaries. Specifically, Thailand looked to ameliorate the problem through public policy. This rather successful approach was contrary to that of Burma, whose political power has long stood against the will of most of the Burmese people. The behavior of the Burmese government has thus resulted in a dreadfully unresponsive population, reducing the country’s effectiveness in dealing with the epidemic. Furthermore, these two contrasting methods, one of public policy and the other of denial and inaction, serve to represent the dichotomy Thailand and Burma exhibit with respect to their relative success/failure against HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS IN THAILAND

The word “thai” means “free,” which can be extended to understand the meaning of Thailand, “land of the free.”² The Thai highly value practicality, peace, and beauty in every aspect of their lives. Each of these values emphasizes the importance of freedom, an overarching tenet of both public and private life. Originally from modern China’s Yunnan province, the Thai people migrated to an area then controlled by Khmer kingdom. Conflict ensued, resulting in the overthrow of the Khmer regime and the instatement of Thai rule as it is known today. As with the ousted Khmer kingdom, the Thai have, due to their sustained military power, retained this sense of opposition to outside control to the present day. In fact, Thailand proudly stands as the only Southeast Asian country not colonized during Europe’s era of Indochinese colonization. Additionally, very little war was fought on Thai soil during the Indochinese wars of the mid-20th century. Cases like these display the timeline of events which has served the formation of a Thai belief system focusing on self-autonomy, consistency, and relatively quick adaptation to change.³

Thailand is a majority Buddhist country, and Thai Buddhists view their unique depiction of Buddha as being free from all external authority and conflicts. This central figure and its characteristic associated features translate into Thai culture as widely-held, precious individual autonomy. Interestingly, the value of personal freedom seems contrary to the cultural value...
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HIV/AIDS is a disease that is known to be devastatingly crippling, in terms of its deconstruction of the immune system as well as its common depression of an individual’s morale. While the HIV/AIDS pandemic was indeed an attack quickly thrust upon the well-being of the Thai people, the Thai treated it as a threatening force to be dealt with and confronted it as such (as opposed to the ignorance of the Burmese approach).5 The Thai people’s adaptability to social and political change has been effectively influential in Thai governmental practices.6 Part of the reason Thailand has been deemed a story of “success” in addressing domestic HIV/AIDS is due to its visible, receptive national government. Non-governmental organizations, scientists and researchers, and human rights advocates have all been allowed to affect Thai public policy from the top down.7 It is this open policy and recognition of civil society that engendered and sanctioned a nationwide attack on HIV/AIDS.

As a developing country, Thailand has surprised much of the world as it has dealt with its struggle with high HIV/AIDS prevalence. Thailand saw its first case of AIDS in 1984 in a homosexual man who had previously been with a Western partner during travel. The patient’s American-educated doctor recognized the disease immediately, but the man died shortly after.8 As a public health measure, mandatory reporting of AIDS cases was instituted not long after in order to track the disease and its relative growth in transmission. This system of detection was faulty, however, in detecting the swift spread of HIV due to the stigma attached to it. Ainsworth, Beyrer, and Soucat, in their 2003 Health Policy article entitled “AIDS and Public Policy: The Lessons and Challenges of “Success’ in Thailand,” describe the fact that AIDS was largely thought to be a “foreigner’s disease,” which led to a common neglect and high stigmatization.9 Moreover, the government effectively restrained acknowledgement of the devastation of the disease, regarding it as the problem of a few homosexual men or drug users rather than viewing it as the grave threat that it truly was to the entire Thai population.10 This is not to say that the government withheld action in other ways, however. It has generally recognized foreign aid, strikingly different from the Burmese regime’s approach. In 1988, funding for reformatory public health measures came primarily from international donors and was let through by the government. Since then, whether in terms of capital, labor, or time, international aid has been a key contribution to successful Thai recovery efforts.11 A system of HIV testing called sentinel surveillance was incorporated into government methadone treatment centers for drug addicts in the late 1980s. Drug users were one of the demographic groups most affected by the virus at this time, which is why the sentinel surveillance system was first implemented among IDUs.12 In fact, the most significant rise of recorded HIV cases in Thailand occurred among drug users in Bangkok, when infections jumped from around 1% to almost 40% in a one-year period. This has been said to mark the onset of the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in Thailand.13

of collectivism typical of its other East Asian neighbors. A closer look, however, reveals that complimentary to the Thai ideal of individual governance is the equally prevalent concept of “keeping face.” “Losing face” can be caused by overstepping accepted cultural boundaries or defying the moral code. An example manifested in an act as it relates to HIV/AIDS could be Thai men’s sexual relationships outside of marriage, possibly involving a second wife and/or the pursuit of commercial sex. For men unmarried or married, if the practice of seeking commercial sex is for personal pleasure and kept private, then it is generally culturally acceptable. If notice were to reach the public realm, however, it would cause a man to “lose face” and have his social reputation severely damaged.4

HIV/AIDS is a disease that is known to be devastatingly crippling, in terms of its deconstruction of the immune system as well as its common depression of an individual’s morale. While the HIV/AIDS pandemic was indeed an attack quickly thrust upon the well-being of the Thai people, the Thai treated it as a threatening force to be dealt with and confronted it as such (as opposed to the ignorance of the Burmese approach).5 The Thai people’s adaptability to social and political change has been effectively influential in Thai governmental practices.6 Part of the reason Thailand has been deemed a story of “success” in addressing domestic HIV/AIDS is due to its visible, receptive national government. Non-governmental organizations, scientists and researchers, and human rights advocates have all been allowed to affect Thai public policy from the top down.7 It is this open policy and recognition of civil society that engendered and sanctioned a nationwide attack on HIV/AIDS.
At the time of the first case of HIV/AIDS reported in Thailand in 1984, the disease was well on its way to crippling major portions of populations in Africa, Western Europe, and the United States. The virus subtype prevalent in Bangkok (subtype B) was the same seen in New York and Rome at this time, illustrating the rapid, intercontinental movement of the disease. During the outbreak of disease transmission marking the late 1980s in Thailand, HIV/AIDS remained a disease perceptually isolated to homosexuals, male sex workers, and drug users. It was widely thought that any respectable Thai would not engage in such unacceptable actions, which made HIV seemingly irrelevant to most Thais. This disconnection and stigma yielded a naiveté amongst the majority of Thais and led to resistance to accept and address an issue that had not yet become a major destructive force to rural health.  

