

NHSMUN50

National High School Model United Nations



SPECPOL

BACKGROUND GUIDE



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Dennis Zhang

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Christian Hernandez

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Therese Salomone

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Hello Delegates!

I am so happy to welcome you to NHSMUN 2024! I am Sebastian Jimenez (he/him), and I am thrilled to be your Director of the best committee, SPECPOL, for Session I. I was once a delegate like you all as well! I competed in NHSMUN for two years, once in SPECPOL in 2021 and UNCTAD in 2022. Additionally, I was the Assistant Director for the Legal Committee in 2023. I am so excited to be back as a Director in SPECPOL, my original committee, and I cannot wait to meet you all. Alison Miu-Martinez and I, your SPECPOL Session II Director, are very grateful to be given this opportunity to chair this committee and further our conversations through our topics!

I am from Tampa, Florida, a second-year student at the University of Central Florida. Currently, I am studying political science (pre-law track) with a minor in finance and concentrating my studies on international and corporate areas of interest. My dream is to become a lawyer someday, and I spent my summer working with the Pre-Law Advising Office at my university and applying for internships. When it is not raining in Florida, I enjoy going out with my friends to social events, thrifting, and finding a nice spot to read and write some short stories. My favorite artists of all time have to be Taylor Swift (I did go to the 1989 Tour, Eras Tour concerts, and one more in late 2024!), The Weeknd, beabadoobee, Gracie Abrams, and Rina Sawayama.

cannot wait to read and hear about all of the ideas you came up with through your position papers and within the committee sessions!

NHSMUN has been a place where I learned a lot about myself and was able to explore my interests with fellow delegates. Being able to speak publicly to a large crowd has taught me how to debate and express solutions to current modern global issues. Committee sessions are an opportunity for you to step outside your comfort zones and develop new connections with delegates from around the world. I sincerely hope you find your NHSMUN experience to be as unforgettable as it has been for me throughout all these years! If you have any questions, concerns, or overall inquiries that you would like to bring to me or Alison, please feel free to reach out to us. We are more than happy to be there for you as a resource. Happy debating in NHSMUN 2024! I cannot wait to see what you all bring to committee!

Sincerely,

Sebastian Jimenez

Director, The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)

Session I

nhsmun.specpol@imuna.org



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Hi Delegates!

My name is Alison Miu-Martinez (she/her), and I am the director of Session II SPECPOL this year. I could not be more excited to welcome you to NHSMUN 2024 and the best committee ever, SPECPOL! I joined Model United Nations in my freshman year of high school and competed all four years. I also helped run my high school's conference during my junior and senior years. In terms of NHSMUN experience, specifically, I attended as a delegate in the Security Council in 2021 and served as an Assistant Director for SOCHUM in 2023. It is safe to say I have had an amazing experience both as a delegate and on staff, and I cannot wait to be your director.

I am from Huntington Beach, California, and I am a second year at Northwestern University. My major changes every other day, but as I write this, it is political science and cognitive science. I spent the past summer working as a research assistant and a marketing intern, and I hope to become a lawyer one day. Outside of school, I enjoy going out to brunch with my friends, shopping, getting my nails done, and playing with my two dogs. I always have headphones in. Right now, my favorite artists/bands are Dominic Fike, SZA, Foster the People, Dayglow, and The Weeknd.

Sebastian and I chose Topic A: The Status of Gibraltar and Topic B: The Effects of Foreign Aid in Sub-Saharan Africa to be this year's SPECPOL topics. We are both very passionate about these issues and are confident that these will be fruitful topics to debate. Specifically, I had the pleasure of writing Topic B. When researching this pressing issue, I encourage you all to think about the role the international community plays in providing foreign aid and how that can be applied to different types of country policies and solutions. I cannot wait to see what creative ideas you all bring to the table in both your position papers and committee!

On a more personal note, MUN has always been an essential part of my life as it helped me get over my fear of public speaking and led to me meeting some amazing people. I genuinely believe it is an excellent opportunity to push yourself out of your comfort zone, meet new people, and learn more about the issues within our world today. From a delegate's perspective, I know all too well the stress of memorizing speeches and talking to other delegations. Because of that, I want you all to see that it is my number one priority to ensure that everyone is in a comfortable and encouraging learning environment. I hope your NHSMUN experience is everything you could want and more! Sebastian and I are always open to questions and concerns, so please feel free to reach out.

Best wishes,

Alison Miu-Martinez

Director, The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)

Session II

nhsmun.specpol@imuna.org



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A Note on the NHSMUN Difference

Esteemed Faculty and Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2024! We are Dennis Zhang and Christian Hernandez, and we are this year's Secretary-General and Director-General. Thank you for choosing to attend NHSMUN, the world's largest and most diverse Model United Nations conference for secondary school students. This year is particularly special as NHSMUN celebrates its **50th Anniversary**, and we are thrilled to welcome you to our hometown, New York City, this March for this landmark year!

As a space for collaboration, consensus, and compromise, NHSMUN strives to transform today's brightest thinkers, speakers, and collaborators into tomorrow's leaders. Our organization provides a uniquely tailored experience for all through innovative and accessible programming. We believe that an emphasis on education through simulation is paramount to the Model UN experience, and this idea permeates throughout numerous aspects of the conference:

Realism and accuracy: Although a perfect simulation of the UN is never possible, we believe that one of the core educational responsibilities of MUN conferences is to educate students about how the UN System works. Each NHSMUN committee is a simulation of a real deliberative body so that delegates can research what their country has said in the committee. Our topics are chosen from the issues currently on the agenda of that committee (except historical committees, which take topics from the appropriate time period). We also strive to invite real UN, NGO, and field experts into each committee through our committee speakers program. Moreover, we arrange meetings between students and the actual UN Permanent Mission of the country they are representing. Our delegates have the incredible opportunity to conduct first-hand research, asking thought-provoking questions to current UN representatives and experts in their respective fields of study. These exclusive resources are only available due to IMUNA's formal association with the United Nations Department of Global Communications and consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. No other conference goes so far to deeply immerse students into the UN System.

Educational emphasis, even for awards: At the heart of NHSMUN lies education and compromise. Part of what makes NHSMUN so special is its diverse delegate base. As such, when NHSMUN distributes awards, we strongly de-emphasize their importance in comparison to the educational value of Model UN as an activity. NHSMUN seeks to reward students who excel in the arts of compromise and diplomacy. More importantly, we seek to develop an environment in which delegates can employ their critical thought processes and share ideas with their counterparts from around the world. Given our delegates' plurality of perspectives and experiences, we center our programming around the values of diplomacy and teamwork. In particular, our daises look for and promote constructive leadership that strives towards consensus, as real ambassadors do in the United Nations.

Debate founded on strong knowledge and accessibility: With knowledgeable staff members and delegates from over 70 countries, NHSMUN can facilitate an enriching experience reliant on substantively rigorous debate. To ensure this high quality of debate, our staff members produce detailed, accessible, and comprehensive topic guides (like the one below) to prepare delegates for the nuances inherent in each global issue. This process takes over six months, during which the Directors who lead our committees develop their topics with the valuable input of expert contributors. Because these topics are always changing and evolving, NHSMUN also produces update papers intended to bridge the gap of time between when the background guides are published and when committee starts in March. As such, this guide is designed to be a launching point from which delegates should delve further into their topics. The detailed knowledge that our Directors provide in this background guide through diligent research aims to increase critical thinking within delegates at NHSMUN.

Extremely engaged staff: At NHSMUN, our staffers care deeply about delegates' experiences and what they take away from their time at NHSMUN. Before the conference, our Directors and Assistant Directors are trained rigorously through hours

of workshops and exercises both virtual and in-person to provide the best conference experience possible. At the conference, delegates will have the opportunity to meet their dais members prior to the first committee session, where they may engage one-on-one to discuss their committees and topics. Our Directors and Assistant Directors are trained and empowered to be experts on their topics and they are always available to rapidly answer any questions delegates may have prior to the conference. Our Directors and Assistant Directors read every position paper submitted to NHSMUN and provide thoughtful comments on those submitted by the feedback deadline. Our staff aims not only to tailor the committee experience to delegates' reflections and research but also to facilitate an environment where all delegates' thoughts can be heard.

Empowering participation: The UN relies on the voices of all of its member states to create resolutions most likely to make a meaningful impact on the world. That is our philosophy at NHSMUN too. We believe that to properly delve into an issue and produce fruitful debate, it is crucial to focus the entire energy and attention of the room on the topic at hand. Our Rules of Procedure and our staff focus on making every voice in the committee heard, regardless of each delegate's country assignment or skill level. Additionally, unlike many other conferences, we also emphasize delegate participation after the conference. MUN delegates are well researched and aware of the UN's priorities, and they can serve as the vanguard for action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, we are proud to connect students with other action-oriented organizations to encourage further work on the topics.

Focused committee time: We feel strongly that face-to-face interpersonal connections during debate are critical to producing superior committee experiences and allow for the free flow of ideas. Ensuring policies based on equality and inclusion is one way in which NHSMUN guarantees that every delegate has an equal opportunity to succeed in committee. In order to allow communication and collaboration to be maximized during committee, we have a very dedicated administrative team who work throughout the conference to type up, format, and print draft resolutions and working papers.

As always, we welcome any questions or concerns about the substantive program at NHSMUN 2024 and would be happy to discuss NHSMUN pedagogy with faculty or delegates.

Delegates, it is our sincerest hope that your time at NHSMUN will be thought-provoking and stimulating. NHSMUN is an incredible time to learn, grow, and embrace new opportunities. We look forward to seeing you work both as students and global citizens at the conference.

Best,

Dennis Zhang
Secretary-General

Christian Hernandez
Director-General

A Note on Research and Preparation

Delegate research and preparation is a critical element of attending NHSMUN and enjoying the debate experience. We have provided this Background Guide to introduce the topics that will be discussed in your committee. We encourage and expect each of you to critically explore the selected topics and be able to identify and analyze their intricacies upon arrival to NHSMUN in March.

The task of preparing for the conference can be challenging, but to assist delegates, we have updated our [Beginner Delegate Guide](#) and [Advanced Delegate Guide](#). In particular, these guides contain more detailed instructions on how to prepare a position paper and excellent sources that delegates can use for research. Use these resources to your advantage. They can help transform a sometimes overwhelming task into what it should be: an engaging, interesting, and rewarding experience.

To accurately represent a country, delegates must be able to articulate its policies. Accordingly, NHSMUN requires each delegation (the one or two delegates representing a country in a committee) to write a position paper for each topic on the committee's agenda. In delegations with two students, we strongly encourage each student to research each topic to ensure that they are prepared to debate no matter which topic is selected first. More information about how to write and format position papers can be found in the NHSMUN Research Guide. To summarize, position papers should be structured into three sections:

I: Topic Background – This section should describe the history of the topic as it would be described by the delegate's country. Delegates do not need to give an exhaustive account of the topic, but rather focus on the details that are most important to the delegation's policy and proposed solutions.

II: Country Policy – This section should discuss the delegation's policy regarding the topic. Each paper should state the policy in plain terms and include the relevant statements, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policy. Comparisons with other global issues are also appropriate here.

III. Proposed Solutions – This section should detail the delegation's proposed solutions to address the topic. Descriptions of each solution should be thorough. Each idea should clearly connect to the specific problem it aims to solve and identify potential obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided. The solution should be a natural extension of the country's policy.

Each topic's position paper should be **no more than 10 pages** long double-spaced with standard margins and font size. **We recommend 3–5 pages per topic as a suitable length.** The paper must be written from the perspective of your assigned country and should articulate the policies you will espouse at the conference.

Each delegation is responsible for sending a copy of its papers to their committee Directors via [myDais](#) on or before **February 23, 2024**. If a delegate wishes to receive detailed feedback from the committee's dais, a position must be submitted on or before **February 2, 2024**. The papers received by this earlier deadline will be reviewed by the dais of each committee and returned prior to your arrival at the conference.

Complete instructions for how to submit position papers will be sent to faculty advisers via email. If delegations are unable to submit their position papers on time, please contact us at info@imuna.org.

Delegations that do not submit position papers will be ineligible for awards.

Committee History

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) is known as the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. Originally the Decolonization Committee, the Fourth Committee previously focused on territories placed under UN trusteeship. In 1993, the current Fourth Committee was formed out of a merger of the Special Political Committee and Decolonization Committee by Resolution 47/233. This was due to a decline in colonial issues.¹ Today, SPECPOL's mandate is far broader, addressing issues regarding political destabilization and decolonization. This includes a variety of problems, including territorial disputes, UN peacekeeping operations, weapon contamination, peace in outer space, and the effects of atomic radiation.² More specific examples include Israeli occupation in Palestine or mine action in Vietnam.

Though colonialism has declined substantially over the past few decades, SPECPOL still faces dilemmas on matters such as neocolonialism and self-determination. There remain 16 colonized territories, containing over two million people, along with numerous additional regions facing challenges regarding sovereignty and self-determination.³ SPECPOL's role includes passing resolutions to help support, monitor, and guide such regions. Examples include economic development and the post-colonial issues faced by the nations of the Lesser Antilles.

Some of the most important issues addressed by SPECPOL are the UN's peacekeeping operations around the world. From observing the India-Pakistan ceasefire to maintaining security in the Middle East, these missions face a variety of challenges. Since the Cold War, the UN has conducted 16 peacekeeping operations. 11 successfully implemented mandates, preventing the recurrence of war. Of the 12 current operations, six are located in Africa, including the four largest.⁴ On the one hand, UN operations have been attributed to reduced violence during conflicts and rebuilding state institutions. However, some have also been criticized as ineffective, corrupt, or violent.⁵ For example, the UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia withdrew after deadly attacks on UN forces, followed by brutal retaliatory strikes (i.e., Bloody Monday). Particularly after such failures, the UN must navigate a challenging and unpredictable landscape.

As one of the UN's six main General Assembly committees, SPECPOL does not pass binding resolutions for member states, nor does it have direct control over any UN resources. Thus, it frequently runs into the challenge of enforcing its resolutions or convincing parties to adhere to them. This is the case with the Israeli occupation of Palestine. However, SPECPOL is a place where countries can discuss issues and grievances. Like all other committees, all General Assembly members are also members of SPECPOL, and important discussions in SPECPOL often make it to the Security Council.

1 UN General Assembly, Resolution 47/233, Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, A/RES/47/233, (July 28, 1993), <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/ares47233.php>.

2 "Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee)," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship Argentina, accessed September 25, 2022, <https://enaun.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/content/fourth-committee-special-political-and-decolonization-committee>.

3 John Quintero, "Residual Colonialism in the 21st Century - United Nations University," *United Nations University*, April 29, 2012, <https://unu.edu/publications/articles/residual-colonialism-in-the-21st-century.html>.

4 "Where We Operate," United Nations Peacekeeping (United Nations), accessed October 11, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate>.

5 Virginia Page Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work?: Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691136714/does-peacekeeping-work>.



SPECPOL

NHSMUN 2024



TOPIC A: THE STATUS OF GIBRALTAR

Photo Credit: PookieFugglestein

Introduction

The Strait of Gibraltar, located in the Mediterranean Sea, has been a point of tension between the United Kingdom (UK) and Spain for hundreds of years.¹ While the Strait only has a population of just over 30 thousand people, Gibraltar represents an essential part of the economies of both countries. If Gibraltar were an independent state, it would have the seventh-highest GDP per capita in the world.² Central to the conflict is a larger conversation about self-determination and what happens to colonial holdovers in the modern day.

The War of Spanish Succession in the 1700s began the conflict over the Strait of Gibraltar. The war started to prevent the unification of France and Spain. The United Kingdom claimed that a union between the two states would disrupt the balance in Europe.³ During the conflict, the UK captured Gibraltar, which was originally Spanish territory, and, ultimately, the conflict resulted in Spain having to give up Gibraltar to the UK.⁴ This began the ongoing disagreements between the two states over ownership, eventually bringing the United Nations into the debate.

