

Governance, Democracy Assistance, and Public Sector Performance

[UN Data](#)

The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) just launched an excellent new website that aggregates statistical data (much of it previously stored in proprietary databases) from every UN agency and allows for easy keyword searching. Useful features like country profiles, advanced search and glossaries are also provided to aid fast and accurate research. The numerous databases, tables and glossaries containing over 55 million data points cover a wide range of themes including Agriculture, Education, Employment, Energy, Environment, Health, HIV/AIDS, Human Development, Industry, Information and Communication Technology, National Accounts, Population, Refugees, Tourism, Trade, as well as the Millennium Development Goals indicators. This initial version of UNdata is fully equipped with all the functionalities for data access and when fully developed, UNdata will have a comprehensive array of international and national databases providing instant access to a wealth of statistical information. UNdata is the brainchild of the United Nations Statistics Division [UNSD], of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the coordinator of statistical activities throughout the UN System. UNSD's core mission is to advance the development of the global statistical system and promote the dissemination of statistical information.

Meyer, S. (2009), [“Governance Assessments and Domestic Accountability,”](#) FRIDE

This working paper by Stefan Meyer summarizes the current debate on governance assessments. It describes the emergence of the “governance” concept in international development and identifies the implications of the aid effectiveness principles for conducting governance assessments. A dilemma exists between the effectiveness dimension, which calls for a single consolidated set of institutional appraisals, and the demand for more diversity in public opinion. Supporting governments’ ability to diagnose their capacities and reform steps must include the effort to convey these to citizens and enable ordinary people to engage with the evidence. The paper concludes that, donors currently seem badly equipped both to make their ‘knowledge production’ useful for governments and to enter into a dialogue with the public sphere. In addition, they also find it difficult to integrate such “lessons” into future activity.

Governance and Social Development Resource Centre. (2009), [“Institutional Assessment of the Police and Justice Sectors,”](#) GSDRC Helpdesk

This concise GSRDC Helpdesk report covers a number of donor designed frameworks for assessing the policing and justice sector and provides links to specific assessments and documents. It includes information from case studies as well as analytic frameworks for the institutional assessment of the security and justice sector as a whole. It appears

that academic and policy literature on security sector programs generally hold that substantial reform of the police requires simultaneous reform of the justice system, as well. However, it is the case that similar principles of reform lead donors to tackle institutional assessments of policing and justice differently. The report suggests that assessments are rarely followed up with comprehensive or systematic action as is generally prescribed in donor frameworks and guidance.

Landman, T. and Häusermann, J. (2003), ["Map Making and Analysis of the Main International Initiatives on Developing Indicators on Democracy and Good Governance,"](#) University of Essex, Human Rights Centre, Report for the Statistical Office of the Commission of the European Communities (EUROSTAT)

This project for the Statistical Office of the European Commission collates and evaluates existing initiatives to measure indicators of democracy, human rights and good governance and makes recommendations to develop more efficient tools of measurement. It concludes that some progress has been made in developing robust measures of the concepts and in placing increasing emphasis on ensuring that the indicators used are relevant to the concept being measured, which itself entails clarity in conceptualisation. However, it also notes a major difficulty in the tendency to reuse data produced for other purposes, and an over-reliance on a few source materials such as that produced by Amnesty International, Freedom House and the US State Department. This problem is exacerbated by a tendency of IGOs to collate material from a number of sources and reproduce it uncritically within their own analysis, effectively giving it another layer of credence. It further suggests that the measurement of good governance is often problematic when reliance is often placed on existing initiatives to measure particular aspects of democracy and/or human rights, which may be taken out of context. A particular problem may arise when priorities set by national governments for data collection do not coincide with those required by donors. Consequently, the effort to rank countries has political implications and is methodologically fraught with difficulties in aggregating different dimensions into composite indices. In the absence of measures for certain key categories, such rankings tend to produce inaccurate (perhaps even meaningless) results. Finally, there is often missing source data and indicators in a number of critical areas, such as the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights (particularly cultural rights), the rule of law, equality of access to justice, the measure of judicial independence, participation of individuals in public affairs, and the engagement of civil society.

Jacoby, T. and James, E. (2009), ["Emerging Patterns in the Reconstruction of Conflict Affected Countries,"](#) *Disasters/* Overseas Development Institute, April 2009

This paper presents some background on the general issues that surround the reconstruction of conflict-affected countries, before going on to comment on some of the more prominent concerns that have emerged within the sphere of humanitarianism over the past decade or so. To contextualize the overall theme of this special edition, it

then points to three areas of commonality among the five substantive papers—namely, issues of “marketization,” “politicization” and “securitization.” These issues represent emerging patterns in the reconstruction of conflict-affected countries generally. The focus of this special edition thus has a broader resonance and, as such, it might be considered to be representative of wider geopolitical trends. These three patterns have combined to narrow the space in which humanitarian and reconstructive interventions into conflict-affected countries are organized and undertaken.

Beschel, R. and Mountfield, E. (2002), [“International Experience with Civil Service Censuses,”](#) PREM Note Number 62, World Bank

Since the early 1980s many developing countries have tried to count and contain the number of civil servants as part of public sector reforms. But a recent survey by the World Bank and the International Records Management Trust shows that many such exercises have had limited success. This PREM note argues that to be more effective, censuses should have clearer objectives, use more appropriate methodologies, and pursue long-term improvements in payroll and personnel systems. The note first describes the results of the survey, which reviewed 31 civil service censuses worldwide, and goes on to explore the common objectives of a census and the methodologies used to conduct censuses. The final section examines the lessons learned from international experience, noting that civil service censuses have often had mixed results.

Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). (2004), [“Monitoring Women’s Participation in Elections,”](#) OSCE

This handbook from the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) provides guidance on monitoring women's participation in the electoral process. It sets out practical steps to be taken to integrate a gender perspective into election observation and should serve to ensure that conclusions drawn on the extent to which an election process meets OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections fully takes into account how the election process affects both women and men. The handbook also has wide relevance to other international election observation efforts and to the understanding of how women’s political participation is measured by international organizations.

Eastern Europe

Shapovalova, N. (2009), [“The EU’s Eastern Partnership: Still Born?”](#) FRIDE

A new initiative for six of the EU's Eastern neighbors that was officially launched this May, promises increasing engagement in the region on the part of the EU, and a

stronger impetus for democracy and market oriented reforms. The EU offers to strengthen bilateral ties with the Eastern Partners as well as to promote regional integration at the EU's borders. The EU is increasing its engagement with the Eastern neighborhood in order to deal with numerous crises. Belarus and Azerbaijan are consolidating their authoritarian regimes. Hit by the economic crisis, Ukraine, post-electoral Moldova and post-war Georgia are in political turmoil. The region's security is threatened by the territorial and energy conflicts. This brief argues that the Eastern Partnership does not offer strong and timely incentives for reform in the post-soviet countries. The EU offers too little to the Eastern periphery's frontrunners and too much to the laggards. The envisaged regional cooperation initiatives are not backed by sufficient aid. It concludes that in order to fulfill the Eastern Partnership's ambitious objectives, the EU should take more responsibility for Europe's East and make a more generous offer to the Eastern neighbors.

Epstein, R. and Seidelmeier, U. (2008), ["Beyond conditionality: international institutions in post-communist Europe after enlargement."](#) *Journal of European Public Policy*

According to the dominant incentive-based explanation, European Union (EU) conditionality has been particularly effective when the EU offered a credible membership incentive and when incumbent governments did not consider the domestic costs of compliance threatening to their hold on power. However, after the EU's eastern enlargement the influence of international institutions could then be expected to decrease in three different contexts: (i) the new member states after accession; (ii) the current candidate countries; and (iii) the post-communist countries in the European neighborhood policy. Yet although the incentive-based explanation receives support in some issue areas, in others, external influence is more enduring than predicted. To the extent that our understanding of the power of incentives is complicated by post-enlargement findings, there are new avenues for research into the full range of mechanisms that international institutions have at their disposal for influencing target states.

Middle East and North Africa

McInerney, S. (2009), ["The Federal Budget and Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2010: Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights in the Middle East,"](#) The Project on Middle East Democracy

This report from the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) analyzes funding changes in funding for democracy assistance to the broader Middle East in the Fiscal Year 2010 Federal Budget. The report finds that, in general, the President's first annual budget demonstrates that the Obama administration has requested large increases in funding for U.S programs . in supporting democracy, governance, and human rights in

the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA). For one example, requested funding for democracy and governance is doubled. For the entire MENA region, the administration has requested \$1.54 billion for democracy and governance programs – more than double the amount in President Bush’s annual request for FY09. However, it has also shifted funds in the Arab world away from partnerships with local civil society actors and toward other initiatives, including rule of law and governance programs. The administration reduced its support for civil society through bilateral foreign assistance in the Arab world, while adding funding to State Department tools specifically designed for such work, including MEPI and the Middle East programming within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL). However, the cuts to civil society are far greater than the new increases. Compared to current levels of funding, the FY10 request represents a 29 percent cut for Arab civil society programs. Cuts for Egypt and Jordan are especially steep at about 40 percent.

South and Central Asia

Larson A. (2008), [“A Mandate to Mainstream: Promoting Gender Equality in Afghanistan.”](#) Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)

This report from the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit finds that gender mainstreaming is not being substantively implemented in the Administration, although it is the government’s principal strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is a valuable tool and could be more effectively executed. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) emphasize gender as a cross-cutting issue. However, technical factors limit the efficacy of existing mechanisms within ministries. Furthermore, institutional cultures of welfare expectations, patronage and perceptions of gendered hierarchies affect the implementation of gender mainstreaming. This report finds that measures of positive discrimination currently employed in Afghanistan are not adequate to combat gender inequalities and that measures of institutional reform operate in parallel to existing institutional practices and so they are significantly limited in their efficacy. Interdepartmental mechanisms in ministries have the potential to be effective, provided that they have strong connections to senior policy makers within the ministry structure. It should not be assumed that attitudes of ministry staff towards gender equality are wholly negative. While a culture of male priority and dominance exists, there is a recognized need to emphasize women’s public roles.

Interesting Blogs about Development and Governance

[Blood and Milk](#) is a blog by public health specialist Alanna Shaikh. Shaikh works on development projects in Tajikistan for several USAID contractors. She blogs about international development generally, reflecting on what she has seen work over the

past decade, and what she has seen fail.

[K in The Stan](#) is the journal-type blog of a Fulbright Scholar. The mysterious K takes an irreverent look at democracy assistance in Kyrgyzstan.