The government’s Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) expanded HIV testing into all 73 provinces in 1990, after beginning with government’s Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) expanded testing, the commercial sex industry and sex trafficking are major causal factors in the amplification of HIV/AIDS prevalence, specifically within the commercial sex industry and the military.16

Beginning in 1989, the Royal Thai military, a representative force determined through a national lottery, began to be tested for HIV twice a year. This testing was important, as conscription had supported the commercial sex industry with a constant slate of faithful customers over the years. Thai conscripts were usually young men of poorer backgrounds with little to moderate education or work experience and probably no formal education on the effects of HIV prior to being drafted. Also, homosexuals were regularly admitted into the Thai military (recall that the public appearance of the disease in Thailand was originally isolated—or at least though to be—to the homosexual male population).17 Army conscripts saw a steep rise in HIV prevalence to 4% nationally by 1993, up from 0.5% in 1989. In the northern region of Thailand, rates of infection were even more staggering, at 13% among the stationed military personnel.18 However, data is difficult to collect for the Thai military community, because of the required two-year term of service – many leave the military apparatus after the term. Additionally, due to the involuntary nature of the draft, researches often encounter ethical hurdles when it comes to studying this sector of Thai society.19

As previously mentioned with regard to the participation of the military in testing, the commercial sex industry and sex trafficking are major causal factors in the amplification of HIV/AIDS cases in Thailand. Further investigation into this matter has shown that visits to brothels are a common cultural practice for Thai men, particularly in the north. In fact, there is an association between Thai men’s visits to brothels and their rates of HIV infection. In 1990, the first survey examining behavioral risks for HIV was conducted in Thailand, revealing that 37% of men ages 20-24 years old had visited a sex worker in the last year.20

To support the sex industry, abduction and the sale of daughters has placed women across Southeast Asia into the sex-trafficking business, willingly or not. Outright job offers, however, are also made – and many times accepted, if seen as financially beneficial to a girl’s family. Prostitution, while it remains illegal in Thailand, is still appreciated to an extent if it brings money back into a daughter’s family. A large aspect of the circulation and rapid spread of HIV across Thailand, Burma, and Southeast Asia at large occurs through the inter-country flow of sex workers. The constant travel of the women shackled in this industry contributes to the rapid spread of the disease.21 These women can be exposed to the disease if placed where it is very prevalent and if condoms are either not available or not preferred by the client. A study performed in 1990 recorded that 38% of men who frequently visited sex workers used condoms every time. Nationally, 31% of sex workers were infected in 1994, at a time when the Thai government was well into implementation of large-scale programs combat the epidemic.22

Injecting drug users (IDUs) are another very large piece in the causal pathway of the Thai HIV/AIDS epidemic, and were the first major group to be struck by the rapid, explosive outbreak of HIV infection in Thailand. The country’s former economic reliance on domestic heroin production has had a residual influence in the form of individual reliance. Over a six-month period in 1988, IDUs reflected a rise in HIV infection from 0% to 30%.23 Injecting drug use in Thailand is practiced in brothels, homosexual bars and clubs, and the Royal Thai Military.24 The problem was so prevalent in the Royal Thai Army, in fact, that in 1991, a new procedure was instituted that mandated discharge of infected conscripts found to have contracted HIV/AIDS from injecting drug use.25 Because the epidemic was not limited to the military, nor was it restricted to IDUs, the Thai were forced to look to a treatment plan which would attack the epidemic from all angles. It is vital to understand that each of these Thai social sectors is linked, which certainly contributes to the magnitude and complexity of the Thai HIV/AIDS epidemic.
UNDERSTANDING THE “SUCCESS” IN THAILAND

The particular way that the Thai government and people combatted the issue of HIV/AIDS, which ultimately led to a renowned public health “success,” involved a progression of program implementation by many different groups. A UNAIDS case study of the Royal Thai Army’s HIV/AIDS prevalence refers to the period between 1987 and 1990 as the “awakening period,” when the reality of the HIV/AIDS threat to Thailand was fully recognized statewide as a result of the sentinel surveillance system. A state-led response included the institution of military HIV prevention and control committees held accountable to the national HIV/AIDS policy established at this time. Also, a several military units realized the importance of bottom-up approaches to tackling the disease. One group in northern Thailand, for example, in association with a local university, fostered public education through small group discussions, exhibitions, and talks. Aspects of these on-the-ground designs were effective enough that the national Thai government began to utilize the models to inform sections of national policy. The “awakening period” of increased public awareness from 1987-1990 was to foreshadow the 1991 high-level commitment and program implementation toward confronting the national struggle against HIV/AIDS head-on. From 1991-1992, the country experienced a transitional government under the rule of esteemed Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun. It was because the government was in a transitional period and because high levels of infection were finally coming to public recognition (through sentinel surveillance) that the HIV/AIDS epidemic rose to the forefront of national policy during that time.

First, the Panyarachun government expanded control of AIDS policy from an exclusive agenda point of the MOPH to direct control by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). This served as one of the first major signals of a high-level political commitment to defeating HIV/AIDS in Thailand. The OPM’s National AIDS Prevention and Control Committee outlined a multi-sectional strategic plan for addressing all aspects of the AIDS epidemic, including prevention-focused education, care for the infected, and aspects of stigmatization. The government at this time also welcomed the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which soon became a major factor in bringing about the success of the Thailand in combating HIV/AIDS. One feature of the national AIDS policy was a far-reaching media campaign, focusing on prevention, behavior change, and the benefits of condom use. One-minute AIDS education programs were introduced into regular television and radio programming, education and training initiatives were instituted in ministerial workplaces, and peer education programs were implemented in Thai schools. These governmental efforts had influence beyond the public realm, as similar complementary private sector programs were implemented as well. To address the issue of female sex workers in particular, scholarships were provided to young girls as incentives for continuing education.

In a further effort to target the sex industry, the highly successful “100% Condom Program” was launched in 1991 (a pilot program was launched in Ratchaburi province in 1989). With an understanding of the practice of widespread prostitution, though illegal, the government urged universal condom use among sex workers rather than attempting to shut down brothels altogether. Existing STI clinics across Thailand were instructed in condom use and condoms were distributed to brothels, bars, and massage parlors. Local-level acceptance of the program was the key to effective implementation. Local police, brothel owners, and public health officials all committed to the campaign. Compliance was universal among brothels, so as to reduce competition. Weekly STI screenings were utilized in brothels as part of the monitoring system accompanying the “100%” program. It is especially clear when studying the organization and coordination of the 100% Condom Program that the Thai success story owes much credit to an extremely active civil society, who in association with an efficacious government reacted to a disease that was plaguing Thai society.