For many years, the United Nations has questioned both Spain's and the UK's claim for Gibraltar. The UN has also suggested adopting resolutions to end the conflict. In 1946, the United Nations listed Gibraltar as a Non-Self-Governing Territory.⁵ A Non-Self-Governing Territory is defined as a territory that has not met a full measure of self-government.⁶ Additionally, the people of Gibraltar have repeatedly rejected the idea of shared sovereignty under both Spain and the UK, preferring to remain a British territory.⁷ While the United Nations has repeatedly urged the two countries to work together on resolving the conflict over Gibraltar, it seems that neither side is willing to budge.

Delegates within the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) must look at the relevant historical context of Gibraltar. One component of the conversation

surrounding Gibraltar is how to create solutions for territorial disputes and promote self-determination. With various territories and legacies of colonial rule worldwide, the future of self-determination is a growing concern. It is essential to consider multiple situations and territorial disputes to promote sovereignty and self-determination. Colonial powers can bring new solutions to these modern issues.

SPECPOL primarily focuses on peacekeeping and ensuring the discovery of non-violent solutions to resolving territorial disputes. Delegates must work together to find a solution to a centuries-old conflict. The UK and Spain have extensive histories of colonial power and growing empires worldwide. The issue of Gibraltar speaks to a more significant concern of how to compromise on both sovereignty and self-determination. Delegates should consider SPECPOL's role in this topic, "The Status of Gibraltar," and consider their countries' historical perspectives and current actions to discover solutions to Gibraltar's self-determination issues.

History and Description of the Issue

The Significance of the Strait of Gibraltar

To understand the conflict between the United Kingdom and Spain, delegates must be aware of the significance of the Strait

1 Caryl-Sue Micalizio, "What Is the Gibraltar Dispute?" *National Geographic - Education Blog*, April 4, 2017, <https://blog.education.nationalgeographic.org/2017/04/04/what-is-the-gibraltar-dispute/>.

2 Lara Williams, "Why Gibraltar matters to both UK and Spain," *Investment Monitor*, September 20, 2022, <https://www.investmentmonitor.ai/features/why-gibraltar-matters-to-the-uk-and-spain/?cf-view>.

3 "War of Spanish Succession," The Royal Hampshire Regiment, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.royalhampshireregiment.org/about-the-museum/timeline/war-spanish-succession/>.

4 "War of the Spanish Succession" *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/War-of-the-Spanish-Succession>.

5 "Gibraltar," United Nations, accessed August 14, 2023, <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/nsrgt/gibraltar>.

6 "Non-Self-Governing Territories | the United Nations and Decolonization," United Nations, accessed August 14, 2023, <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/nsrgt>.

7 "Cooperation yes- joint sovereignty, no," HM Government of Gibraltar, July 8, 2022, <https://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/press-releases/cooperation-yes-joint-sovereignty-no-says-government-4802022-8082>.

of Gibraltar. The Strait is a crucial sea lane because it connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Mediterranean Sea.⁸ Many states in Northwestern Africa, primarily Morocco, border the Mediterranean Sea. Because of this, maritime trading for resources, such as oil, minerals, and steel, is accessible through the Strait. The Strait allows for significant imports and exports to pass through.⁹ This makes maritime trading with Gibraltar crucial for global superpowers like the UK and their allies. Gibraltar's ports are also top partners with Spain, Germany, Morocco, the Netherlands, and Belgium. This brings Gibraltar a major amount of general cargo and other types of shipments.¹⁰ Another advantage of the Port of Gibraltar is how accessible it is to cruise ships, vessels, yachts, and other forms of maritime transport.¹¹

The United Kingdom benefits heavily from its relationship with Gibraltar. Currently, Gibraltar is a British Overseas Territory (BOT) of the UK.¹² This means that Gibraltar has its own Parliament and conducts its internal affairs. However, the United Kingdom is responsible for Gibraltar's foreign affairs and defense.¹³ Because Gibraltar is not independent, it is allowed to set its taxes and tariffs on goods imported from outside of the European Union (EU).¹⁴ This brings in much revenue for both Gibraltar and the United Kingdom. Gibraltar brings financial prosperity to the country. In 2021, the United Kingdom exported just under USD 500 million to Gibraltar, and Gibraltar was the UK's 51st largest trading partner.¹⁵ The UK mainly exports cars, petroleum, and boats to Gibraltar,

with export rates increasing steadily over the last 20 years.¹⁶

Additionally, Gibraltar is home to a UK naval base, which provides the UK and its allies with safe passage from invasions as well as protection from neighboring countries.¹⁷ Gibraltar also benefits from this relationship with the UK. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) provides protection for the UK, which then transfers over to Gibraltar since it is a BOT.¹⁸ Currently, both NATO and the UK naval base provide protection for Gibraltar from potential invasions and other threats.¹⁹

In addition to its strategic trading location, Gibraltar is one of the Mediterranean Sea's biggest bunkering ports. Bunkering refers to the refueling of cargo ships, which is often done while a ship is at anchor or a port.²⁰ A bunker is an all-durable petroleum product that is loaded aboard a vessel that is then used for consumption to fuel and power a ship.²¹ In 2007, it was estimated that Gibraltar could hold 4.3 million tons of bunkers. This led many deep-sea vessels to call for the port to supply bunkers. Gibraltar's location and reputation as a popular shipping port give it an advantage for bunkering companies. This also helps Gibraltar attract new trading partners.²²

According to the Faculty of Science in Tetouan, Morocco, and the Faculty of Marine and Environmental Science at the University of Cadiz, Spain, around 100,000 vessels travel through the Strait of Gibraltar annually. In 2017, it was

8 "Strait of Gibraltar," International Law, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://opil.ouplaw.com/display/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1172>.

9 "Strait of Gibraltar," Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Strait-of-Gibraltar>.

10 "Maritime Profile: Gibraltar," United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, accessed August 12, 2023, <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/countryprofile/maritimeprofile/en-gb/292/index.html>.

11 "Sailing through Strait of Gibraltar," World Experience, accessed October 13, 2023, <https://weareworldexperience.com/theclub/product/sailing-through-strait-of-gibraltar/>.

12 "Gibraltar Factsheet," Government of Gibraltar, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/press/gibraltar-fact-sheets>.

13 Government of Gibraltar, "Gibraltar Factsheet."

14 "What is the Gibraltar Dispute," *National Geographic*, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://blog.education.nationalgeographic.org/2017/04/04/what-is-the-gibraltar-dispute/>.

15 "United Kingdom," OEC, accessed August 29, 2023. <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/gbr/partner/gib>.

16 OEC, "United Kingdom."

17 "Inside the Rock: Gibraltar's Strategic and Military Importance Is Complemented by Financial and Gaming Leadership," *CityAM*, November 12, 2015, <https://www.cityam.com/inside-rock/>.

18 Scott Schonauer, "NATO guards Strait of Gibraltar," *Stars and Stripes*, March 19, 2003, <https://www.stripes.com/news/nato-guards-strait-of-gibraltar-1.3061>.

19 "Gibraltar Squadron," Royal Navy, accessed October 13, 2023, <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/operations/mediterranean-and-black-sea/gibraltar-squadron>.

20 "FAQ," Port Vancouver, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.portvancouver.com/about-us/faq/bunkering/>.

21 "Bunkers," Eurostat Statistics Explained, accessed August 12, 2023, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Bunkers>.

22 "Port of Gibraltar," World Port Source, accessed August 12, 2023, http://www.worldportsource.com/ports/commerce/GIB_Port_of_Gibraltar_54.php.

estimated that roughly 30 percent were oil tankers. These tankers transport around 500,000 tons of crude oil every day.²³ As oil control becomes increasingly important, Gibraltar is in a strategic location.

Spain also benefits heavily from its relationship with Gibraltar and vice versa. As of 2022, it was estimated that as many as 15,000 Spanish citizens travel to Gibraltar for business every day.²⁴ This benefits both Gibraltar and the neighboring Spanish town of Andalucía. According to Jay Gomez, the Deputy Chairman of the Gibraltar Funds & Investments, almost 15,000 Spanish citizens earn their salaries in Gibraltar.²⁵ Additionally, Gibraltar receives massive amounts of tourists every year. Gibraltar is a popular tourist destination for both British and Spanish visitors.²⁶ In 2021, the Government of Gibraltar estimated that around 130,000 tourists visited, with over half of them being day trips from Spain.²⁷

The Port of Gibraltar is also a majorly successful online

gaming hub, providing revenue for both the UK and Gibraltarians.²⁸ The rise of online business, sometimes referred to as e-commerce, began in the 1980s when the Gibraltar government increased efforts to diversify its economy.²⁹ Through legislation enacted by Gibraltar, companies receive tax benefits that allow them to capitalize off of the growth of the online gaming industry.³⁰ Overseas companies sometimes establish business in Gibraltar and the Strait of Gibraltar to use this tax benefit for their financial services, boosting the Gibraltar economy throughout this process. The Strait of Gibraltar receives more trading companies through this and generates revenue.³¹

Self-Determination in a Post-Colonial Context

Central to the conflict over the future of Gibraltar is the discussion of self-determination. Self-determination refers to the ability of a group of people, whether a community, state,

23 D. Nachite, N. Del Estal Domínguez, A. El M ‘rini, and G. Anfuso, “Environmental Sensitivity Index Maps in a High Maritime Transit Area: The Moroccan Coast of the Gibraltar Strait Study Case,” *Journal of African Earth Sciences* 163 (March 202): 103750, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jafrearsci.2020.103750>.

24 Williams, “Why Gibraltar Matters.”

25 Williams, “Why Gibraltar Matters.”

26 “Tourist Survey Report,” Statistics Office, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/uploads/statistics/2021/Reports%202021/Tourist%20Survey%20Report%202021.pdf>.

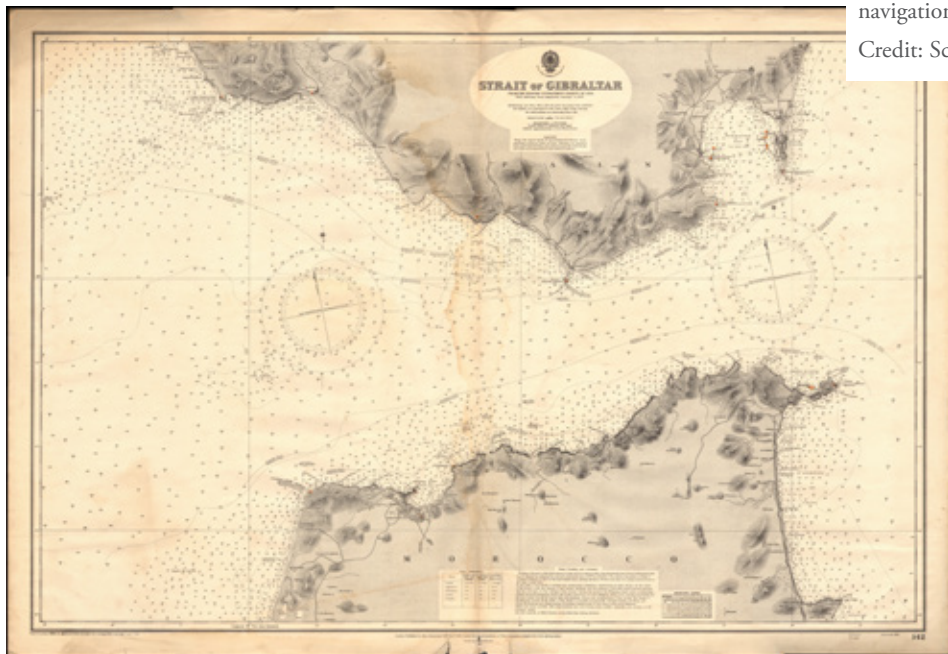
27 Statistics Office, “Tourist Survey Report.”

28 “How Gibraltar became a hotspot for gaming and crypto currency,” *Lancashire Post*, October 29, 2021, <https://www.lep.co.uk/culture/gaming/why-gibraltar-is-a-hotspot-for-gaming-and-crypto-currently-3437957>.

29 Lancashire Post, “How Gibraltar became a hotspot.”

30 Lancashire Post, “How Gibraltar became a hotspot.”

31 Lancashire Post, “How Gibraltar became a hotspot.”



A map showing the Strait of Gibraltar and paths of navigation.

Credit: Scan of original Admiralty Chart

or culture, to choose their political destiny.³² This political freedom can refer to both a group’s internal relations, including the ability to create laws or select government, or external relations, including treaties or diplomacy.³³ Cultural differences, including unique ways of life and traditional practices, also allow a territory to define its own identity.

While self-determination has always been a topic of discussion, it first became prominent during World War I. United States President Woodrow Wilson promoted the concept and included a reference to it in his Fourteen Points.³⁴ The Fourteen Points were created as a guideline for country-building after WWI. They included a discussion of ending colonial rule within Europe and ending European colonization and colonial empires.³⁵ According to the United Nations, colonization is generally defined as Western control of a non-Western territory.³⁶ After World War I, various European empires, including the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were dismantled.³⁷ However, this also led to the rise of new colonial powers, including Japan, and the growth of existing powers, including France, the United Kingdom, and Germany.³⁸ In particular, the United Kingdom ended World War I with a greatly expanded empire, which stretched from the Suez Canal to Egypt.³⁹

The United Nations was created at the end of World War II in 1945. At the time, 750 million people, a third of the world’s population, lived in colonial territories.⁴⁰ Today, that number has been reduced to two million. 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories are recognized by the UN.⁴¹ The decrease in colonial

territories was mainly due to a period of decolonization in Asia and Africa. The process of decolonization does vary. Decolonization has been achieved through both revolutions and peaceful protests. Some former colonies also have continuing relationships with their former colonial rulers.⁴² According to the United States State Department, decolonization coincided with the new Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. Increasing competition between the rising superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union also influenced decolonization.

So, what does self-determination mean in a post-colonial world? Understanding self-determination can be incredibly helpful in understanding a state or territory’s culture. Many scholars believe that understanding self-determination and studying culture is a way to learn the behaviors of a particular group. This definition often relates to how self-determination is a perspective of a country, individual, or cultural group.⁴³ Discussions of self-determination in a postcolonial world can be applied to Gibraltar. This shows how their culture and view of self-determination differ from other non-self-governing territories.

Self-determination, especially after World War II, has also been a common trend in the conflict between Spain and Gibraltar. In the 1960s, Sir Joshua Hassan, the Gibraltar Chief Minister, publicly stated that Gibraltarians have their individuality that allows for their culture to thrive, separate from their relationship with the United Kingdom and Spain.⁴⁴ Since then, the Gibraltarian people have continuously

32 “Self-Determination,” *Encyclopedia Princetoiensis*, accessed August 28, 2023, <https://pesd.princeton.edu/node/656>.

33 *Encyclopedia Princetoiensis*, “Self-Determination.”

34 “Why did Woodrow Wilson Promote the Concept of ‘Self-Determination’ ?” *Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs*, accessed October 17, 2023, <https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/explore-engage/classroom-resources/1919-the-year-of-the-crack-up/wilson-self-determination>.

35 “The Fourteen Points,” *National WW1 Museum and Memorial*, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/peace/fourteen-points>.

36 H Jacobson, “The United Nations and Colonialism: A Tentative Appraisal,” *International Organization* 16 no. 1, 37-56, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300010808>.

37 “How Imperialism Set the Stage for World War I,” *History.com*, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.history.com/news/imperialism-causes-world-war-i>.

38 *History.com*, “How Imperialism Set the Stage for World War I.”

39 “The British empire after the War,” *The National Archives*, accessed August 29, 2023, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/aftermath/brit_empire_after.htm.

40 “Decolonization,” *United Nations*, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/decolonization>.

41 *United Nations*, “Decolonization.”

42 “Decolonization of Asia and Africa, 1945–1960,” *United States State Department*, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/asia-and-africa>.

43 Tawara D. Goode, “Impact Feature Issue on Self-Determination and Supported Decision-Making for People with Intellectual, Developmental, and Other Disabilities,” *University of Minnesota*, accessed August 16, 2023, <https://publications.ici.umn.edu/impact/32-1/self-determination-cultural-differences-in-perception-and-practice>.

44 Jamie Trinidad, “Self-Determination and Contested Peoplehood in Gibraltar: Separating the Law from the Rhetoric,” *The Round Table*

advocated for maintaining their status as a BOT and have rejected continuous attempts for joint sovereignty with Spain. For Gibraltar, self-determination is vital to ensure the Gibraltarians can choose their own political status and form of social, economic, and cultural development.⁴⁵

In the late 1990s, the United Kingdom began modernizing its relationship with Gibraltar. In February 1998, Robin Cook, a British Labor Party politician, announced that the UK would change the name of Gibraltar's territory from British Dependent Territory to British Overseas Territory.⁴⁶ This allowed Gibraltar to have a greater amount of independence. This name change pushes Gibraltar to have the right of self-governance and recognition of its independent power to run its territory. Self-government is defined as the control of an organization by groups of people that are independent of the central government.⁴⁷

In 2015, the British Labor Party affirmed its absolute commitment to furthering the self-determination of Gibraltar.⁴⁸ Hilary Benn says that the future of Gibraltar is to be determined through partnership and bringing people together through typical value and economic interest. Benn was the shadow Foreign Secretary, or a member of the main opposition party in Parliament, which would hold this office if their party were to enter power. Gibraltar's primary source of communication is between the Gibraltarian government and the British. The support of a major British political party gives Gibraltar the possibility to have a greater say in determining its future.

Delegates should consider individual self-determination, factors of the UK and Spain's involvement with Gibraltar, and

further the discussion for resolutions to solve these issues. The status of Gibraltar has changed constantly over three centuries, so historical reflections and modern political ideas should be considered when debating this topic.

The History of Conflict between the United Kingdom and Spain

As mentioned previously, the conflict between the UK and Spain over ownership of Gibraltar began in the 1700s with the War of Spanish Succession.⁴⁹ When King Charles II of Spain died without an heir, the War of Succession began between the United Kingdom, Spain, and other European powers over who would rule Spain.⁵⁰ During the conflict, Gibraltar, which was previously Spanish territory, was captured by the British, with the United Kingdom formally gaining Gibraltar with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.⁵¹ In addition to losing Gibraltar, Spain also had to give up Minorca, one of the Balearic Islands.⁵² Later, during the American War of Independence, Spain and France tried to seize Gibraltar. This was known as "the Great Siege of Gibraltar."⁵³ During the siege, Gibraltar was under blockade for over three years, the longest in British military history, but could hold off the invasion. The United Kingdom maintained control of Gibraltar and declared it a British colony in 1830.⁵⁴ These two historical events began a long history of conflicts between the UK and Spain over ownership of the Strait.

In 1960, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) pushed for global decolonization and asked former colonial powers, including the UK, to compile a list of their colonies. When the UK created this list, they included Gibraltar without

110, no. 3 (2021): 347–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2021.1933086>.

45 "Self-Determination," Underrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, accessed July 27, 2023, <https://unpo.org/article/4957>.

46 Vaughne Miller, *Gibraltar, the United Kingdom and Spain* (London: House of Commons Library, April 22, 1998), <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP98-50/RP98-50.pdf>.

47 "Self-Government," Cambridge Dictionary, accessed August 12, 2023, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/self-government>.

48 "Labour 'Absolutely' Committed to Gibraltar's Self-Determination," *Mercopress*, October 1, 2015, <https://en.mercopress.com/2015/10/01/labour-absolutely-committed-to-gibraltar-s-self-determination>.

49 "War of the Spanish Succession," Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/War-of-the-Spanish-Succession>.

50 Encyclopædia Britannica, "War of the Spanish Succession."

51 Ben Johnson, "The History of Gibraltar," *Historic UK*, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryMagazine/DestinationsUK/History-of-Gibraltar/>.

52 "Balearic Islands: Minorca," UMBBC, accessed August 29, 2023, https://www2.umbc.edu/MA/index/number9/cohen/coh_8.htm.

53 "The Great Siege of Gibraltar," Gibraltar National Museum, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.gibmuseum.gi/our-history/military-history/great-siege-of-gibraltar>.

54 "Gibraltar profile," *BBC News*, May 19, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18219307>.

consulting Gibraltarians.⁵⁵ As a result, the UNGA established the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories in 1964, which included Gibraltar.⁵⁶ As mentioned previously, a Non-Self-Governing Territory is a territory that has yet to achieve self-governance. This often means that the territory is controlled in some capacity by a different state.⁵⁷ Also, in 1964, the UNGA adopted a resolution that requested the return of Gibraltar to Spain, in alignment with the UN's mission of decolonization. Gibraltarians, however, wanted to remain part of the UK and did not want to return to Spain.⁵⁸

Two years after passing its 1964 resolution, the United Nations listened to representatives from the UK, Spain, and Gibraltar about the issue. During the 1960s, the Spanish Government also increased its campaign for returning Gibraltar to Spain. Representatives from all groups eventually agreed upon a framework for future negotiations about Gibraltar. Spain's representative, Foreign Minister, Maria Castiella, presented the

United Nations with the "Red Book," a group of documents that Spain claimed proved that Gibraltar was Spanish.⁵⁹ While this agreement took into consideration the perspectives of Gibraltarians, it did not specifically mention Gibraltar's right to self-determination.⁶⁰ In 1966, the UN General Assembly published UN Resolution 2231. This spoke on Gibraltar's status. The resolution called upon the UK and Spain to consider "the people of the Territory," or Gibraltarians, when negotiating the future status of Gibraltar.⁶¹

The request to listen to the people of Gibraltar would lead to the first of many referendums held in the territory. In 1967, the UK had a referendum on whether or not the people of Gibraltar wanted to remain British. Overall, the people of Gibraltar overwhelmingly supported remaining British. With a 95.8 percent voter turnout, 12,000 individuals voted to stay with the United Kingdom. Less than 50 voted to join Spain.⁶² Furthermore, the UK established a new constitution

55 "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Gibraltar," Minority Rights Group International, accessed August 24, 2023, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4954ce4323.html>.

56 "Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust," United Nations, accessed August 24, 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/observances/non-self-governing-week>.

57 "The Political Status of Non-Self-Governing Territories," Old Dominion University Model United Nations Society, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://ww1.odu.edu/content/dam/odu/offices/mun/docs/non-self-governing-territories.pdf>.

58 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

59 "In pictures: the story of the Gibraltar/Spanish border," *The New Statesman*, April 22, 2014, <https://www.newstatesman.com/newstatesman-gibraltar/2014/04/pictures-story-gibraltarspanish-border>.

60 Simon J. Lincoln, "The Legal Status of Gibraltar: Whose Rock is it Anyway?" *Fordham International Law Journal* 18, no. 1 (1994), 294-296, <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1405&context=ilj>.

61 UN General Assembly, Resolution 2353, Question of Gibraltar, A/RES/2353(XXII), (December 20, 1966), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/202992?ln=en>.

62 Alice Mascarehhas, "Gib set to mark 1967 Referendum in a major way," *Gibraltar Chronicle*, April 11, 2017, <https://www.chronicle.gi/>

A car showing how Gibraltarians sided with the UK on the 1967 Referendum.

Credit: Andy Newton



for Gibraltar in 1969 that granted the territory greater self-governing power.⁶³ This constitution also explicitly stated that the territory could not be transferred to Spain without the consent of Gibraltarians, further emphasizing Gibraltar's right to self-determination.⁶⁴ In response to this new constitution, Spain closed its border with Gibraltar and cut off telephone and transport links.⁶⁵

The Spanish response was immediate, with Spanish Dictator Francisco Franco closing the Spain-Gibraltar border in 1969. It would remain closed until 1985.⁶⁶ Due to this decision, almost 5,000 Spanish citizens lost their jobs since they could no longer commute across the border. The Gibraltar government was then forced to turn to the United Kingdom and Morocco for supplies, leading to a closer relationship between Gibraltar and the UK.⁶⁷

In 1980, Spain and the UK agreed to reopen discussions over the status of Gibraltar under what is known as the Lisbon Agreement.⁶⁸ Then, in 1982, Spain partially reopened the border under limited conditions, with the whole border opening in 1985.⁶⁹ The Spanish government did not reopen telephone and transport links between Spain and Gibraltar.⁷⁰ Over the next few decades, Spain and the UK continued discussions on Gibraltar until they finally reached an agreement in 2002.⁷¹ The 2002 agreement proposed granting the UK and Spain joint sovereignty over Gibraltar.⁷² Joint sovereignty, or a condominium, is the concept that two sovereign powers can exercise their sovereignty rights simultaneously through a

formally agreed resolution.⁷³ After months of discussions, the UK and Spain concluded that joint sovereignty of Gibraltar was the best resolution to their dispute.⁷⁴

Gibraltarians were not included in the discussions about joint sovereignty between the UK and Spain. Their chief minister, Peter Caruana, said he would only participate in the discussions if he could veto any deal he disliked. British and Spanish ministers would not agree to this condition.⁷⁵ Gibraltarians largely opposed the idea of joint sovereignty. In response to the proposed plan, Caruana called a referendum on whether Gibraltarians accepted the proposed deal. The referendum saw an 88 percent turnout, with 17,900 voting against joint sovereignty and only 187 voting for it.⁷⁶ Though not legally binding, the referendum pressured the British government to reject the joint sovereignty proposal. This is under the 1969 constitution, which stated that the UK would not give Spain sovereignty over Gibraltar without the consent of Gibraltarians. Though UK leaders emphasized the importance of continuing discussions on Gibraltar with Spain, they also stated that they would not go forth with an agreement on Gibraltar's future without the consent of Gibraltarians.⁷⁷

The representative of Spain discussed their understanding of the referendum. They believed the colonial situation in Gibraltar had contradicted what the United Nations had previously stated. Additionally, they felt it had destroyed the unity and the territorial integrity of the region.⁷⁸ Territorial integrity refers to respecting the sovereignty of a state.⁷⁹ Spain's

[gib-set-to-mark-1967-referendum-in-a-major-way/](#).

63 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

64 *BBC News*, "Gibraltar profile."

65 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

66 "Gibraltar," *Politics.co*, accessed August 29, 2023, <https://www.politics.co.uk/reference/gibraltar/>.

67 Debbie Bartlett, "Franco closes Gibraltar border," *SUR*, <https://www.surinenglish.com/gibraltar/201906/07/june-1969gibraltar-border-closure-20190607102708-v.html>.

68 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

69 William Borders, "Spain to Reopen its Gibraltar Border," *The New York Times*, January 9, 1982, <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/01/09/world/spain-to-reopen-its-gibraltar-border.html>; Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

70 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

71 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

72 Patrick Wintour and Giles Tremlett, "Gibraltar votes out joint rule with Spain," *The Guardian*, November 8, 2002, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/nov/08/uk.gibraltar>.

73 "Condominium," *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Self-Determination*, accessed July 30, 2023, <https://pesd.princeton.edu/node/241>.

74 Wintour and Tremlett, "Gibraltar votes out joint rule."

75 Wintour and Tremlett, "Gibraltar votes out joint rule."

76 Wintour and Tremlett, "Gibraltar votes out joint rule."

77 Keith B. Richburg, "Gibraltar Votes to Remain British," *The Washington Post*, November 8, 2002, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2002/11/08/gibraltar-votes-to-remain-british/aa4f79c0-ddb6-4141-ae3c-cf2f2523909d/>; *BBC*, "Gibraltar profile."

78 United Nations Press, "Gibraltar Petitioners Tell Decolonization Committee Sovereignty Dispute Between Spain, Uk Should Not Displace Right To Self-determination," News release, July 6, 2005, <https://press.un.org/en/2005/gacol3119.doc.htm>.

79 Samuel K. N. Blay, "Review of Territorial Integrity and Political Independence," *Oxford Public International Law*, accessed August

representative believed that the 2002 referendum had not respected Spain's involvement in Gibraltar and left them out of the discussion of sovereignty.⁸⁰

Despite this outcome, Spain elected a new government in 2004 that was more open to including Gibraltar in discussions about the territorial dispute. This new Spanish government agreed with the UK that future discussions should include Gibraltarians.⁸¹ Spain then set up a forum on the future of Gibraltar where leaders from the UK, Spain, and Gibraltar would all be represented. However, Gibraltarians were still not pleased with this arrangement because neither the Spanish nor the British government officially recognized their right to self-determination.⁸²

This changed, however, in 2006 when the Gibraltarian government established the new Constitution of Gibraltar. This new constitution established a framework for governance and set out the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people of Gibraltar.⁸³ It allowed Gibraltar complete autonomy over its internal affairs and provided a separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, modeled after the British government.⁸⁴ The 2006 constitution also guarantees Gibraltar's right to self-determination.⁸⁵ Because the British government recognized Gibraltar's new constitution, they also officially recognized Gibraltar's right to self-determination.⁸⁶ This encouraged greater inclusion of Gibraltarians in conversations about their future. For example, later that year, the governments of Gibraltar, the UK, and Spain agreed to ease telecommunication restrictions between Spain and Gibraltar. While this decision is a sign of progress, the three governments have still been unable to resolve the sovereignty issue.⁸⁷

Delegates should continue to look at all sides of the dispute

and utilize the relevance of historical context when debating possible resolutions. Additionally, arguments for Spain's possession of Gibraltar have consistently brought up historical associations like the War of Succession. This means that delegates should consider Spain's perspective from past events and apply it to modern-time Gibraltar. Furthermore, the 1967 referendum and the 2002 referendum reflect the relationship that the UK and Gibraltarians have with each other. A solid understanding of the history of the dispute between the UK and Spain is important to understanding the current situation and must be considered when developing resolutions.

Self-Determination Around the World

As mentioned previously, self-determination varies around the world. Gibraltar's self-determination perspective, which is the ability to govern themselves while maintaining a close relationship with the UK, differs from other Non-Self-Governing Territories. This is because of the unique cultural and political values in Gibraltar. Additionally, the end of many colonial empires has opened up a new conversation about how the populations of former colonies or territories wish to identify.⁸⁸ Below are various short historical case studies of how self-determination has been applied worldwide. Delegates in SPECPOL are encouraged to consider how these cases are similar to that of Gibraltar in some ways yet different in others. These can be used to understand the real-life implementation of self-determination and to develop solutions to the current conflict.

The Falkland Islands is a UK territory in the South Atlantic Ocean with just over three thousand people.⁸⁹ In addition to being a UK territory, the government of Argentina also

11, 2023, <https://opil.ouplaw.com/display/10.1093/law/epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1116>.

80 United Nations Press, "Gibraltar Petitioners Tell Decolonization Committee."

81 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

82 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

83 "Gibraltar Constitution," HM Government of Gibraltar Government Law Offices, accessed July 27, 2023, <http://www.gibraltarlawoffices.gov.gi/gibraltar-constitution>.

84 "The Separation of Powers in the United Kingdom," Political Science Encyclopedia, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://www.politicalscienceview.com/the-separation-of-powers-in-united-kingdom/>.

85 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

86 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

87 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples."

88 "How Self-Determination Shaped the Modern World," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed August 16, 2023, <https://world101.cfr.org/understanding-international-system/building-blocks/how-self-determination-shaped-modern-world>.

89 "Falkland Islands," Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed July 30, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Falkland-Islands>.

claimed the islands and named them “Las Malvinas.”⁹⁰ However, many Falkland Islanders had British heritage despite this claim and were unwilling to acknowledge Argentina’s claim.⁹¹ During the 1960s, the United Nations invited both the British and Argentine governments to discuss the future of the island, but little progress was made.⁹² The conflict intensified in the 1980s when Argentina invaded the Falklands during what is known as the “Falklands War.”⁹³ After the invasion, and largely to keep their status as a world power, the British military sent over 100 ships to retake the island.⁹⁴ The Falklands War, similar to the conflict of Gibraltar, represents what occurs when two colonial powers are unwilling to lose their current, or former territories.