On another front, antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) coming in from outside Thai borders (in addition to other means of aid) also became an important part of reducing the Thai HIV/AIDS prevalence. External donors typically increased their contributions to Thailand as global awareness of the epidemic increased. The United States alone donated $10.1 million in 1991, compared with its $1 million contribution in 1988. That the participating NGO count rose from 23 in 1992 to 184 in 1997 is demonstrative of the consistently increasing and widening involvement, both external and internal, which has led to sustained success in reducing HIV/AIDS prevalence. UNAIDS and World Health Organization (WHO) programs regarding the HIV/AIDS pandemic were tailored for and integrated into Thai national health policy from 2001. In 1997, the National AIDS Prevention and Control Committee launched a second wave of AIDS policy initiatives which maintained successful programs and developed supportive
networks in communities to prevent the spread of the disease, as well as to care for those living with AIDS. Likely as a result of the “100% Condom Program,” a survey showed that 97% of sex workers at brothels in 1997 consistently used condoms with “casual customers”; 93% claimed to make use of them with “regular customers.” 1993 saw an overall drop in men visiting sex workers from 22% in 1990 to 10%.\(^{38}\) Thailand has continued to see this positive trend in maintaining dynamic, grounded policy toward reducing HIV/AIDS. The country’s success appears to be a result of the coalition between government officials, civil society, NGOs, external donors, and a receptive public community.\(^ {39}\)

After the first diagnosis in 1984, the people of Thailand were hesitant to accept the threat posed to the entire population by HIV/AIDS. It was the surveillance program as well as the following noticeable increase in cases that guided the Thai government and people to form a response. The aggressive attack made use of both internal and external resources to combat the disease and has been proven largely successful. In fact, the 2008 UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic stated that the use of ARV therapy in Thailand has rose from 4% in 2003 to an astounding 61% in 2007. Moreover, Thailand significantly increased its use of ARV treatment in 2007, an upgrade that was only surpassed by Namibia and Rwanda in that same year.\(^ {40}\)

**HIV/AIDS IN THAILAND**

Burma provides an entirely different case to the “success” seen in Thailand.\(^ {41}\) Sharing a border and many other cultural and social characteristics, these two populations and governments chose very different paths when addressing the spread of HIV/AIDS. Unlike Thailand, Burma did not have reliable networks in civil society or local-level support for the infection outbreak. There seemed to be a void of positive national morale and motivation toward cooperating with the government in any way. It is this inequity between the junta elite and the impoverished people which has set and continues to set the tone for the spread of HIV/AIDS within Burmese borders.

Four decades have passed since Burma has seen democratic rule. Military coup d’êats marked the years between 1962, the end of democratic governance, and 1989, the declaration of martial law under the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) who currently rules the country. Under this military junta authority, Burma (whose title the SLORC officially changed to the “Union of Myanmar” in 1989 and is refused recognition by countries like the United Kingdom and the United States) is internationally recognized for its ghastly human rights abuses. Among these are the subjection of Burmese to forced labor, the deprivation of democratic elections, heavy regulation of political parties, abhorrent sexual violence, and numerous counts of censorship and restrictions of media.\(^ {42}\)

Unlike Thailand, Burma faced years of British colonization, from the late nineteenth century until 1948. Under British administration, the country experienced a stable infrastructure, an enviable education system, and a thriving economy. The country also boasted very high levels of rice production. Today Burma continues this long-time agricultural tradition – which it shares with Thailand, but also produces larger amounts of heroin and opium. Because there is a lack of laborers skilled in understanding modern technology, however, the Burmese economy faces stagnation and lack of competitiveness in the world market.\(^ {43}\)

**UNDERSTANDING THE “FAILURE” IN BURMA**

The vastly ethnically diverse Burmese population, while subjugated by force, has not failed to test the extent of military rule. Numerous instances of popular uprisings or protests have ended brutally, with the wealthy junta retaining vastly inequitable power over its poor population. A hallmark of Burmese society is the social inequality present as an effect of exclusive military rule.\(^ {44}\) Richard Wilkinson, a leading researcher in social inequality as it relates to health, argues in his 2005 publication, *The Impact of Inequality: How to Make Sick Societies Healthier*, that a high level of social inequality will tend to lead to a high level of health inequality as well.\(^ {45}\) This Wilkinson terms “a fundamental issue of social justice,” something which is “socially corrosive.”\(^ {46}\) Indeed, in Burma Wilkinson’s point rings true, as the population maintains a steep gradient of health inequality between the privileged few and the desperate others, which could be a major part of the causal pathway resulting in high HIV/AIDS prevalence. Burma’s noticebably high rates of cyclical poverty and an ever-widening income gap have made for a population devastatingly infected with one of the deadliest and most rapidly spreading diseases of modern times. The population, unfortunately, must also face the foe of a government that is turning its head from the devastation.
Surrounding Burma are parts of Southeast Asia that have extraordinarily high rates of HIV/AIDS infection, including Thailand, northern India, and China’s Yunnan province. Frequent trafficking of female sex workers without respect to political borders has proven to be a major factor in bringing about the devastating HIV/AIDS prevalence across Southeast Asia. Also, it has been shown by tests along border lines that illicit drug use has appeared as one of the prominent causes for extension of the virus beyond political boundaries. An Indian study showed particularly strong infection rates in the northeastern states of Manipur and Nagaland, both of which share a border with Burma. China’s Yunnan province stands as the area in China most affected by HIV. This part of China is also a frequent recipient of Burmese heroin exports. As the Yunnan-Burma border was home to much injecting drug use during the late 1980s and early 1990s, IDU-related infections have continued to be prevalent among IDUs in upper and northeastern Burma. Evidently, injecting drug use at tea stalls has been grounds for a number of different infections – not just HIV, which brings attention to the even more critical nature of prevention methods in Burma. HIV/AIDS was first reported in Burma in 1985 among IDUs. It was alleged that over 40% of IDUs in Burma were infected by 1989 – this figure is an estimate due to the junta-imposed regulations on research. However, this should not discount their overwhelming significance in reviewing the country’s HIV/AIDS crisis. The Burmese people have long depended on an agrarian livelihood focused on the cultivation of rice and poppies. The production of the latter crop has been fueled by and resulted in widespread heroin and opium use across the country. Inexpensive and widely available heroin rose in popularity in Burma following the SLORC seizure of national control in 1988. A partnership between the UN Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and the Myanmar Ministry of Health proved extremely valuable in producing a report in 1996 on the drug user’s struggle with HIV/AIDS. After interviews, group discussions, and observation, a team of researchers revealed that across the 36 townships studied, drug abuse prevalence ranged from 1.7% to 25%, and that 88-99% of drug users were male. In an article entitled, “Assessing the Magnitude of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Burma,” Beyrer et al. note that there is a likely link between female sex workers and male IDU partners, which would contribute to an already escalatory growth pattern for HIV/AIDS. With the help of the WHO in 1994, the Burmese National AIDS Program carried out a survey quantifying HIV prevalence among IDUs, showing a striking 74% rate in Burma’s capital city of Rangoon—among the highest in the world at the time. HIV sentinel surveillance, based on the Thailand sentinel surveillance model, was used in Burma to track HIV/AIDS infection rates twice a year. Parts of the population monitored in these surveys include STD clinic patients, female sex workers, pregnant women, and new military recruits. Note that only two sites conducting sentinel surveillance were present in Rangoon and Mandalay, two of the country’s largest cities. Data beyond 1995, however, have not been published by the Burmese MOH.