In 2013, the Falkland Islanders voted in a referendum to retain their status as a British Overseas Territory.⁹⁵ The

outcome of the referendum and the rejection of both complete independence and further connections with Argentina are important to consider. Both represent the importance of the democratic process and listening to the voices of the citizens of the territory. Today, the UK has received backlash for its decision to invest EUR 60 million towards developing the islands, with many comparing it to colonial rule.⁹⁶

Another major case study on sovereignty and colonial powers is Hong Kong, a special administrative region of the People’s Republic of China.⁹⁷ The British government gained control of Hong Kong in 1842 when China gave up the territory during the First Opium War.⁹⁸ In 1997, however, Hong Kong was returned to China. The Chinese government promised individual rights to Hong Kong’s citizens and judicial independence until 2047.⁹⁹ Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping

90 “Sovereignty since the ceasefire: The Falklands 40 years on,” House of Lords Library, August 1, 2022, <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/sovereignty-since-the-ceasefire-the-falklands-40-years-on/>.

91 “A Short History of The Falklands Conflict,” IWM, accessed September 5, 2023, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/a-short-history-of-the-falklands-conflict>.

92 Kieran Mulvaney, “The improbable Falklands War still resonates decades later,” *National Geographic*, April 1, 2022, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/falklands-war-history-and-legacy>.

93 IWM, “A Short History of The Falklands Conflict.”

94 Mulvaney, “The improbable Falklands War still resonates decades later.”

95 Leo Benedictus, “Who were the three Falkland Islanders who voted no?” *The Guardian*, March 12, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/shortcuts/2013/mar/12/falkland-islanders-who-voted-no>.

96 George Allison, “Falkland Islands have as much right to self-determination as Scotland,” *The National*, May 22, 2023, <https://www.thenational.scot/politics/23538575.falkland-islands-much-right-self-determination-scotland/>.

97 Lindsay Maizland, “Hong Kong’s Freedoms: What China Promised and How It’s Cracking Down,” Council on Foreign Relations, February 17, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/hong-kong-freedoms-democracy-protests-china-crackdown>.

98 John Ruwitch, “Was Hong Kong a colony? Not according to new textbooks, a paper says,” *NPR*, June 15, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/15/1105162914/was-hong-kong-a-colony-not-according-to-new-textbooks-a-newspaper-says>.

99 Meg Shen and James Pomfret, “In Hong Kong, Xi says ‘one country, two systems’ is here to stay,” *Reuters*, July 1, 2022, <https://www>.



Sign in Mawei, China. Sign says “Peaceful Unification. One country two systems.”
Credit: Xiangjiao

created the “one country, two systems” policy, which allowed Hong Kong to have a high level of independence while allowing the Chinese government to change the political system of the territory.¹⁰⁰

In 1972, Hong Kong was removed from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories at China’s request.¹⁰¹ Since then, Hong Kong’s citizens have repeatedly pushed for increased autonomy. From 2014 to 2019, Beijing, the capital of China, has been expanding its control over the region. For example, China has censored the press in Hong Kong. This breaks the promise made in the 1990s. This has led to mass pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong¹⁰²

The concept of unauthorized assembly has been a significant discussion, especially since freedom and self-determination for Hong Kong’s sovereignty are in question. After 2047, the agreement that the Chinese and UK governments made about the “one country, two systems” will end.¹⁰³ This raises the concern of whether the idea of self-determination and sovereignty for Hong Kong will remain after this agreement ends. Hong Kong is a prime example of how topics surrounding territorial disputes are urgent, as many issues can persist even after reaching agreements.

American Samoa is an unincorporated territory of the United States of America. Until 1951, the US Navy had been overseeing the territory. In 1951, however, the government decided that American Samoa had lost its military importance. This resulted in the Department of the Interior taking over administrative duties.¹⁰⁴ In 1967, the people of American Samoa adopted a constitution that can be changed by the United States government.¹⁰⁵ A unique aspect of the

relationship between the United States and American Samoa is how Samoa has adopted many aspects of American culture while still maintaining its own culture. Since the 1960s, American Samoa has adopted a national park and has engaged in business with American companies.¹⁰⁶

In October 2022, the United States Supreme Court ruled to reconsider the relationship between American Samoa and the United States. As part of this ruling, the United States government is now denying full citizenship rights to residents of American Samoa. For American Samoa, there is a fear of upending, or overturning and changing, these rulings, which could cause political and “cultural collateral damage.”¹⁰⁷ This refers to an issue that the American Samoan community had not asked for and could be a fear of violating their right to self-determination and a way of life. As American Samoa has continued its relationship with the United States, they primarily ask to determine their future and protect their way of life.

In these cases, there are international implications where territories and colonies simply do not want to leave their parenting power. They also want to be able to support themselves through their own form of self-governing and cultural protection. It is up to the international community to listen to their concerns and create solutions that accommodate both the parenting countries and the territories themselves.

[reuters.com/world/china/hong-kong-deploys-massive-security-xi-set-swear-new-leader-2022-06-30/](https://www.reuters.com/world/china/hong-kong-deploys-massive-security-xi-set-swear-new-leader-2022-06-30/).

100 “One Country, Two Systems Is the Most Ingenious Vision,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, August 26, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/zggcdwjjw100ggs/gg/202208/t20220826_10754252.html; Shen and Pomfret, “In Hong Kong.”

101 Patricia Dagati, “Hong Kong’s Lost Right To Self-determination: A Denial Of Due Process In The United Nations,” *NYLS Journal of International and Comparative Law* 13, no. 1 (1992), https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1345&context=journal_of_international_and_comparative_law.

102 Zen Soo, “Hong Kong in Limbo 25 Years after British Handover to China,” *Associated Press*, June 29, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/voting-rights-china-hong-kong-932009be8d2a91ef2f84e6e406d290b4>.

103 “Self-Determination Is the Answer for Hong Kong,” *Time*, September 24, 2015, <https://time.com/4042269/hong-kong-self-determination-occupy-umbrella-revolution/>.

104 “American Samoa,” US Department of the Interior, June 11, 2015, <https://www.doi.gov/oia/islands/american-samoa>.

105 “Revised Constitution of American Samoa,” American Samoa Bar Association, accessed September 5, 2023, <https://asbar.org/revised-constitution-of-american-samoa/>.

106 “History and Geography of the Territory,” Mooney Wiedland Warren, accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.mooneywiedland.com/about-us/american-samoa-office/history-of-the-territory/>.

107 Kimberly Atkins Stohr, “The (Unheard) Case of American Samoa,” *BostonGlobe*, November 9, 2022, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/11/09/opinion/unheard-case-american-samoa/>.

Current Status

Impacts of The Rise of Right-Wing Politics in the United Kingdom and Spain

Since 2020, conversations surrounding Gibraltar and the UK have involved Brexit. The 2016 Brexit Referendum was a ballot vote introduced by right-wing politicians in the UK to determine if the UK would leave the European Union (EU).¹⁰⁸ The UK public voted to leave the EU. 51.9 percent voted to leave the EU and 48.1 percent voted to stay.¹⁰⁹ The first major reason British citizens decided to vote to leave was a lack of economic growth since joining the EU. Political views also influenced the Brexit vote. Left-wing voters in the UK were largely opposed to Brexit, while right-wing voters favored the initiative.¹¹⁰ The Scottish National Party (SNP), the largest political party in Scotland and left-wing, has stated that they are strongly against Brexit. They view Brexit as “against Scotland’s will” and plan to try to rejoin the EU independently in the elections for the Scottish Parliament.¹¹¹

Overall, the left-wing politicians described Brexit as taking the UK away from the largest single market. They claimed it would restrict freedom of passage throughout the EU and the Schengen Area.¹¹² The Schengen Area includes many European countries that have signed the Schengen Agreement. This agreement eliminates border checks in many European countries and makes traveling between European countries easier.¹¹³ A single market allows the movement of goods and services freely within the EU.¹¹⁴ On the other side of the argument, the right-wing politicians in the UK were for the progression of Brexit. The main argument of The Tories, the right-wing party in the UK, was that the free movement

of people in Europe was lessening the UK’s control of its borders.¹¹⁵ The migration of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa into the UK also motivated a leave vote. The EU’s open border system would no longer be in effect if the UK left, so proponents for Brexit saw leaving as a way to limit immigration. Many supporters of Brexit saw immigration as something that negatively affected wages. Overall, the right-wing politicians wanted the UK to have more control over its borders through the economy and politics.

Though it is not part of the UK mainland, Gibraltar, alongside all other British Overseas Territories, voted on Brexit. Gibraltar’s responses to the Brexit vote radically differed from those of the broader UK population. Gibraltarians, with a high turnout rate of 84 percent, saw only four percent of Gibraltarians vote to leave the EU. This means roughly 96 percent of Gibraltarians voted to remain in the EU.¹¹⁶ The stark contrast between Gibraltar’s views on Brexit and those of the broader British public has introduced new complications in their long-term relationship. Although Gibraltar has not examined independence from the UK since the events of Brexit, Gibraltar has discussed the changes they would want to accommodate them. For example, based on negotiating terms for Gibraltar, the UK and Spain have agreed to include some aspects of the Schengen Agreement to “ease border movements.”¹¹⁷

Brexit has changed how the UK and Spain discuss the status of Gibraltar. Both parties have begun to agree on a new treaty that would affect Gibraltar’s ability to freely move across the border with Spain.¹¹⁸ In December 2022, the Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister José Manuel Albares stated that both governments

108 “What Brexit Means,” Council on Foreign Relations, July 22, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-brexit-means>.

109 Sewell Chan, “E.U. Referendum: After the ‘Brexit’ Vote,” *The New York Times*, June 24, 2016, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/live/eu-referendum/the-final-tally-51-9-for-leave-48-1-for-remain/>.

110 Jennifer Scott, “Where Do the UK’s Political Parties Stand on Brexit Vote?” *BBC News*, December 29, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-55177496>.

111 Scott, “Where Do the UK’s Political Parties Stand on Brexit Vote?”

112 “Single Market,” European Union, accessed August 20, 2023, https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/actions-topic/single-market_en.

113 “The Schengen Agreement,” German Federal Foreign Office, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/visa-service/-/231202>.

114 European Union, “Single Market.”

115 Esther Webber, “They Got Brexit Done. So Why Are UK Tories Still Angry about Immigration?” *POLITICO*, May 25, 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/tories-brexit-done-uk-conservatives-on-immigration-rishi-sunak/>.

116 Imogen Groome, “How Did Gibraltar Vote in the EU Referendum?” *Metro*, April 3, 2017, <https://metro.co.uk/2017/04/03/how-did-gibraltar-vote-in-the-eu-referendum-6550844/>.

117 “Gibraltar Profile,” *BBC News*, accessed August 20, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18219307>.

118 Cristina Gallardo, “UK and Spain Close in on Post-Brexit Deal for Gibraltar,” *POLITICO*, December 14, 2022, <https://www.politico>.



A poster of a common phrase used in Catalonia to protest against Spain.

Credit: Christian Van Der Henst S.

had begun to make progress in resolving challenges with visa-free travel between Gibraltar and the Schengen area.¹¹⁹ As of December 14, 2022, disagreements remain over finding a middle ground between the UK's and Spain's positions on Gibraltar's sovereignty and relationship with the EU. For example, because Gibraltarians voted to remain a part of the EU, they wanted London to negotiate a "special status" with the EU on their behalf. This special status might allow Gibraltarians more opportunities for economic agreements and easier border crossing within the EU.¹²⁰

These negotiations have also included new debates over Gibraltar's business status with Spain. The Spanish far-right Vox party has created discussions surrounding Gibraltar's borders. This is because it is a UK Overseas Territory connected to Europe, specifically Spain. The Vox Party was founded during a peak in Spain's economic crisis and political instability, primarily focusing their discussions on the idea of Spanish nationalism and traditional Catholic values.¹²¹

[eu/article/uk-and-spain-close-in-on-post-brexit-deal-for-gibraltar/](https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-and-spain-close-in-on-post-brexit-deal-for-gibraltar/).

119 Gallardo, "UK and Spain Close in on Post-Brexit Deal for Gibraltar," *POLITICO*, December 14, 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-and-spain-close-in-on-post-brexit-deal-for-gibraltar/>.

120 "Gibraltar Very Concerned by Violence in Catalonia, Chief Minister Says," *Reuters*, October 1, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-gibraltar-idUSKCN1C61S1>.

121 "Factsheet: Vox Party," Bridge Initiative, accessed August 11, 2023, <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-vox-party-partido-vox/>.

122 "Gibraltar Government Takes Spain's Far-Right Vox Party to Court for Inciting Hatred," *Reuters*, December 18, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gibraltar-lawsuit-vox-idUSKBN1YM1YF>.

123 Ashifa Kassam, "The Rock and the Hard Right: Gibraltar Fears Rise of Vox in Spanish Election," *The Observer*, July 23, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/23/gibraltar-fears-rise-of-vox-in-spanish-election>.

124 Kassam, "The Rock and the Hard Right."

They created their platform, titled "100 Points to Keep Spain Alive," during the general elections in 2019. In 2019, the Gibraltarian government sued the Vox Party because of a "narrative of unabashed hatred" towards Gibraltarians.¹²² This was the start of several disputes between Gibraltar and the Vox Party due to allegations of anti-Gibraltarian propaganda from the Vox Party. Many Gibraltarians fear that Vox generating more power in the Spanish elections and government could result in a decline in Gibraltarian businesses. Gibraltar thrives off of Spanish business and the 15,000 Spanish workers who cross the border to work in Gibraltar every day.¹²³ A point of contention is determining which government will conduct the checks of travelers when they arrive in Gibraltar. The Spanish, who are Schengen members, have said they would want that responsibility to go to the Spanish police. The UK disagrees, asking Frontex, the EU border agency, to take on that role.¹²⁴

Another right-wing Spanish party, the People's Party, and Vox are seen as potential partners in forming a majority in the

350-seat Spanish lower house, taking control of the Spanish government. The People's Party in Spain is a center-right party with a history of advocating for crime-fighting, a strong nation-state, and tax cuts.¹²⁵ Coalitions are the union of two similar political parties into one bloc. They are a common strategy within governments with parliamentary systems to take control due to the high volume of parties that these governments tend to have. Because the Vox party is unlikely to gather enough support to take control of the Spanish government alone, a coalition with the People's Party is seen as a way for them to influence national policy.¹²⁶

As the events of Brexit and other right-wing policies in recent years have affected the UK and Spain, conversations over how these ideologies can affect Gibraltar have intensified. Over the past decade, Gibraltar has battled with self-determination and territorial politics regarding its status with the EU and its relationship with the UK and Spain. Delegates should consider how politics has played a major role in the conversations of territorial disputes and generate resolutions to solve these issues.

Case Study: Lessons from the Issue of Self-Determination in Catalonia

Unlike Gibraltar, Catalonia has not had the right to self-determination. The 2017 Catalanian referendum for independence and its outcome exemplifies how denying self-determination to the people of a disputed region can result in resentment. This can also damage its relationship with the ruling state.

Catalonia is located in northeastern Spain and has a population of about 7.5 million people.¹²⁷ It is an autonomous region,

meaning it has its own government but is ultimately still under Spanish control.¹²⁸ The history between Spain and Catalonia goes back to the late 15th century when King Ferdinand II of Aragon married Queen Isabella I of Castille. This marriage marked the beginning of the Spanish monarchy.¹²⁹ Catalonia was a semi-autonomous region under the Kingdom of Aragon with its own government, the Generalitat, but it soon encountered trouble with the new Spanish monarchy. In 1640, during the Franco-Spanish War, Catalonia declared independence from Spain and was protected by France for about 10 years. However, Spain eventually regained control of Catalonia.¹³⁰ Catalonia kept its government until 1714 when Phillip V 's forces defeated Catalanian forces in the War of the Spanish Succession. Because Catalonia fought against Phillip V in the war, he denied Catalonia's right to self-governance.¹³¹

In 1931, Republican forces in Spain who wanted to establish a democratic government overthrew King Alfonso XIII. They then established the Second Spanish Republic and returned some autonomy to Catalonia, including the ability to self-govern.¹³² In 1939, the Spanish Civil War ended when the Nationalist forces defeated the Republican forces. This marked the beginning of Francisco Franco's dictatorship and the end of Catalanian autonomy.¹³³ Franco wanted to remove any traces of the republican government and promote Spanish nationalism.¹³⁴ Catalonia's regional autonomy threatened this Spanish nationalism, so Franco banned the Catalan language and flag. Catalonia also lost its right to self-govern.¹³⁵

After Franco's death in 1975, Spain transitioned to a democracy. Catalonia's autonomy was restored with the passage of its new constitution in 1978.¹³⁶ Catalonia quickly became Spain's wealthiest region, generating half of the income tax and value-

125 "Spain: Parties at a Glance," PolitPro, accessed August 11, 2023, <https://politpro.eu/en/spain/parties>.