Burmese law criminalized condom use before 1993. This is an important element in the case study of Burma with respect to HIV/AIDS. In order to counter the lack of widespread condom use in a given population, a play from the international AIDS policy playbook would urge broad distribution of condoms as a first step. In Burma, however, the case is very different. Accepted, universally-applied AIDS policy is simply feasible in the situational outlier that is Burma. A population with absolutely no history of condom use requires a tailored approach in order to decrease HIV transmission, specifically within the commercial sex industry. Unfortunately, lack of government reception and accessibility in recent years has led to a near-void of AIDS policy in the country. The governmental initiatives seen in other countries are simply not present in Burma.

Unlike Thailand, the Burmese “failure” may be partially due to an inactive or non-existent civil society and highly restricted NGOs and external health programs. In spite of the 2006 policy adjustment regarding lessening the severity of regulations on humanitarian assistance, several progressive groups working in Burma have chosen to continue their work there. These include Population Services International and Médecins Sans Frontières [Doctors Without Borders] Netherlands. The United States also contributed $1 million to the work of Populations Services International in Burma in 1999. A 2004 pledge of funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria at $98.4 million over a 5-year period was put forth and initially accepted to provide support to those working to improve Burma’s health on several fronts, though a later investigation and of ongoing human rights abuses was enough to discontinue the grant in 2006. This situation exemplifies the continued strains that self-isolation and inaccessibility in foreign relations have made on internal health.

One must be careful not to overstate the lack of comprehensive, aggressive action of the Burmese government towards HIV/AIDS, as there were some steps taken in the ameliorative direction. For example, some humanitarian groups have associated with government-organized NGOs. These include
the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association and the Union Solidarity Development Association.62 César Chelala describes a then-new change of heart in encouraging foreign investment and tourism in her 1998 Lancet article on the state of Burma’s health.63 A grassroots community of indigenous health workers has also made great leaps in providing service to those in poor health: known as “Backpack Health Worker Teams,” these workers provide basic health care in the most devastated and restricted areas in Burma. Certain ethnic groups within Burma also have health organizations which work to keep clinic doors open. These ethnic groups have support from the international community, which speaks to their great underlying potential to expand service and reduce HIV/AIDS prevalence overall.64

CONCLUSION

The Burmese and Thai stories contain many shared aspects which have served to define problems and successes addressing their respective bouts with HIV/AIDS. Theravada Buddhism has long stood as a guide for public and private life in both countries. In Thailand, a majority Buddhist population means that the people hold the value of personal autonomy in high regard while retaining a sense of community and harmony amongst others and national AIDS policy in Thailand has reflected these cultural values,. While Buddhism may be prevalent in Burma, the overbearing junta suppressed its cultural expression. It did not initiate a top-down policy approach, nor did it allow for a successful bottom-up approach. Whereas in Thailand HIV/AIDS policy had a national agenda, Burma paid little attention to its HIV/AIDS crisis. Burma was said to have the second worst healthcare system in the world in a 2003 article.65 A common border to the west in Burma and to the north in Thailand holds much significance in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in these two countries. In 1991, HIV was almost five times as common among young men in northern Thailand as in any other part of the country.66 There is heavy transfer of sex workers across this border as well, and with little accurate data of Burmese HIV/AIDS prevalence, there is no telling the devastating effects this practice may have on transmission.67 The military is an important institution in both societies. In Burma, it is the authoritarian power, the law-making and law-enforcing body. For Thais, the military is a breeding ground for young, usually low-educated men who seek out pleasure in all forms. Burmese enter the army starting at age fifteen, while Thais enter starting at twenty-one. According to Beyrer, “The virus forces us to look objectively at sex, and at the ways in which sexual activity often, even regularly, violates sexual norms and challenges shared mythologies.”68 The message of this quotation is vital to understanding at least part of the reservations seen in both governments and societies when it comes to dealing with the HIV/AIDS crisis. The policy expressed in Thailand was a result of an active government with high-level commitment.69 With very different reactions to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is likely that Thailand and Burma’s starkest difference concerning AIDS policy methods was at the national level. Government influence was taken advantage of in Thailand, whereas Burma saw inaction and complacency.70 After evaluating the major contrasts in policy, one finds confidence in considering Thailand a “success” against the “failure” of the Burmese state in addressing its HIV/AIDS epidemic.

In Thailand, we see an overwhelming and continued success in reducing HIV/AIDS prevalence statewide. An active civil society, a capable and effective government, international aid, and cooperative local communities have all been factors in materializing the success Thailand has seen over the past decade and half. Trends seem to point to a bright future for budget allocation toward AIDS programs.71 The case of Burma, though, seems entirely different. Its failure as both a viable state and a public health management agency has led to large amounts of Burmese people living amidst crippling disease and poverty. What is the point at which one may label a public health crisis a “success,” or “failure”? What are the determinants? In the case of Thailand, it is well-recognized that there has been a constant, rising trend in health.72 Perhaps this considerable, devoted action and funding towards an effective slate of public health measures and programs should be among the primary indicators of success in reducing disease prevalence. Burma has, through today, discouraged international aid and offered little in the way of foreign policy or diplomacy. The authoritarian SLORC lacks provisions for collecting data for things like overall population or health statuses of individuals. There is undeniable neglect and inequality which permeates all of Burmese cultural, social, and political life and which has had numerous consequences. The stagnation of policy work and consequent prevalence leads one to deem the state of the ever-deepening public health crisis of HIV/AIDS in Burma a clear failure. Self-isolation in Burma, compared with the open policy in Thailand, is representative of two very different paths in confronting the HIV/AIDS epidemic as it took hold in Southeast Asia in the late 1980s. These paths have led to both relative failure and success, which are titles
ultimately justified through the divergent political, social, economic, and cultural climate that has come to define each country in terms of its respective responses to HIV/AIDS.

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The Formation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea:  

legitimized coercion

by CHRISTOPHER MIRASOLA

THE CHOATIC YEARS FROM 1945-1948 WERE especially important in the formation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)’s system of governance. In a span of three years, this region transformed from a subjugated Japanese colony, to a hotbed of mass political movements manifest in the People’s Committees, and finally to a rigid communist system under Kim Il Sung. Why was North Korea able to form a centralized communist state by 1948 despite the decentralized system of governance present at liberation? It will be shown that this has a twofold explanation. First, it will be argued that a coercive process of state formation allowed Kim Il Sung and his partisans to subjugate rival powers and, ultimately, declare the DPRK. This coercive process of state formation, however, should not be seen as the sole reason for the creation of the DPRK. Second, it will be posited that this coercive process of state formation was seen as legitimate by the people due to the fact that its actions were underpinned by the people’s preexisting beliefs.

To this end, the paper will be organized as follows. First, an overview of theories relating to coercion and legitimacy in state formation will be presented. Second, a picture of North Korea at liberation will be presented, focusing on the People’s Committees, alongside Kim Il Sung and the Soviet forces, to provide perspective on how these theories of coercion and legitimacy are placed within the larger historical narrative. Third, the paper will analyze how coercion and legitimacy theories apply to North Korea’s unique historical context.

This section will have the twofold purpose of showing how Kim Il Sung used coercive processes to construct the DPRK and how these processes have been misconstrued as the sole explanation for the DPRK’s formation. The coercive process of state formation will be seen through conflict (1) between ideologies and (2) between communist elites for Soviet recognition. Thereafter, theories of legitimacy will be used to show how the coercive process of state formation was supported by the preexisting beliefs of the people. This will focus on anti-Japanese sentiment, ethnic nationalism, and popular action already taken by People’s Committees. This section will also serve to prove that the system of communism formed by Kim Il Sung, at this time, was much less rigidly Stalinist than it was a form of popular nationalism based on Kim’s charismatic authority.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS: coercive state formation

The state, in its most general terms, can be defined as an institution with executive functions that has a sovereign territory that is maintained by force. There is a general consensus that its most basic tasks include making war, fostering internal order and managing whatever economic agenda it sees fit to pursue. Peters expands upon this conceptualization of the state by theorizing that states are organizations through which groups pursue distinct goals.
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and influence the ways in which politics occur. Tilly, alternatively, posits the state as a “monopoly of violence” that is born out of a conflict in which the state creates a “racket” of sorts, both protecting the people from and creating the threat of violence. This involves neutralizing rivals within and outside of the territory (war and state making), protecting the people against enemies and extracting resources to pay for those actions. The interaction of these four processes affects the subsequent characteristics of the state. Dogan and Higley also claim that the state principally emerges during times of crisis, but they focus more on the role of elites in its formation. According to them, the type of regime that emerges in a certain region is dependent on the speed with which an old elite group is thrown out of power and replaced. Of the types of crises that Dogan and Higley put forth, the two that are most germane to this paper are (1) when territories get national independence and (2) when a revolution occurs. In each of these cases, internal disorganization allows a new elite group to ascend to power. In this way, they contend that the interaction between these three concepts (political crisis, elites and regime) create the diverse characteristics of a state. Both Tilly and Peters, as a final point, make the important connection between historical context and the characteristics of the resulting state. Tilly points out that popular opposition against the processes of war or state making constrains future state actions, thereby impacting its subsequent characteristics. Additionally, he contends that the international environment can have an important influence. Similarly, Peters makes the point that particular structures are influenced by the historical periods in which they were formed.

obstacles to the application of state formation theory...

These theories of coercive state formation have variable levels of applicability to the situation in North Korea. It is apparent that each of the aforementioned thinkers took as given the absence of any dominant power or institutions at the time of crisis. This, obviously, is not the case for North Korea. As Tilly notes, even in most decolonized states the army was not provided by the people, but was imposed from outside without substantial formation of mutual constraint between people and the state. State formation in the North occurred concomitantly with the presence of Soviet troops, the SCA and numerous People’s Committees. Thus, the theories mentioned above must be qualified by the exigencies of the North Korean case, creating new parameters in which the North’s political system was formed. There was, therefore, no “war making” by state actors, in the Tillian sense, as this had been assured by the Soviet army. Also, since state institutions already existed and were supported by the SCA, these state actors/elite groups instead competed for control of preexisting institutions and the ability to mold them in the ways they wished. It is from within these more narrow parameters that we will address the coercive process of state formation in North Korea. As will be shown in subsequent sections of this paper, the partially applicable coercive state formation theories must be combined with theories of legitimacy to gain a complete understanding of the creation of the North Korean state. As Samuel Kim said, it “seems likely that the North Korean regime, in its early days and a long period thereafter, probably had a considerable amount of internal legitimacy.”
theories of legitimacy...