126 "Spain's PP Sees Path to Power After Hard-Right Vox Dials Down Demands," *Reuters*, August 7, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/spain-s-pp-sees-path-to-power-after-hard-right-vox-dials-down-demands/7214783.html>.

127 "Catalonia Population 2023," World Population Review, accessed August 22, 2023, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/regions/catalonia-population/>.

128 Sonia Kahn, "Indeterminately Independent: The Volatile Autonomy of the Spanish Region of Catalonia," Library of Congress Blogs, September 9, 2022, <https://blogs.loc.gov/maps/2022/09/indeterminately-independent-the-volatile-autonomy-of-the-spanish-region-of-catalonia/>.

129 Kahn, "Indeterminately Independent."

130 Kahn, "Indeterminately Independent."

131 Kahn, "Indeterminately Independent."

132 Kahn, "Indeterminately Independent."

133 Kahn, "Indeterminately Independent."

134 Omar G. Encarnación, "The Ghost of Franco Still Haunts Catalonia," *Foreign Policy*, October 5, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/05/the-ghost-of-franco-still-haunts-catalonia/>.

135 Encarnación, "The Ghost of Franco."

136 Encarnación, "The Ghost of Franco."

added tax in Spain.¹³⁷ In 2006, the Catalan Parliament passed a new Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia to give the Generalitat more power. It would allow Catalonia to keep more tax money, require residents to learn Catalan, and have more control over immigration policy.¹³⁸ However, tensions with the Spanish government began to rise in 2008 due to the financial crisis. Some Catalans believed that rising unemployment levels and a failing economy in Spain negatively impacted their region and wanted to separate from the rest of the country.¹³⁹ Then, in 2010, Spain's Constitutional Court limited Catalonia's autonomy by ruling some articles of the 2006 Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia unconstitutional.¹⁴⁰ This resulted in calls for Catalan independence.¹⁴¹

In 2017, the Catalan Parliament voted on a referendum on splitting from the rest of Spain. The voters were asked whether they wanted Catalonia to become independent or remain part of Spain. In this referendum, 92 percent of the voters supported independence.¹⁴² However, there was only a 42 percent turnout, partially because many unionists, or people who support staying part of Spain, boycotted the referendum.¹⁴³ The Spanish government also sent law enforcement to the region ahead of the referendum. Police raided Catalan government offices and polling stations, discouraging and preventing many people from voting.¹⁴⁴ This created outrage in Catalonia and led to protests. Protesters were met with violence from law enforcement, causing further

tension.¹⁴⁵ The Spanish government then imposed direct rule. This meant that Catalan autonomy was suspended. The Spanish government also arrested major Catalan political leaders and dissolved the Catalan Parliament.¹⁴⁶ The national government also charged 12 Catalan separatist leaders with sedition, which means inciting rebellion and misusing public funds. Nine of these leaders received lengthy prison sentences in 2019.¹⁴⁷ Carles Puigdemont, the president of Catalonia at the time, fled to Belgium, where he remains today.¹⁴⁸

Three of the imprisoned leaders attempted to appeal their sentences with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). However, the Spanish government pardoned all nine imprisoned leaders in 2021, just before the ECHR considered their cases.¹⁴⁹ The Spanish government stated that the decision to pardon the separatist leaders was meant to calm tensions with Catalonia, but the decision sparked protests and discontent on both sides. According to a newspaper poll, 60 percent of Spaniards disagreed with the pardons, many claiming they threatened Spanish unity.¹⁵⁰ Catalan separatists, on the other hand, are upset that the pardoned leaders are still banned from holding public office. They argue that the pardons cannot calm tensions between the Spanish government and Catalonia.¹⁵¹

It is important to note that while the case of Catalonia provides important lessons about self-determination, it is quite different from the case of Gibraltar. One major distinction

137 "Catalonia—Facts and Information," History, November 1, 2019, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/why-catalonia-spain-wealthiest-region-independence>.

138 Renwick McLean, "Autonomy passes for Catalonia," *The New York Times*, March 30, 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/30/world/europe/autonomy-passes-for-catalonia.html>.

139 Tara John, "Why Did Catalonia Just Vote for Independence? Here's What to Know," *TIME Magazine*, October 27, 2017, <https://time.com/5000205/catalonia-declares-independence/>.

140 Krishnadev Calamur, "The Spanish Court Decision That Sparked the Modern Catalan Independence Movement," *The Atlantic*, October 1, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/catalonia-referendum/541611/>.

141 Calamur, "The Spanish Court Decision."

142 Ben Turner, "Catalan Independence: Five years on from referendum, is there any hope for separatists?" *Euronews*, October 1, 2022, <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/10/01/catalonia-independence-is-there-any-hope-for-separatists-five-years-after-failed-referendu>.

143 "Catalonia's bid for independence from Spain explained," *BBC News*, October 18, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29478415>.

144 Angela Dewan, Vasco Cotovio, and Hillary Clarke, "Catalonia independence referendum: What just happened?" *CNN*, October 2, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/02/europe/catalonia-independence-referendum-explainer/index.html>.

145 Tara John, "What to Know About the Catalan Independence Referendum," *TIME Magazine*, September 25, 2017, <https://time.com/4951665/catalan-referendum-2017/>.

146 Turner, "Catalan Independence."

147 Ana Garcia Valdivia, "Catalan Separatist Leaders Sentenced to 9-13 Years Prison Over 2017 Independence Referendum," *Forbes*, October 15, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/anagarciavaldivia/2019/10/15/catalan-separatist-leaders-sentenced-to-9-13-years-prison-over-independence-referendum-in-2017/?sh=63f15b8d579e>.

148 Joseph Wilson and David Brunat, "A fugitive Catalan separatist may hold the key to Spain's government after an inconclusive election," *Associated Press*, July 25, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/spain-election-sanchez-puigdemont-catalonia-8ca29d88a246110d943d3add2ac0ed7a>.

149 "Spain pardons Catalan leaders over independence bid," *BBC News*, June 22, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57565764>.

150 *BBC News*, "Spain pardons Catalan leaders."

151 *BBC News*, "Spain pardons Catalan leaders."

between Catalonia and Gibraltar is that Catalonia is a viable independent state while Gibraltar is not. Although not all Catalans wish to be independent from Spain, there is enough support for Catalonia to potentially become an independent state in the future. This can be seen with the 2017 referendum. The majority of Gibraltarians, however, do not want to be an independent state but rather remain under the control of the UK. It is also important to note that Catalonia historically has not had the right to self-determination, while Gibraltar has. Since the creation of the Spanish monarchy, Catalonia's status and self-governing privileges have been mostly decided by the Spanish government. This is seen most recently with the response from the Spanish government to the 2017 independence referendum. Gibraltar, however, has been able to determine its future. In the 2002 referendum, for example, Gibraltarians overwhelmingly opposed the joint sovereignty proposal between the UK and Spain, and their decision was respected.

The case of Catalonia is still relevant because it shows that denying a region's right to self-determination can lead to civil unrest and division. The UK has historically respected Gibraltar's right to self-determination. However, new Brexit developments have complicated the relationship between Gibraltar, the UK, and the EU. When navigating these new relationships, it is important that colonial powers still respect Gibraltar's right to self-determination.

Additionally, differences between the situations of Catalonia and Gibraltar demonstrate that territories that do not have full governing powers do not always want the same outcomes. This case study shows that colonial powers can affect territories differently. Solutions to territorial disputes must reflect those differences. Ultimately, it is important to consider the desires of people in disputed territories, whatever they may be, and to respect their right to self-determination. Delegates should consider the events in Catalonia and how they highlight the importance of respecting self-determination in the case of

Gibraltar.

Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were created in 2015 by the United Nations. This was a way for the United Nations General Assembly to create a universal call to action to ensure that by 2030, all people can experience peace and prosperity.¹⁵² With 17 SDGs guiding the actions of the United Nations, delegates are to ensure that their decisions are informed by the SDGs.

The first SDG that should be addressed is Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. Post-Brexit, businesses in Gibraltar will lose accessibility to the EU's single market. This has created fear that Gibraltar's economic growth will be hindered. Additionally, freedom of movement between Gibraltar, Spain, and the United Kingdom has decreased. Delegates in SPECPOL must consider the economic impacts of Brexit on Gibraltar. They should also consider solutions encouraging decent work and economic growth within Gibraltar.¹⁵³

The second SDG that should be addressed is Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. SDG 16 states that the UN should maintain peace and justice during conflicts. This directly relates to the disagreements between the UK and Spain. This SDG aims to reduce all forms of conflict and insecurity and strengthen countries' participation in global governance.¹⁵⁴ This includes ensuring the peace and conflicts between the UK and Spain are resolved peacefully through treaties and agreements. Additionally, SDG 16 promotes developing compromises to promote the rule of law and protect human rights. With the events of Brexit, delegates should respect the differences between the UK and Gibraltar regarding the relationship they want with the EU. Target 16.b specifically states that member states should promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies.¹⁵⁵ Delegates should consider resolutions that uphold SDG 16 and establish agreements that respect all parties to the conflict, especially Gibraltarians.

152 "Sustainable Development Goals," United Nations Development Programme, accessed July 28, 2022, <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>.

153 "Decent Work and Economic Growth," United Nations Development Programme, accessed August 11, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals/decent-work-and-economic-growth>.

154 United Nations Development Programme, "Decent Work and Economic Growth."

155 "Promote and Enforce Non-Discriminatory Laws and Policies." SDG 16: Business Framework, accessed August 11, 2023, <https://sdg16.unglobalcompact.org/target-16-b/>.

The final SDG that should be addressed is Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals. SDG 17 involves respect for each country's ability to implement policies to achieve sustainable development.¹⁵⁶ Delegates should consider how the UK and Spain can work together to address the issue of Gibraltar. Additionally, delegates should consider Gibraltar's opinions and policies in developing solutions that respect Gibraltarians and help achieve sustainable development. Delegates should also consider the role other countries play in resolving this issue and how all UN member states can work together to overcome this conflict and achieve sustainable development.

Bloc Analysis

Point of Division

Although not every UN member state has a direct interest in the situation in Gibraltar, all UN member states are impacted by decolonization in some way or another. As mentioned previously, the UN Charter includes information on Non-Self-Governing Territories like Gibraltar.¹⁵⁷ According to the UN Charter, a Non-Self-Governing Territory is a territory "whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government."¹⁵⁸ In 1946, UN member states reported Non-Self-Governing territories under their authority to be included in a UN List.¹⁵⁹ The original List included 72 Non-Self-Governing Territories, but most of these have since been removed. Today, only 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remain on the list.¹⁶⁰ The UN List also includes administering Powers, which are countries that currently govern these territories.¹⁶¹

The blocs for this topic organize countries by their status in relation to the Non-Self-Governing Territories List. Some countries are currently administering Powers of territories on the Non-Self-Governing Territories List. However, the views and opinions that the people of the Non-Self-Governing

Territories have of their administering Power may differ. For example, Gibraltarians are content to remain part of the UK, but other territories might seek independence from their administering Power or wish to be part of another country. The second group is countries that were formerly administering Powers. These countries once were administering Powers on the List of Non-Self-Governing Territories but have since been removed. This could be because the territories under their control gained independence or their status has changed.¹⁶² Additionally, some countries were formerly listed as Non-Self-Governing Territories but have since gained independence and become UN member states. The final bloc consists of countries that have neither been administering powers nor territories on the List of Non-Self-Governing Territories at any point in history. While countries in the same bloc could have different connections to Gibraltar, they historically have had similar policies and priorities when discussing the situation of other Non-Self-Governing Territories.¹⁶³

These blocs are meant to serve as a guideline, but delegates are encouraged to further research their country's policies on Non-Self-Governing Territories and the situation in Gibraltar specifically. Additionally, while delegates are encouraged to work with other countries in their bloc, they should also look for ways to form resolutions and agreements with countries in other blocs.

Current administering Powers

Countries in this bloc are currently listed as administering Powers on the UN List of Non-Self-Governing Territories. These countries assume the governing responsibilities for these territories and are often colonizers. Specifically, these countries are the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and New Zealand.¹⁶⁴ While countries in this bloc are all administering Powers to a Non-Self-Governing Territory, their relationship with these territories might differ.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Development Programme, "Sustainable Development Goals."

¹⁵⁷ "Non-Self-Governing Territories," United Nations, accessed October 17, 2023, <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/nsgt>.

¹⁵⁸ United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust."

¹⁵⁹ United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust."

¹⁶⁰ United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories."

¹⁶¹ United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust."

¹⁶² United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust."

¹⁶³ United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust."

¹⁶⁴ United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories."

For example, the UK is the administering Power to Gibraltar. As mentioned previously, Gibraltarians overwhelmingly support remaining in the UK. The UK has also allowed Gibraltar some form of self-determination by refusing to accept the joint sovereignty proposal with Spain after Gibraltarians voted against this in the 2002 referendum.¹⁶⁵ This differs from the United States and its relationship with Guam, for example. According to the UN, Guam is listed as a Non-Self-Governing Territory whose administering Power is the United States.¹⁶⁶ Unlike Gibraltar, the people of Guam have historically been denied any form of self-determination by the US government. In 2020, for example, the US Supreme Court denied Guam the possibility of a referendum to vote for statehood, independence, or free association.¹⁶⁷ Free association means that Guam would be a sovereign state but maintain a close relationship with the United States. It would also be protected by the US military.¹⁶⁸ Administering Powers that have several Non-Self-Governing Territories might also have different relationships with each one.

Despite their differences, countries in this bloc all influence control over Non-Self-Governing Territories. Countries in this bloc might historically oppose allowing self-determination to territories on the UN List of Non-Self-Governing Territories. However, countries in this bloc must allow territories self-determination. Countries in this bloc might seek ways to grant this self-determination while maintaining a relationship with these territories. They might also look for ways to transition to allowing these territories greater self-governance and to work towards removing them from the UN List.

Former administering Powers

Countries in this bloc were formerly listed as administering Powers on the UN List of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Still, the territories listed under their authority have since been removed. This could be due to these territories gaining

independence or changing their status. Countries in this bloc include Spain, Portugal, Australia, and the Netherlands.¹⁶⁹ Historically, these countries were colonial powers, but they have since made efforts towards decolonization.

There are different reasons that countries in this bloc are no longer considered administering Powers. For example, Belgium was once listed as an administering Power for the Belgian Congo and the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi. However, these territories gained independence from Belgium and are now the sovereign countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda.¹⁷⁰ In other cases, such as that of Ifni, the territory's status changed. Ifni was once listed as a Non-Self-Governing Territory whose administering Power was Spain. Following the Ifni War from 1957-1958, however, Spain ceded the territory to Morocco, who had claimed it for many years.¹⁷¹

Although countries in this bloc have all lost their status as administering Powers in different ways, they have all taken part in decolonization efforts. Countries in this bloc, therefore, might encourage current administering Powers to work towards decolonization as well. They might encourage policies that aim to remove other territories from the List of Non-Self-Governing Territories. However, these countries' ideas on pursuing this goal might differ from those of people currently in Non-Self-Governing Territories. Spain, for example, claims that Gibraltar is currently a British colony. It argues that Gibraltar should be returned to Spain to be removed from the List. Gibraltarians, however, largely oppose becoming part of Spain. Countries in this bloc must respect self-determination and listen to People's perspectives in Non-Self-Governing Territories when developing resolutions to the situation in Gibraltar.

Former Non-Self-Governing Territories

Countries in this bloc were once listed as Non-Self-Governing

¹⁶⁵ Richburg, "Gibraltar Votes to Remain British."

¹⁶⁶ United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories."

¹⁶⁷ "US Supreme Court declines to take up Guam plebiscite case," *Associated Press*, May 5, 2020, <https://apnews.com/94961dd63fabf51b67dec99b42879524>.

¹⁶⁸ Free Association Taskforce, "Free Association: The Best of Both Worlds," *Unincorporated*, accessed October 18, 2023, <https://humanitiesguahan.org/unincorporated/free-association-best-both-worlds>.

¹⁶⁹ United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust."

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, "Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust."

¹⁷¹ "Ifni," *Britannica*, accessed October 18, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ifni>.

Territories by the UN but have since gained independence and become member states. Examples of countries in this bloc include Chad, Vietnam, Yemen, and Angola.¹⁷² Countries in this bloc achieved independence in different ways and had different relationships with their administering Powers. Angola, for example, only gained independence from Portugal in 1975 after an armed conflict that lasted several years.¹⁷³ On the other hand, France peacefully granted the Central African Republic independence in 1960. After independence, the Central African Republic allowed France to provide help with trade, defense, and international relations.¹⁷⁴ Despite these differences, countries in this bloc understand the importance of self-determination in issues like that of Gibraltar.

Although countries in this bloc might not have a stance on the issue of Gibraltar explicitly, their former status as Non-Self-Governing Territories influences their views on this issue. Countries in this bloc will likely advocate for policies that allow the people of Non-Self-Governing Territories the right to self-determination. As former Non-Self-Governing Territories themselves, countries in this bloc understand the importance of allowing Gibraltarians to determine their own future. They often will be opposed to policies that allow administering Powers to make decisions on Non-Self-Governing Territories without first consulting the people who live there. It is important that countries in this bloc work with those in other blocs to ensure the protection of the rights of Gibraltarians.

Countries that were neither administering Powers nor Non-Self-Governing Territories

Countries in this bloc have neither been administering Powers nor Non-Self-Governing Territories. These countries have not been directly involved in decolonization efforts as recently as countries in the previous blocs but are still interested in this issue. Countries in this bloc include Mexico, Iran, Hungary, and Canada.¹⁷⁵

Although countries in this bloc have not been directly involved in the Non-Self-Governing Territories List, they often still have a history with colonization. Many were formerly colonies but gained independence before the UN established the List in 1946. Mexico, for example, was once a Spanish colony but gained independence in 1821.¹⁷⁶ Other countries in this bloc might have avoided colonization for one reason or another. For example, Nepal’s rugged terrain prevented Western powers from colonizing it.¹⁷⁷ Regardless of their past, countries in this bloc have either never been a colony or a colonizer, or they have not been for several years. Much like countries in the two previous blocs, these countries will likely aim to develop policies that support decolonization. Though countries in this bloc have not recently known the direct harms of colonization, they are aware of the issues it can cause and might be indirectly impacted by this issue. Countries that were colonies long ago might even continue to experience the long-term effects of colonization today. Though they might not have the same understanding of Non-Self-Governing Territories that countries in the previous bloc have, countries in this bloc are still likely to support resolutions that ensure the right to self-determination.

Committee Mission

The status of Gibraltar is discussed by the United Nations General Assembly nearly every year. Over the years, different events have changed Gibraltar’s self-determination issues. These range from previously discussed referendums as well as modern events like Brexit. Because of this, many legal frameworks are relevant for discussion since self-determination varies in every situation. Because the situation of Gibraltar is tied to decolonization, this topic is very relevant to SPECPOL.

This issue also involves the role of the United Nations in determining sovereignty. Sovereignty issues are an important

¹⁷² United Nations, “Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust.”

¹⁷³ “The Angola Crisis 1974-75,” U.S. Department of State, accessed October 18, 2023, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/angola>.

¹⁷⁴ “Independence of the Central African Republic,” Britannica, accessed October 18, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Central-African-Republic/Independence>.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations, “Non-Self-Governing Territories: a sacred trust”; United Nations, “Non-Self-Governing Territories.”

¹⁷⁶ “Mexican War of Independence,” History, accessed October 18, 2023, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/mexican-war-of-independence-begins>.

¹⁷⁷ Tim Pile, “From Ethiopia to Iran, places that escaped colonisation by Europeans - how did they do it?” *South China Morning Post*, January 5, 2020, <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/travel/article/3044478/ethiopia-iran-places-escaped-colonisation-europeans>.

part of SPECPOL's work. In 2020, SPECPOL stated its support for self-determination for the people of Gibraltar.¹⁷⁸ This means that the United Nations is listening to Gibraltarians' complaints from past debates of joint sovereignty and protecting rights of self-determination.

As part of the United Nations General Assembly, SPECPOL does not have the authority to enforce actions or powers upon member states. When creating resolutions relevant to this issue, delegates need to keep this in mind. As seen from the events of Brexit and the previous referendums, Gibraltar's voice and opinion are important in this conversation. Delegates must consider all sides and parties in creating solutions. Delegates should also keep in mind the Sustainable Development Agenda and continue to promote non-discriminatory policies that address the whole situation with all parties involved.

Delegates should know their country's perspective on territorial disputes and their connection to colonization. This will allow countries to create solutions that address Gibraltar and create frameworks for addressing broader conflicts.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations, "United Nations Support for Self-Determination Remains Source of Pride, Crucial Pillar, Says Secretary-General, as Special Committee Opens 2020 Session," news release, February 21, 2020, <https://press.un.org/en/2020/gacol3342.doc.htm>.



SPECPOL

NHSMUN 2024

TOPIC B:
THE EFFECTS OF FOREIGN AID IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Photo Credit: USAID in Africa

Introduction

Foreign aid is the transfer of money, goods, or services from one country or organization to another. This is often done to help the recipient country address a certain issue or crisis.¹ The most common purposes for aid are for economic, military, or humanitarian use. Aid includes providing grants, loans, job training, fresh food, or clean water. Countries choose to provide aid for a variety of reasons. For example, some may use foreign aid to assist their allies or potential allies. Other countries may give aid because their government wants to help a country in desperate need.²

Every single country in Sub-Saharan Africa has received some form of foreign aid.³ Annually, these countries receive about USD 15 billion more than any other region in the form of foreign aid.⁴ Foreign aid often becomes necessary for countries that do not have an established economic or political structure to fall back on if conflict arises. Because states are not able to recover economically themselves, they rely on other countries or organizations, including international organizations like the United Nations, the World Bank, or the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to assist them. Many Sub-Saharan African countries lack this structure because of an event known as the Scramble for Africa.⁵

The Scramble for Africa was a period from about 1884 to 1914 when European countries divided Africa amongst themselves and colonized most of the continent.⁶ In the late 1800s, European traders, missionaries, and explorers began to travel to Africa. Upon their arrival, they found that Africa had numerous natural resources. Africa contains 30 percent of the world's mineral reserves, 8 percent of the world's natural gas, and 12 percent of the world's oil reserves.⁷ European countries wanted these resources to support their growing industrialization and trade industries. As a result, European countries such as France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Portugal, and Great Britain rushed to stake their claims in Africa.⁸ European powers had to overthrow African groups,

such as the Ashanti, Nbele, and Shona, to gain control of these resources. Europeans did not know African culture or political structures, so they organized African territory in ways that best suited their needs. This meant that they did not establish independent political and economic systems. This would have long-term impacts on African countries, including financial instability.⁹

Given Sub-Saharan Africa's historical past and current economic, political, and social struggles, it is essential to acknowledge and understand the different effects foreign aid can have on a country. This can help delegates in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) think critically about the consequences of foreign aid, both intended and unintended. Collaboration between countries is essential when addressing this topic as well. As a General Assembly Committee, SPECPOL only has the power to recommend specific actions instead of creating binding agreements. As a result, delegates should craft solutions and policies that other countries or organizations would realistically adopt.

History and Description of the Issue

Origin of Foreign Aid

Foreign aid dates back to the aftermath of World War II,

1 "Foreign Aid," Britannica, accessed August 18, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/money/topic/foreign-aid>.

2 Britannica, "Foreign Aid."

3 "Bureau for Africa," USAID, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/organization/bureau-africa>.

4 *Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Developing Countries 2023: Disbursements, Commitments, Country Indicators* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1787/12757fab-en-fr>.

5 Stelios Michalopoulos and Elias Papaioannou, "Scramble for Africa and Its Legacy," *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, 2018, 12043–53, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95189-5_3041.

6 Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, "Scramble for Africa and Its Legacy."

7 "Our work in Africa" United Nations Environmental Program, accessed August 18, 2023. <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/our-work-africa>.

8 "Scramble for Africa," Britannica, accessed August 18, 2023. <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Scramble-for-Africa/632997>

9 Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, "Scramble for Africa."

which left many countries economically unstable.¹⁰ To prepare for the war, states allocated their funds towards producing military weapons. This expanded military budgets but also meant less money was invested into other sectors that had previously contributed to economic growth, such as the educational sphere. Additionally, countries experienced a shortage of necessary goods, including food, gasoline, and metal.¹¹ These shortages meant that after the war, the overall productivity of the economy was decreasing, as there were fewer workers and materials. At the same time, certain goods could no longer be produced because countries changed their economies to prioritize wartime goods. Political ideologies also played a role in this situation. The Soviet Union wanted to spread communism to Eastern European countries. The United States, on the other hand, wanted to spread democracy and prevent the expansion of the Soviet Union's influence.¹²

The vulnerable economic and political state of European countries led to the development of foreign aid programs to help rebuild their economies. The Marshall Plan is the most notable of these programs. The United States created this program to provide USD 13.3 billion in aid to 16 European countries over four years.¹³ This money was used to rebuild Western European countries that had been left in financial ruin due to the war. The United States also saw this as an opportunity to minimize Soviet influence in Europe.¹⁴ In turn, this would create stronger relations between the United States and European countries and establish reliable trading partners in Europe.

Under the plan, European countries had to agree to a financial proposal detailing how to rebuild their economies to receive the money.¹⁵ The funds provided came in the form of grants

and loans for food, fuel, and machinery. This would then boost productivity and industrialization.¹⁶ Productivity is a measurement of how efficient workers are.¹⁷ Industrialization is the process in which a region moves from an agricultural economy towards a manufacturing one.¹⁸

The Marshall Plan had both positive and negative effects. In terms of trade, European countries did not meet the outlined goal. Typically, for a country to experience positive economic growth, the number of goods it sells to other countries—its exports—must be higher than the number of goods it buys from other countries—its imports. The Marshall Plan promised aid-receiving states that they would be able to pay for 83 percent of all of their imports with the money they would make from the goods they were exporting. Instead, European countries could only pay for about 50 percent of their imports with the money they had gained from their exports. Because they were unable to make enough money through exports to pay for all of their imports, this meant they experienced a budget deficit. A budget deficit is when a country is spending more money than it is earning. This contributes to their national debt and makes it more difficult for a country's economy to recover. Additionally, because the price of goods in other countries rose a significant amount, this meant that European countries lost even more money. This is because they had to pay higher prices for the same amount of goods but were not making more money than they were before. This left European countries in a similar economic standing to the one they were in before the implementation of the Marshall Plan. However, there were positive consequences as well. Economists found that in the post-Marshall Plan time, there were increases in steel production, oil refining capacity, and

¹⁰ "Foreign Aid," Encyclopædia Britannica, May 23, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/money/topic/foreign-aid>.

¹¹ "Rationing for the War Effort," The National WWII Museum, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students-teachers/student-resources/research-starters/take-closer-look-ration-books>.

¹² "What Will Russia Do After the War?" The National WWII Museum, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/what-will-russia-do-after-war>.

¹³ "The Marshall Plan: Design, Accomplishments, and Significance," EveryCRSReport.com, accessed October 23, 2023, <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R45079.html>.

¹⁴ "Marshall Plan (1948)," National Archives and Records Administration, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/marshall-plan>.

¹⁵ National Archives and Records Administration, "Marshall Plan."

¹⁶ National Archives and Records Administration, "Marshall Plan."

¹⁷ "Examples of Measuring Productivity at Work for Organisations," Personio, accessed October 20, 2023, <https://www.personio.com/hr-lexicon/how-to-measure-productivity/>.

¹⁸ "Is Industrialization Good for the Economy?" Investopedia, last modified December 21, 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/033115/industrialization-good-economy.asp>.

coal production.¹⁹ These all contributed to economic growth because the economy was more productive in terms of how quickly necessary products were produced for both domestic use and exports.

Because of the mixed results of the plan, critics have debated whether the Marshall Plan was a success or if it approached the crisis appropriately. For example, supporters of the Marshall Plan claimed it promoted industrialization in Europe. However, it is difficult to determine whether the Marshall Plan is directly connected to the increase in production and industrialization or if it was just a byproduct of European countries no longer having to focus on the production of war materials.²⁰ Additionally, many critics view the Marshall Plan as the start of the Cold War.²¹ The Cold War was a period of rivalry and tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, mainly having to do with different ideological beliefs.²² The Soviet Union established its foreign assistance program called the Molotov Plan in Eastern Europe as a response to the Marshall Plan, leading eventually to the Cold War.²³

Despite its mixed effects, the Marshall Plan provided a blueprint for future foreign aid programs. This includes international programs like the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a financial agency stemming from the United Nations.²⁴ The IMF assists in the form of loans, technical training, and advisory services to all member countries. The loans the IMF provides are general loans that can be used at the country's discretion regarding how they believe it can best help their economy. They do not give out loans for specific projects or to support specific economic sectors.²⁵ The World Bank is an international organization made up of five institutions to end extreme poverty.²⁶ These institutions are the International Bank for Reconstruction and

Development, the International Development Association, the International Finance Corporation, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, and the International Centre for Settlement and Investment Disputes. Although all operate under one goal, each institution has its own focus. For example, the International Development Association is concentrated on the world's poorest countries. It is more centered around developing all types of infrastructure. In contrast, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development focuses more on middle-class countries that need advice on loans and sustainable growth. Both of these types of aid can be applied to Sub-Saharan African countries, as some have more of a need for overall structural development, while others need policy assistance.²⁷

Foreign aid can take different forms depending on whether it is between countries or from an international organization to a country due to their differing priorities. For global organizations, there are fewer personal incentives, as they are operating as an organization without abiding by a specific country policy. Instead, international organizations have mandates that formally establish what their organization's mission is and what they aim to achieve. These mandates often have certain ideologies built within them, depending on who leads the organization. An example of an order would be the World Bank's stated goal to achieve long-term economic development and poverty reduction.²⁸ This means that the aid they provide will be justified because it will contribute to achieving this mandate in some form. With country relationships, there might be more mutual benefits being sought out, such as strengthening their trade relationship with one another. Country-based foreign aid can help keep those receiving the support more accountable, as they now are directly involved with the country providing them aid. This type of aid also allows Sub-Saharan African

19 National Archives and Records Administration, "Marshall Plan."

20 National Archives and Records Administration, "Marshall Plan."

21 "What is the Marshall Plan and What Did It Accomplish?" Notre Dame International Security Center, May 15, 2023, <https://ndisc.nd.edu/news-media/news/what-is-the-marshall-plan-and-what-did-it-accomplish/>.

22 "Cold War," Britannica, last modified October 18, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cold-War>.

23 Notre Dame International Security, "What is the Marshall Plan and What Did It Accomplish?"

24 "The Bretton Woods Conference, 1944," US Department of State, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/wwii/98681.htm>.

25 International Monetary Fund, "What Is the IMF?"

26 "Who We Are," World Bank, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are>.

27 World Bank, "Who We Are."

28 "The IMF and the World Bank," International Monetary Fund, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2022/IMF-World-Bank-New>.

countries to form stronger diplomatic ties with the countries they receive assistance from and promotes collaboration and communication.

It is important to note, however, that modern-day foreign aid provided to Sub-Saharan Africa has changed significantly since the implementation of the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan, for example, was designed to be a collaboration between the United States and European countries. The plan encouraged European countries to maintain their independence, even while receiving support from the United States. The Marshall Plan also emphasized long-term economic growth. The Plan concentrated on stimulating trade and production for long-term financial stability rather than short-term relief. Furthermore, the countries that received aid through the Marshall Plan already had strong economies before World War II. Europe's existing economic structures and industrialization helped it rebuild rather quickly.²⁹ Many Sub-Saharan African countries, however, did not have these existing structures prior to receiving aid. The European colonization of Africa in the 19th century had already destabilized these countries before they began to receive foreign aid. Additionally, some modern day foreign aid programs cause Sub-Saharan African countries to become overly dependent on other countries or organizations.³⁰ However, the Marshall Plan still serves as an example of early foreign aid distribution efforts and the importance of evaluating the potential consequences of such programs.