Before analyzing the ways in which the process of state formation in North Korea was seen as legitimate by the people, it is first important to give a synopsis of existing theories on the concept of legitimacy. In its most general terms, legitimacy is seen as the relationship between the one who governs and the governed, such that the governor has the moral claim to retain a monopoly of violence. However, legitimacy should not be conflated with obedience. Whereas obedience is the passive action of acquiescing to the demands of the state, legitimacy, even if it is habitual, is a positive acceptance of a regime. There are two opposing conceptions on how this legitimacy is obtained. The first is a more traditional argument put forth by Weber and the second a more novel one advanced by Beetham. According to Weber, legitimacy is created when the people believe in the legitimacy of the order (or, in other words, the “goodness”) of the system. This common structure has diverse characteristics based on what kind of authority provides this belief in legitimacy. In this case, Weber’s concept of charismatic authority is most pertinent. Charisma is defined as when supernatural, superhuman or exceptional powers/qualities are given to a specific leader. Moral authority, in this case, stems from a single figure who does not have limits on his/her power since legitimacy is based on his/her own charisma. It arises from an environment where institutional order is disorganized, the norms of daily life have been broken and a psychology of insecurity is widespread. Since it is revolutionary in character, there are no ordered appointments or dismissals and no institutions of which to speak. Beetham, contrary to Weber, posits that legitimacy is based on how closely the regime matches the preexisting beliefs of the people. According to Beetham, legitimacy is obtained in the following way. First, power must be acquired and exercised to advance the general interest in accordance with existing rules (written or unwritten) which are derived from a valid source of authority. Second, this validity must be proven through a demonstration of consent, which is used as proof of legitimacy and introduces a moral component to the relationship between state and society. Contrary to Weber, who simply reduces legitimacy to a belief from a complex of factors, Beetham analyzes the relationship between beliefs and legitimacy. This aids in explaining why people see certain institutions as legitimate and why legitimacy can fluctuate with time.

theories of legitimacy in the process of state creation...

Generally speaking, theories of coercion insufficiently explain how states are created except in a relatively small number of cases, where overwhelming terror and force alone can account for popular acquiescence. As can be seen most plainly in Beetham’s theory, to abstract from legitimacy would entail disregarding all the beliefs that the people hold towards the state in which they live. Obviously, this would be a grave oversight. As will be evident later in this paper, the formation of the DPRK was heavily reliant on popular legitimacy. Aside from coercion, state formation was predicated on ethnic Korean sentiment and anti-Japanese rhetoric. Additionally, evidence of prior reforms similar to policies put forth by the NKPPC and the KWP’s mass-based character further show that these state creating institutions were founded upon popular ideals and sentiments. To fully understand why theories of legitimacy and coercion must be used in tandem to explain DPRK state formation, it is necessary to situate ourselves within the historical context of North Korea at the time of liberation.

NORTH KOREA: a picture of liberation

people’s committees...

Upon liberation, People’s Committees had spontaneously formed at the provincial, city, county and village levels since, as Ree says, “it was a natural development that active Koreans stepped into the vacuum when Japanese powers collapsed on the local levels.” “Active Koreans,” in this case, included students, demobilized soldiers, village elites, landlords, and former officials. Furthermore, there was widespread support for these Committees in the local population since they reflected local sentiments. Despite the fact that Northern People’s Committees were nominally connected to the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) in Seoul, they were noted for their autonomy and were generally politically variegated, though there was a general conservative bent throughout the North. This political differentiation was due to the fact that each People’s Committee was subject to diverse political pressures depending on the locality in which they developed. Functionally, these Committees dealt primarily with local policing and other administrative tasks.
In addition, they usually exhibited a strong anti-Japanese sentiment and seized the capital of the Japanese and their “collaborators” as well.22

*Kim Il Sung*...

Compared to the People’s Committees, there is far less scholarly agreement on Kim Il Sung’s status at the time of liberation. A more traditional argument contends that the Soviets supported Kim Il Sung as the leader of North Korea from the outset. Conversely, newer approaches argue that he was in no way the “chosen” leader. According to the traditional position, Kim primarily enjoyed the support of the Soviets because he was associated with them longer than any other group in the North (approximately five years). It would be natural, they argue, that Kim be chosen by the Soviets since there were no Korean communists present in Moscow and he, unlike other North Korean nationalists and communists, was trained by their forces and was solidly anti-Japanese.23 This argument, however, is belied by the fact that Kim’s guerilla forces were not under any direct state authority24 and that, in the period immediately after liberation, Kim had no leadership position in the North despite widespread Soviet presence.25 Further, there is evidence that Kim Il Sung reached Pyongyang almost by chance26 and, once he got there, found a conservative (Cho man-sik) in the dominant position of power. Additionally, for a long amount of time, the Soviet occupational forces actively supported Cho man-sik as the de facto leader in the North.27 In sum, these scholars argue that Kim Il Sung came to power by isolating rival domestic communist groups, allying with Soviet Koreans at home, and creating a personal army. This process will be discussed at greater length with regard to coercive processes of state formation.28

*Soviet Forces*...

After pushing out the Japanese forces, the Soviet presence in North Korea was in many ways the exact opposite of the US Provisional Government. The Soviet forces began with a much more minimalist approach to their function in North Korea. Contrary to American perceptions, as Armstrong contends, there was, “little evidence that the Soviet occupation of North Korea was a ‘pre-conceived formula for a take-over.’”29 Upon Japan’s defeat, it was the stated purpose of the Soviet forces to facilitate the independence process in Korea.30 This “facilitation” was actuated through a structure called the Soviet Civil Administration (SCA), a parallel government that worked alongside provincial People’s Committees (though they were definitely in a dominant position).31 The diverse SCA bureaus were called Komendaturas. The SCA embarked on a program of centralization of political power in Pyongyang through the preexisting People’s Committees. Additionally, they began to address issues of war damages and held out the possibility of enforcing a program of land redistribution.32 However, it cannot be said, that the Soviet presence was solely a positive influence. For example, as Soviet troops pushed the Japanese off the peninsula, there were widely reported accounts of their forces pillaging the countryside.33 Despite this, there was widespread popular approval of the Soviet role in the liberation of North Korea.34 It is apparent that while the SCA may have been no less powerful than the U.S. military government in the South, there were also important differences as to the way that each government treated the naturally occurring political structures (People’s Committees).

**Summary**...

As can be seen, at the time of liberation there existed a relatively decentralized system of governance that lacked a unifying political ideology. Further, it is apparent that Kim Il Sung, despite debate as to his relationship with Soviet forces, had little authority and power at this point in the formation of the North Korean state system. Lastly, Soviet forces were viewed positively by the people and were beginning to implement a system of centralized authority as the Japanese colonial structure was slowly dismantled.

**COERCION AND LEGITIMACY IN THE DPRK: coercive state formation in north korea**

As stated previously, the coercive process of state formation in North Korea can only be narrowly applied to analyze the simultaneous conflict between (1) ideologies and (2) between elites within the communist camp.