Government Stability and Foreign Aid

When a country receives foreign aid, its government is typically responsible for properly managing that aid and implementing new measures. This is because foreign aid mostly takes the form of public investment rather than private investment. Aid-providing countries who also want to establish diplomatic

ties choose to provide public investment because it ties them directly to the country's government. How governments handle foreign aid, however, looks different depending on their structure.

23 Sub-Saharan African countries are under an authoritarian regime, and only one country is considered to be operating as a full democracy.³¹ The determination of a government as democratic or authoritarian is based on the following factors: the electoral process, pluralism, government functions, political participation, and civil liberties.³² Examples of the most authoritarian countries in Sub-Saharan Africa include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea. In contrast, some of the most democratic countries are Mauritius, Botswana, Cabo Verde, and South Africa. Most experts agree that there is a relationship between a country's level of democracy and the impact of foreign aid.³³

In some cases, foreign aid can make a government more transparent and democratic. If aid is allocated towards developing other branches of government, this can take away power from the executive branch. This can be done through investing money in securing voting locations and ensuring the fairness of the electoral process. Another aspect of increased democratization is that countries have an incentive to abide by certain conditions and implement new policies to continue to receive more aid.³⁴ In a study done by the University of Chicago, it was found that aid provided to promote democracy helps prevent election misconduct and encourages multi-party systems.³⁵ Election misconduct included violence during elections, harassment of political parties, and discouraging people from running for office. Multi-party systems exist in countries where multiple political parties make it to the final stage of an election. However, this impact of foreign aid is limited. In every case studied, political parties that did not

²⁹ National Archives and Records Administration, "Marshall Plan."

³⁰ Juliette Lyons, "Foreign aid is hurting, not helping Sub-Saharan Africa," *Le Journal International*, October 13, 2014, https://www.lejournalinternational.fr/Foreign-aid-is-hurting-not-helping-Sub-Saharan-Africa_a2085.html.

³¹ "Democracy Index in Sub-Saharan Africa by Country 2021," Statista, December 15, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1204750/democracy-index-in-sub-saharan-africa-by-country/>.

³² Statistica, "Democracy Index."

³³ Nabamita Dutta, Peter T. Leeson, and Claudia R. Williamson, "The Amplification Effect: Foreign Aid's Impact on Political Institutions," *Kyklos* 66, no. 2 (2013): 208–28, <https://doi.org/10.1111/kykl.12018>.

³⁴ Dutta, "The Amplification Effect."

³⁵ Simone Dietrich and Joseph Wright, "Foreign Aid Allocation Tactics and Democratic Change in Africa," *The Journal of Politics* 77, no. 1 (2015): 216–34, <https://doi.org/10.1086/678976>.



World Food Programme food distribution point in Zimbabwe

Credit: Kate Holt/AusAID

currently hold office were unable to garner enough support and resources to overcome those that did.³⁶

In contrast, foreign aid can also cause government corruption. Because very little aid is given directly to the people, governments often have complete control over how they spend it.³⁷ This makes it easier for governments to spend the money on resources that secure their power instead of helping ordinary citizens. This is especially true if there are no measures to hold the government receiving the aid accountable.³⁸ Countries might also give aid to other countries intending to prop up authoritarian governments or foster corruption. One example of how foreign aid can increase government corruption can be found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Currently, the country is experiencing one of the longest-running humanitarian crises and receives millions of USD a year in foreign aid.³⁹ An anti-fraud task force run by the UN found that individuals in government positions and humanitarian organizations intentionally interfered with the distribution

³⁶ Dietrich and Wright, "Foreign Aid Allocation."

³⁷ Dutta, "The Amplification Effect."

³⁸ Dutta, "The Amplification Effect."

³⁹ Paisley Dodds and Philip Kleinfeld, "Leaked review exposes scale of aid corruption and abuse in Congo," *The New Humanitarian*, June 12, 2020, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/investigation/2020/06/12/Congo-aid-corruption-abuse-DFID-DRC-UN-NGOs>.

⁴⁰ Dodds and Kleinfeld, "Leaked review exposes scale of aid corruption and abuse in Congo."

⁴¹ "Power Struggle for Sudan," Global Conflict Tracker, July 11, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/power-struggle-sudan>.

⁴² "Sudan: Why has fighting broken out there?" *BBC News*, April 24, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-65284948>.

⁴³ "Sudan Emergency: Situation Report," ReliefWeb, May 22, 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-emergency-situation-report-no2-22-may-2023>.

of supplies. They also found that the anti-corruption tools that had been implemented were not being used. The lack of regulations on who can use funds was cited as another reason the fraud occurred. It was unclear what aid was being spent on and who benefitted from the aid.⁴⁰ This type of corruption in foreign aid can hurt countries more than it helps them.

Another issue for many Sub-Saharan African countries is receiving aid through political turmoil and transitions. In April 2023, conflict erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Force (RSF) over control of Sudan.⁴¹ The conflict has primarily been caused by political instability since military generals have largely ruled Sudan. These generals often disagree about how best to run the country.⁴² In June of 2023, the United Nations estimated that the conflict displaced more than one million individuals and that USD 2.6 billion was needed to resolve the humanitarian crisis.⁴³ Both the RSF and the SAF agreed to a ceasefire so that aid could be provided to around two million people. However,

the truce has since been broken.⁴⁴ Furthermore, humanitarian relief, including through the World Food Program or UNICEF, is often complex due to attacks by the RSF and SAF. In March 2023, a World Food Program truck was looted, and around 17 tons of food were taken.⁴⁵ This case demonstrates that the effectiveness of foreign aid largely depends on a government's stability. Conflict complicates the provision of foreign aid and makes it more challenging to reach the people who need this aid the most.

Oftentimes, foreign aid amplifies the existing political institution of a country.⁴⁶ In other words, foreign aid causes governments with relatively strong democracies to become more democratic. However, it can also reinforce authoritarianism and corruption in less stable countries.⁴⁷ When providing foreign aid, it is important to consider the potential negative consequences it could have on a country. It is also essential to focus on who specifically receives aid and how it is spent.

Differences Between Short- and Long-Term Aid

Foreign aid can be either short- or long-term aid. When providing foreign aid, governments often specify which type they are providing. For this topic, the difference between short- and long-term aid depends on the amount of money or resources given and whether the aid is given on a temporary or permanent basis. Short-term aid is when there is a restricted amount of money and resources provided or when aid is given temporarily. Long-term aid is when there is no specified amount of money and resources provided or when aid is given permanently. The reason these criteria are used to classify aid as short- or long-term is that depending on what aid is used for, the actual amount of time needed for aid provision can vary greatly.

One example of short-term aid is during the South Sudanese Civil War. In 2013, political and ethnic conflict led to the outbreak of war and overall increased violence in South Sudan. This forced 1.87 million people to flee their homes. These people then struggled to access necessities such as food and adequate housing.⁴⁸ In response to this conflict, Canada gave USD 32.8 million to South Sudan to be used for humanitarian efforts, including clean drinking water and emergency healthcare services.⁴⁹ This aid is considered short-term because it is classified as emergency aid and is distributed only once. It intends to temporarily help the citizens of South Sudan survive in times of ongoing conflict.

An example of long-term aid is the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Power Africa project.⁵⁰ This project aims to help Sub-Saharan African countries achieve sustainable economic growth by connecting them to reliable power and electricity sources. The project offers support through a multitude of resources, including financial resources. Power Africa works with African governments on how to maintain the power sector and how to implement access to power throughout the region, whether it be in large cities or rural areas. Additionally, they create partnerships with other organizations, companies, and countries to help fund these projects.⁵¹ Power Africa is considered long-term aid because there is no set amount of aid given. This project has a stated mission, but there is no specific end date or indicator to signal that the project has been completed. Power Africa does not put a cap on how much aid they give to these countries.⁵² This type of aid is more common with organizations such as USAID because they have a more specific mandate they are trying to fulfill in comparison to general country foreign aid that is given to help another country overall. Lastly, this aid is not labeled as emergency aid and seeks to help achieve long-term economic growth. Assistance provided for purposes such as rebuilding the economy or expanding energy access takes

44 "Sudan Conflict: Rethinking Pathways for Humanitarian Aid Provision," CSIS, June 15, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/sudan-conflict-rethinking-pathways-humanitarian-aid-provision>.

45 CSIS, "Sudan Conflict: Rethinking Pathways for Humanitarian Aid Provision."

46 Dutta, "The Amplification Effect."

47 Dutta, "The Amplification Effect."

48 "South Sudan conflict: facts and how to help," World Vision, August 4, 2020, <https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/south-sudan-conflict-facts-and-how-to-help>.

49 World Vision, "South Sudan conflict: facts and how to help."

50 "Power Africa," USAID, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica>.

51 USAID, "Power Africa."

52 USAID, "Power Africa."

time and is typically long-term aid.

Unless specified for the private sector, foreign aid is typically managed by the governments of the countries receiving the aid. Whether foreign aid is given in the form of short- or long-term aid can change the outcomes for the country receiving aid. A study by the Cooper Union, which analyzed 26 Sub-Saharan African countries between 1990-2016, found that long-term aid increased the country's debt because they took loans with interest attached to them.⁵³ The interest attached to a loan is how much money must be paid back in addition to the borrowed amount. Unless it is established at a rate that stays the same, the interest that needs to be paid back tends to increase every year. Another finding was that long-term aid is often associated with increased responsibilities tied to the money. Researchers believe an explanation for this could be that if a country is planning to make a long-term investment in another country, it wants to seek out its benefits or ensure that the other country will use the money properly. When a country cannot fulfill the responsibilities of the agreement they made to receive the aid, this can put them in a worse economic standing than they were before receiving the aid.

These two factors are associated with an increase in a country's

⁵³ "The Fiscal Management of Foreign Aid in Sub-Saharan Africa," Research Outreach, February 7, 2022, <https://researchoutreach.org/articles/fiscal-management-foreign-aid-sub-saharan-africa/>.

⁵⁴ Research Outreach, "The Fiscal Management of Foreign Aid in Sub-Saharan Africa."

⁵⁵ Research Outreach, "The Fiscal Management of Foreign Aid in Sub-Saharan Africa."

budget deficit, which is counterproductive to progress toward economic growth.⁵⁴

The study found that short-term aid, however, leads to a decrease in the budget deficit. This result can be explained by how governments respond to these types of grants. When a government receives short-term aid, it often treats the money more to mitigate its current debt rather than as an extension of its spending. When a government is given aid they believe to be permanent, they often view it as an additional source of funds for their overall government spending. Because of this mindset, governments do not allocate the money towards addressing the issue the aid was given for and instead use it wherever they see fit. Because there is typically a lack of accountability with long-term foreign aid, it often leads to increased government spending that surpasses the amount of aid received.⁵⁵

The study also looked at the impact of types of aid on levels of public investment. Public investment is how much the government spends on public services such as healthcare, education, or the military. This differs from private investment, which would be money spent by private owners, such as private companies, for their use. The study found an increase



Power Africa Providing Electric Grids.

Credit: USAID in Africa

in public investment when countries received long-term aid, but they made no changes to public investment when they received short-term aid.⁵⁶ There are risks associated with both outcomes. Too much of an increase in spending can be difficult to manage, but no change in spending will result in no economic gain. Assistant Professor Loujaina Abdelwahed from the Cooper Union suggests that one way to mitigate this is by identifying the different needs of each country's economy.⁵⁷ For countries that are more focused on government spending adjustments or have not been able to manage long-term aid effectively, short-term grants are likely to work best.⁵⁸ For countries looking for long-term economic stability and poverty alleviation, however, more consistent, long-term grants would likely work best. This would give them enough money to increase public spending in multiple sectors.⁵⁹ One example of a successful temporary grant for fiscal adjustment occurred in Ghana. In 2015, the country received a USD 918 million loan from the IMF. As a result, the budget deficit decreased from 13 percent to 5 percent in three years.⁶⁰

Another danger posed by long-term aid is that it allows for a higher probability of aid corruption than short-term aid. Short-term aid is usually humanitarian relief meant to provide people with necessities in response to a crisis. With long-term aid, however, it is more difficult for an organization or country to ensure their aid is used properly the entire time. One example is the Arab Spring, which was the rise of mass protests for democracy across the Middle East.⁶¹ As this gained international attention, African countries such as Sudan and Djibouti responded to protests with military forces. To provide these forces, African governments had to increase their military spending. According to a study by the University of Southern California Economics Review, 40 percent of the African military budget from the Arab Spring consisted

of aid from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.⁶² Due to the vague outlines of the aid, governments justified using the aid on military spending over economic development.

Overall, long-term aid has greater potential for economic growth when used properly, but it also has a greater potential for no growth or negative growth when mishandled. Short-term aid tends to have a higher chance of being used correctly but has limited impact on transforming a country's economy. In a study on aid promotion in Africa, economics professors Shaomeng Jia and Claudia R. Williamson found that aid cannot be properly utilized without growth-enhancing institutions.⁶³ Growth-enhancing institutions are infrastructure that allow for development to be made. In terms of foreign aid, this means the establishment of economies and political systems that are developed enough to promote growth. Allocating aid into a system that lacks organization and stability is more likely to be ineffective. The study supports the idea that there must be proper aid facilitation for it to work the way it is intended to.⁶⁴ Thus, aid should be allocated towards helping countries develop growth-enhancing institutions before trying to transform other parts of a country's economy.

Foreign Competition Over Influence in Sub-Saharan Africa

Historically, Sub-Saharan Africa has been a highly-desired region by foreign powers in their efforts to gain power, influence, resources, and territory. This was first exemplified in the Scramble for Africa but remains relevant today. The difference between the Scramble for Africa and the current situation is the approach countries take towards gaining influence in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the past, countries used physical violence and force to stake their claims in Africa. As

56 Research Outreach, "The Fiscal Management of Foreign Aid in Sub-Saharan Africa."

57 Loujaina Abdelwahed, "The Fiscal Management of Permanent and Temporary Foreign Aid: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of International Development* 33, no. 4 (2021): 685–716, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3542>.

58 Research Outreach, "The Fiscal Management of Foreign Aid in Sub-Saharan Africa."

59 Research Outreach, "The Fiscal Management of Foreign Aid in Sub-Saharan Africa."

60 "IMF Lending Case Study: Ghana," IMF, May 20, 2019, <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/GHA/ghana-lending-case-study>.

61 "Arab Spring Stirs African Hopes and Anxieties," United Nations, accessed July 26, 2023, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/august-2011/%E2%80%98arab-spring%E2%80%99-stirs-african-hopes-and-anxieties>.

62 Xiaopeng (Kaitlyn) Tu, *Foreign Aid, Blessing or Bane: A Case Study of Foreign Aid's Impact on Sub-Saharan Africa* (University of Southern California: University of Southern California Economics Review, 2022), <https://usceconreview.com/2018/11/28/foreign-aid-blessing-or-bane-a-case-study-of-foreign-aids-impact-on-sub-saharan-africa/>.

63 Shaomeng Jia, and Claudia R. Williamson, "Aid, Policies, and Growth: Why So Much Confusion?" *Contemporary Economic Policy* 37, no. 4 (2019): 577–99, <https://doi.org/10.1111/coep.12418>.

64 Jia and Williamson, "Aid, Policies, and Growth."

Sub-Saharan African countries gained their independence, however, foreign powers reverted to more diplomatic ways to establish regional relations. This includes providing aid to Sub-Saharan African countries. This puts into question the morality and legitimacy of foreign aid. It also questions whether the main goal of foreign aid is to increase foreign influence rather than to uplift Sub-Saharan African countries economically, socially, and politically.