With regard to conflict between ideologies, almost all non-leftist parties (especially those with Christian orientations) were eliminated between 1946 and 1947 through force, violence and reeducation. This elimination was catalyzed by the issue of trusteeship because, before that time, there was a degree of cooperation between nationalist and leftist groups.35 In fact, before trusteeship, the USSR actively promoted the concept...
of a joint nationalist-communist government headed by the nationalist Cho man-sik. It is doubtful, however, that such a cooperation would have lasted long since tensions were already rising between communist and nationalist/religious forces. By 1946, there was increasing resistance on both the American and Soviet sides to the creation of the Korean People's Republic as negotiations stalled between the two superpowers. This stalemate caused the Soviet Union to accept the possibility of forming a joint trusteeship with the U.S. until a more favorable unity government could be agreed upon, an option that all Koreans opposed. Cho man-sik's refusal, unlike the majority of leftists, to acquiesce to the concept of trusteeship destroyed his relationship with the SCA, ending the cooperation between left and right. The vehement way that rightists united behind their opposition to trusteeship (going so far as to create political anti-trusteeship committees in the North) prompted the USSR to preclude them from being part of any unity government. This culminated in Cho man-sik's arrest (and eventual execution), and the promotion of one of Kim Il Sung's partisans to the head of the interim North Korean governing body. This appointment definitively destroyed the nationalist movement. At that point, North Korean leftists quickly united to create a centralized Communist Party organization. In addition, there was an effort, on the part of the SCA, to equalize the composition of the People's Committees, which had the actual effect of pushing them, at least at the provincial level, to the left.

Once leftist dominance was established with the help of Soviet forces, the conflict between different communist elites came to the fore. First, Kim and his partisans were able to consolidate their power within the communist camp because Kim controlled the People's Army and all other military posts. The only other communist group that could have militarily opposed him, the Yangan group, had been forced to disarm by the Soviets upon entering North Korea. Second, Kim embarked upon a political process to consolidate and kick out rival communist groups such as the domestic communists, Chinese partisans and Soviet Koreans. In the absence of united opposition, Kim was able to consolidate power by creating the Democratic Youth League (DYL) and the Korean Workers Party (KWP). He formed the DYL to clamp down on the various ideologies present in the youth population by filtering out elements that he found undesirable. Additionally, Kim actively sought to consolidate the various leftist parties (especially the North Korean Communist Party, the Northern People’s Party and the National Democratic Party) within the KWP to solidify his power. To achieve this, Kim first leveraged the Soviet Koreans to force domestic communists (like the O Ki-Sop) to pledge their loyalty to him. Kim then cemented his partisans' place within the state structure by using his power over the North Korean Provisional People's Committee's (NKPPC) cabinet to purge other party leaders. After these rival sources of power were effectively neutralized, elections for the People's Committees were called under the new more centralized NKPPC structure, allowing his partisans to gain a larger portion of the vote. At this point, the SCA was effectively dissolved, putting power firmly in the communist's hands and culminating, by mid-1946, in Kim being declared the head of the future Korean government.

From these examples, it is easy to see why many believe that this coercive process was solely responsible for the creation of the DPRK. Furthermore, the theorists tend toward the opinion that the DPRK was simply a Soviet imposition, an ideological regime that far outlived its tenure. First, the argument that coercive power was the sole reason for the creation of the DPRK is based upon a general trend of centralization. This entailed reversing the flow of authority so that it stemmed from Pyongyang to the People’s Committees (not vice-versa), utilizing their local police forces to enforce political order and restructure society. This process of centralization entailed the standardization of names, number of members, duties and electoral procedures at the provincial, city, county, township and village levels. By 1946, Kim Il Sung implemented the “democratic reform” that created the North Korean Provisional People's Committee. He contended that this autonomy was necessary because they could no longer wait for the creation of a single Korean government, due to perceived American military aggression to the south. At this time, press freedom began to be curtailed in favor of his communist partisans. The process of consolidating the People's Committees culminated in 1947 with Kim's decision to militarize North Korean society. The argument that the USSR imposed a government upon the North is based upon the following observations. First, the DPRK system highly resembled the Stalinist style of communist governance due to the strong Soviet presence. Upon the proclamation of the DPRK in February 1947, the government also entered upon a Stalinist policy of centralization and heavy industrialization centered around a cult behind their leader, Kim Il Sung. Additionally, it is noted that the USSR and Kim Il Sung's priorities matched well from 1947-1948. This was because Kim Il Sung needed assistance resisting President Syngman Rhee to the South and Chiang, a Manchurian guerilla leader, to the North. These were two people to whom the Soviets were ideologically opposed. With regard to the formation of the KWP, it has been argued that...
older revolutionaries would never have bowed to Kim Il Sung's dominance without the threat of Soviet force.54 Lastly, the SCA's existence, and the fact that they constructed legal and cultural institutions, led many to believe that the Soviet forces effectively created the DPRK (91).55

**summary...**

From the preceding discussion, a number of important points emerge. First is the fact that coercive state formation clearly played an important role in the creation of the DPRK. In the context of the North's liberation, it has been proven that coercive state formation occurred within a narrower framework than has been traditionally treated by the theorists introduced in the beginning of this section. This narrow framework entailed conflict between diverse ideologies and between elites within the communist camp. Furthermore, it has been shown why many have accredited the formation of the DPRK entirely on the process of coercive state formation and the role of the USSR. Based on these conclusions, it would seem that there was little room for popular sentiment in the creation of the DPRK. In the subsequent section on legitimacy, the claim that coercive power was not the only reason why Kim Il Sung and his partisans were able to centralize power will be furthered.

**legitimacy in north korea...**

Beetham’s schema will be used to show why this coercive process of state formation was seen as legitimate by the people. To begin, it will focus on the fact that it was predicated on Japanese anti-colonialism and Korean ethnic nationalism, two concepts that resonated profoundly with the people. Second, it will be shown that Kim’s programs were already, to a great extent, pursued by the people and his program (through the KWP), was less communist than it was populist-nationalistic.

Japanese anti-colonialism was widely apparent in the formation of the DPRK. As Armstrong says, “anti-colonial nationalism, not Soviet style socialism, was the...dominant theme of North Korean politics as a whole.” Events during the colonial period created a siege mentality, causing many Koreans to fixate on defense against the threat of imperialism.56 This pervasive anti-Japanese sentiment naturally turned many to the communist camp, since many nationalists had been severely weakened by association with the Japanese colonial structure.57 As Cumings states, “the prime test of political legitimacy in liberated Korea was a person's record under Japanese rule.”58 The widespread consciousness of their postcolonial nature led many to support the measures taken by the Soviets and Kim Il Sung’s partisans.59 For example, the SCA's first proclamation was the appropriation of all production by the Japanese and other “traitors” in the North. The 10 Point Plan, promulgated on February 9, 1946, also mirrored anti-Japanese sentiment. This program called for agrarian land reform (the confiscation of all estates owned by the Japanese and their partisans), nationalization of land owned by Korean landlords, and a land to tiller policy.60 In the land to tiller program, the land that a peasant worked became his own property, greatly increasing the stake that the majority of the population had in the regime.61 This land reform garnered obvious support from peasants and workers,62 and was “broad based and democratic, patriotic and anti-Japanese.”63 Kim Il Sung, in general, enjoyed a high level of legitimacy in the eyes of the people since he purged Japanese elements from Korean society. This struck a chord with the people who had negative memories of Japanese occupation and allowed him to claim the moral high ground over the South where American forces kept most of the Japanese property intact.

Ethnic Korean nationalism, and its concomitant attachment to autonomy, was the basis for the state’s legitimacy in the North. The emphasis on autonomy was only magnified by their experience with Japanese colonization. First of all, this concept of ethnic Korean nationalism is predicated on an ethnic homogeneity that is especially acute in the Korean peninsula.64 *Juche*, the ideal that would become the mantra of the DPRK in the 1950s, began in the 1940s as a concept of the nation. This was based upon feelings of maternal care for the nation,65 as is evinced when Kim Il Sung says that it is important to “make our Motherland a wealthy and powerful force,” which he defines as a, “unified, self-reliant, independent state free of foreign interference.”66 Furthermore, this brand of nationalism bolstered the communist’s position in North Korea since, as Armstrong asserts, “nationalism and state socialism were mutually reinforcing, creating an ideology of extreme centralization.”67 Kim Il Sung also promoted a kind of communism that was specifically Korean, not international in character.68 The state structure and policies that Kim Il Sung (and the communists in general) promulgated were heavily based on this sense of nationalism and autonomy. For instance, the North Koreans embraced the native Korean script, *hangul*, far earlier than the South did.69 Additionally, the cause of national unity was promoted in socialist circles above the concept of proletarian revolution, especially by Kim Il Sung. In
this vein, local communists stressed the elimination of colonial and feudal aspects of society by emphasizing the concept of Korean unity.71

Lastly, the programs put forth by the communists and North Korean Provisional People's Committee (NKPPC) were already, to a large extent, pursued by the people. The KWP was less a strict communist doctrine than a broad based mass political movement.72 Up until 1948, anyone who disagreed with policy in the North could simply move South, since the border was still relatively open. Since a vast majority of the population stayed in the North, there is reason to believe that there was popular support of its agenda, such as the imposition of equal rights, labor rights, nationalization of key industries etc.73,74

With regard to the point that many policies put forth by the communists were based on the desires of the people, the best example is that of land redistribution. In 1945, there were few other regions in the world with a less equitable distribution of land.75 In Korea, there was a history of land reform that dated back to the Choson dynasty. Of note is the prominent 17th century reformer Yu Hyongwon, who called for the total abolition of private ownership of property. For the NKPPC, land reform was seen as fundamental to gaining the support of the peasants since, “peasant demand for land was a basic feature of post-liberation Korea.” This was because, even before the NKPPC began its own process of land reform, many People’s Committees had sponsored their own land to tiller policies and redid their local tax structures. Armstrong goes so far as to allege that, after the land reform, 70% of peasants supported the North Korean government. The non-doctrinaire character of the KWP is largely a product of the Sinuiju incident of November 23, 1945. On that day, communist troops shot a middle school student protesting communist “meddling” in a local People’s Committee’s affairs. This led Kim Il Sung to see the need for an inclusive communist party that was less ideologically rigid.76 This was based upon the model, developed by Mao, that the party should be based upon the masses, not strict ideology. From this point on, Kim II Sung built the KWP on an open basis where people of any social standing could enter and enjoy the opportunity for class mobility.

charismatic authority...

Evidence of Kim Il Sung’s Weberian charismatic authority is also readily evident. Proof of this can be seen in the development of Kim Il Sung’s cult status and following, which started around 1947. At this time, a “historical” legend began based upon his role in the liberation of North Korea.77 Like all charismatic authorities, Kim Il Sung was endowed with exceptional characteristics. In his case, they were put in terms of Confucian values such as benevolence, trust, obedience, and respect. Sung’s status also had a number of religious overtones, specifically stemming from the concept of filial piety (in which Kim was the “father” of the nation).78 According to Armstrong, this involved the indigenization of the cults surrounding Stalin, the Japanese Emperor and Christ,79 three major cultural influences on the Korean peninsula.

summary...

From the foregoing discussion, it is readily apparent that, despite the process of coercive state formation, by 1948 the DPRK enjoyed a wide base of legitimacy. This contention is based on the application of Beetham’s definition of what constitutes legitimacy. Fundamentally, this is based on the fact that the policies and rhetoric of those leading the process of state creation relied heavily on anti-Japanese and ethnic Korean sentiment. Additionally, the fact that many of the reforms imposed by the NKPPC were encouraged (and, in some cases, already pursued by some sectors of society) is evidence that the policies were widely supported. Lastly, the mass based, non-doctrinarian nature of the KWP explains why there was little opposition to its dictates.

CONCLUSION

In sum, it is apparent that North Korea was able to go from a highly decentralized system of local People’s Committees to a hierarchical communist system through a process of state formation that was seen as legitimate by the people. From this, it can be seen that traditional theories regarding the formation of the DPRK overlook a vitally important fact regarding the conditions under which the state emerged. As opposed to the DPRK’s popular conception as an illegitimate, repressive state from its infancy, this paper shows that it enjoyed popular legitimacy at the time of its formation. Any analysis of the DPRK must keep in mind this foundational legitimacy, along with the myriad atrocities and crises that have occurred, if it is to fully understand North Koreans’ contemporary perceptions of their state. The legacy of this legitimacy must be acknowledged and understood if the United States, and indeed the entire international community, is to create a nuanced and effective policy towards the DPRK. In so doing, the DPRK can be treated less as a mystical, erratic enigma and more as a comprehensible state.
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