Currently, China is most African countries' largest trading partner, foreign investor, and lender.⁶⁵ China has double the amount of foreign investments compared to the US and has earned more than four times as much money through trade.⁶⁶ There is speculation that China's extensive involvement in the region is due to their need for Africa's raw materials to support the growing manufacturing empire they have built.⁶⁷ Some experts criticize this involvement, arguing that China has utilized this relationship for political and economic gain. For example, in 2019, African countries made up about half of the signatories of a Chinese letter expressing support for the oppression of the Uighur people.⁶⁸ The Uighurs are a minority group that have experienced systematic oppression and international human rights violations at the hands of the Chinese government. Additionally, one year later, 25 African countries supported China in discussing a national security law in Hong Kong.⁶⁹ This law included criminalizing actions such as speaking out against the government, colluding with external forces, intimidating others, and breaking away from the country.⁷⁰ Because many African countries such as Benin, Botswana, Namibia, Ghana, and Senegal have all made steps towards establishing democracies in their countries, it appears

that supporting this authoritarian legislation would go against their practices.⁷¹

Some experts have speculated that these contradictory actions could be tied to the reliance these African countries have on China. For example, China has established ports in Equatorial Guinea and is looking to add naval bases.⁷² Some believe Equatorial Guinea allows China to build its trade and military bases in the area because it is indebted to China. This raises concerns about whether foreign aid is helpful or whether it is a way for foreign powers to take advantage of recipient countries.

Regardless of China's intentions with the aid it provides Sub-Saharan Africa, China has spearheaded the development of infrastructure projects in the region. China has invested in multiple sectors that promote sustainability, including energy, transportation, and politics. Currently, China has spent more than USD 5.3 billion on projects in the power sector.⁷³ Some of these projects include the construction of a hydroelectric power plant in Kenya and a hydropower dam in Gabon.⁷⁴ Additionally, the China Road and Bridge Corporation has led the construction of roads in countries such as Botswana, Ethiopia, and Angola.⁷⁵ The development of these roads has been essential to connecting citizens from one city to another and providing easier access to food, water, and job opportunities. As for political infrastructure, China has contributed to the building of parliamentary buildings in Africa. The new USD 200 million parliamentary building in Zimbabwe was a gift from China to help stabilize the political development in the country.⁷⁶ China has been involved in building or renovating

65 "10 Things to Know about the U.S.-China Rivalry in Africa," United States Institute of Peace, December 12, 2022, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/12/10-things-know-about-us-china-rivalry-africa>.

66 United States Institute of Peace, "10 Things to Know."

67 United States Institute of Peace, "10 Things to Know."

68 "China Regional Snapshot: Sub-Saharan Africa," Committee on Foreign Affairs, November 21, 2022, <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/china-regional-snapshot-sub-saharan-africa/>.

69 Committee on Foreign Affairs, "China Regional Snapshot."

70 "Hong Kong National Security Law: What Is It and Is It Worrying?" *BBC News*, June 28, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-52765838>.

71 "Democracy in Africa: success stories that have defied the odds," *The Conversation*, July 23, 2019, <https://theconversation.com/democracy-in-africa-success-stories-that-have-defied-the-odds-120601>.

72 Eric A. Miller, "More Chinese Military Bases in Africa: A Question of When, Not If," *Foreign Policy*, August 16, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/16/china-military-bases-africa-navy-pla-geopolitics-strategy/>.

73 "China in Africa," Institute of Developing Economies, accessed August 20, 2023, https://www.ide.go.jp/English/Data/Africa_file/Manualreport/cia_10.html.

74 "Institute of Developing Economies," China in Africa.

75 "Institute of Developing Economies," China in Africa.

76 Kate Bartlett, "Why China Is Building Africa's New Parliaments," *VOA*, April 19, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/why-china-is-building-africa-s-new-parliaments/7056696.html>.



US Military Providing Health Training to Uganda
 Credit: Staff Sgt. Shejal Pulivarti

15 other African countries' government buildings as well.⁷⁷ These developments can potentially promote more political involvement and more organized political systems in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Providing foreign aid from one country can also create competition with other countries. For example, the United States responded to China's actions in Equatorial Guinea by advancing its own relationship with the country through Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Molly Phee, meeting with Equatorial Guinea President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo.⁷⁸ During this meeting, Phee and Obiang discussed how the United States and Equatorial Guinea can work together to promote prosperity to civilians through security, protection of human rights, and preservation of the environment.⁷⁹ Additionally, the United States has made it clear through their actions that it is a priority for them to not only become very close with Africa but to prevent other

countries from having the opportunity to do so.⁸⁰ This was seen in how the United States diplomat communicated to African countries that they should not engage in business with Russia.⁸¹ It was emphasized that conducting business outside of purchasing grain and fertilizer would be violating sanctions and thus lead to punishments from the United States.⁸² African leaders responded by acknowledging how essential purchasing from Russia is for the lives of African civilians and economies. They argued that if the United States were genuinely invested in aiding the recovery of African countries, they would not involve politics in the deal.⁸³

In August 2022, the Biden administration released its US Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa. This strategy acknowledges that the administration wants to achieve certain regional goals. These include promoting democracy, COVID-19 and economic recovery, and food production.⁸⁴ This strategy recognizes how achieving these goals benefits

⁷⁷ Bartlett, "Why China Is Building Africa's New Parliaments."

⁷⁸ "Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Phee's Meeting with Equatoguinean President Obiang," U.S. Embassy in Equatorial Guinea, February 16, 2022, <https://gq.usembassy.gov/assistant-secretary-of-state-for-african-affairs-phrees-meeting-with-equatoguinean-president-obiang/>.

⁷⁹ U.S. Embassy in Equatorial Guinea, "Assistant Secretary of State."

⁸⁰ Cameron Hudson, "Why Are Foreign Powers Scrambling to Court Africa?," *CSIS*, accessed July 30, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-are-foreign-powers-scrambling-court-africa>.

⁸¹ Ruth Maclean, "A U.S. Diplomat Warns African Countries against Buying Anything from Russia except Grain and Fertilizer," *The New York Times*, August 5, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/world/europe/us-africa-russia-sanctions.html>.

⁸² Maclean, "A U.S. Diplomat Warns."

⁸³ Maclean, "A U.S. Diplomat Warns."

⁸⁴ "U.S. strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa," The White House, accessed July 30, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/U.S.-Strategy-Toward-Sub-Saharan-Africa-FINAL.pdf>.

the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa. It outlines how the region has a fast-growing population, free trade opportunities, diverse natural environments, and influential voting power in the UN.⁸⁵ The strategy also includes what actions the administration plans to take, including increasing their investments and loans to Africa and encouraging African countries to amend their constitutions to include democratic clauses.⁸⁶ Although the United States advertises this plan as mutually beneficial, it has received criticism. Members from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) point out that the United States emphasizes spreading democratic values. Yet, they have also provided support to Sub-Saharan African countries whose governments have undemocratic leaders, including Chad, Gabon, and Cameroon.⁸⁷ Additionally, CSIS points out that many of the objectives the United States has established as a part of its plan to help Sub-Saharan Africa require more interactions between the United States and Sub-Saharan African countries. However, past research has shown that these types of diplomatic missions are often underfunded and understaffed, which makes them unlikely to occur regularly, as stated in the plan.⁸⁸ Others criticize the economic development programs in the plan. Members from the Africa Program highlight that the main solution in the plan to foster economic growth is to continue with current programs that the United States already has established in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁸⁹ However, these initiatives, such as Feed the Future and Prosper Africa, have not always been able to achieve their stated goals.⁹⁰ This brings into question how effective continuing these initiatives would be in supporting the economic growth of Sub-Saharan African countries.

Competition in foreign aid provision between the United States, China, Russia, and other countries puts unnecessary pressure on Sub-Saharan African countries who wish to remain in good standing with these world powers. It can, therefore, decrease the overall effectiveness of foreign aid and do more

harm than good. When discussing foreign aid, it is important to navigate how these countries can accept aid without being exploited by world powers for political gain.

Exploitative Nature of Aid

Although the initial purpose of foreign aid was to help struggling countries, there have been instances of foreign aid harming recipient countries. Whether or not it is intentional, these instances have left countries worse off than they were when they received the aid. It has also made economic crises in these countries even more severe. Oftentimes, if countries are in a position where they do not believe they can bring themselves out of an economic or humanitarian crisis, they will accept the aid that is offered to them no matter the conditions of the agreement. They do this because they believe any help is better than no help. However, by the time they realize that this aid is negatively impacting them, it is often too late for these countries to back out of their financial or political obligations under these agreements. This brings into question whether aid that has the potential to leave a country worse off should even be offered or accepted. Additionally, it illustrates what types of agreements recipient countries should avoid involving themselves in if they do choose to accept aid with strings attached.

One example of exploitative aid is China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The plan is marketed as a development and investment infrastructure project that started in Europe and later spread to Africa, Latin America, and Oceania.⁹¹ There are currently about 149 countries involved at different levels with the project, and China has gained much power and influence as a result.⁹² Though it was designed to help others, there has been criticism that the BRI makes countries' economic situations worse rather than better.

Specifically, all loans handed out are expected to be paid back

85 The White House, "U.S. strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa."

86 The White House, "U.S. strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa."

87 Catherine Nzuki and Mvemba Phezo Dizolele, "The Potential and Limits of the New U.S. Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa," *CSIS*, August 17, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/potential-and-limits-new-us-strategy-sub-saharan-africa>.

88 Robbie Gramer and Amy Mackinnon, "U.S. Embassies in Africa Are Chronically Short-Staffed," *Foreign Policy*, July 22, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/07/22/africa-embassies-short-staffed-us-sahel-china-russia/>.

89 Nzuki and Dizolele, "The Potential and Limits of the New U.S. Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa."

90 Nzuki and Dizolele, "The Potential and Limits of the New U.S. Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa."

91 "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed July 31, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>.

92 Council on Foreign Relations, "China's Massive Belt."

in full with interest, and there is little possibility of China canceling debt.⁹³ However, countries often feel they have no other option and end up accepting the loans. This leads countries such as Ghana and Zambia to experience increased debt due to the BRI instead of the BRI helping reduce their debt.⁹⁴ Another criticism is that BRI projects take a long time to implement. On average, it takes 1,047 days to implement a BRI infrastructure project. Additionally, it is very common for China to suspend or cancel BRI projects.⁹⁵ Long-term projects with no specific end date leave more time for economies to worsen instead of recover. With 35 percent of projects experiencing delays, this does not provide promising results for the countries involved.⁹⁶ Some delays included labor violations, public protests, environmental hazards, and corruption.⁹⁷ Specifically, 47 projects worth USD 41.2 billion have been associated with corruption.⁹⁸ Providing economic support alone is not enough. There must also be enough people and resources to ensure that projects are implemented efficiently and ethically.

Italy joined the BRI in 2019 in hopes of boosting its trade.⁹⁹ In 2023, however, Italy's defense minister Guido Crosetto referred to joining the BRI as a mistake. Within the last four years, China saw exports increase while Italy did not.¹⁰⁰ He acknowledged that Italy is now in a complicated position, as leaving the BRI would damage ties with China, which is both a competitor and partner.¹⁰¹ This reveals the consequences of the BRI as once a country commits, they feel trapped in the agreement. As a result, these countries fall further into debt.

Additionally, the BRI has been criticized for negatively affecting the lives of Africans. In Madagascar, schools and churches were torn down for China's mining activities.¹⁰² In Tanzania, 200,000 people were forced to relocate to make room for a new port.¹⁰³ Most of the projects are run by Chinese workers and benefit China's employment and economy. This takes opportunities away from African citizens.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, the loan programs have left African citizens in debt to China. As a result, these countries cannot establish connections with other countries because they are financially controlled by China.¹⁰⁵ Countries should consider how they can create agreements that ensure aid-receiving countries are not trapped in debt.

France has also been accused of exploiting countries through foreign aid. In 1944, representatives of 44 countries met at the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. At this conference, these representatives passed the Bretton Woods Agreement, which established gold as the basis for the US dollar and based all other currencies on the value of the US dollar. This established the need for a system of international trade and currency exchange to support every country's economy.¹⁰⁶ With this came the creation of the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc, currency that could be used by the French colonies in Africa.¹⁰⁷ The French government promised to provide this currency to African colonies under a fixed exchange rate. The intention was to help these colonies manage their inflation and establish a presence in the international monetary system. However, there were many requirements tied to this currency. For example, each central bank had to keep at least 50 percent

93 Ammar A. Malik, *Banking on the Belt and Road: Insights from a new global dataset of 13,427 Chinese development project* (Williamsburg: AIDDATA, 2023), https://docs.aiddata.org/ad4/pdfs/Banking_on_the_Belt_and_Road_Executive_Summary.pdf.

94 Malik, *Banking on the Belt and Road*.

95 Malik, *Banking on the Belt and Road*.

96 Matthew Loh, "China Spent Twice as Much as the US on Overseas Development, but Its Belt and Road Initiative Is Losing Momentum," *Business Insider*, September 30, 2021, <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-spends-twice-us-but-belt-road-initiative-losing-steam-2021-9>.

97 Loh, "China Spent"

98 Loh, "China Spent"

99 "Italy Seeking to Leave 'atrocious' China Belt and Road Plan without Harming Ties," *The Guardian*, July 31, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/31/italy-china-belt-and-road-initiative-atrocious-defence-minister>.

100 *The Guardian*, "Italy Seeking to Leave."

101 *The Guardian*, "Italy Seeking to Leave."

102 L. Venkateswaran, "China's Belt and Road Initiative: Implications in Africa," *ORF*, September 3, 2020, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-implications-in-africa/>.

103 Venkateswaran, "China's Belt and Road Initiative."

104 Venkateswaran, "China's Belt and Road Initiative."

105 Venkateswaran, "China's Belt and Road Initiative."

106 James Chen, "Bretton Woods Agreement and the Institutions It Created Explained," *Investopedia*, March 21, 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brettonwoodsagreement.asp>.

107 Landry Signé, "How the France-backed African CFA franc works as an enabler and barrier to development," *Brookings Institute*, December 7, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-the-france-backed-african-cfa-franc-works-as-an-enabler-and-barrier-to-development/>.

of its foreign assets with the French Treasury. Additionally, no more than 20 percent of their earnings from the previous year could be borrowed.¹⁰⁸ As the French colonies became independent countries, they continued to rely on the CFA franc as their currency. However, in 1994, France devalued the CFA franc, which disrupted participating countries' economies and led to increased rates of unemployment and inflation. It also led to a scarcity of certain goods. In 2014, it was rumored that the CFA franc was to be devalued again, which led to mass panic among Sub-Saharan African countries about the state of their economies. This act was viewed as an act of betrayal from the French government, as the French Cooperation Minister had promised one month prior that the CFA franc would never be devalued. African economists have pointed out that this instance poses an example of why Sub-Saharan African countries that remain close to their European colonizers have not truly reached a level of independence.¹⁰⁹ Lastly, it shows that countries were trapped under this agreement due to their invested reliance on the currency already. When distributing foreign aid, it is essential to ensure that countries receiving aid do not become dependent on those providing aid.

Lack of Economic Stability

Over time, Sub-Saharan African countries have experienced inconsistent economic stability due to various factors such as inflation, political change, and new economic policies. In 2022, economic growth decreased to 3.6 percent from 4.1 percent the previous year.¹¹⁰ For South Africa, specifically, the energy crisis is expected to contribute to a decrease in economic growth in 2023. Additionally, it is predicted that stagnant oil production in Nigeria is contributing to its lack of economic growth. In Sub-Saharan Africa, eight of the largest economies in the region are growing slower than average, and public debt has tripled in the last 13 years.¹¹¹

A study that analyzed the economy of Sub-Saharan African countries between 1995-1997 found that increasing private investment was more beneficial than government investment in improving GDP.¹¹² Policies encouraging increasing exports, decreasing the deficit, and fostering competition also saw positive results. Lastly, the study acknowledged that there must be an increase in human capital in the region. Human capital is the type of skills and experience a worker has and the number of workers that contribute to different types of jobs.¹¹³ For these goals to be achieved, Sub-Saharan Africa must be equipped with more external assistance and debt relief. This is where foreign aid can help these countries, as it can provide extra support. However, many factors must be considered when debating how best to achieve economic stability in Sub-Saharan African countries.

As countries continue to receive foreign aid without experiencing noticeable economic growth, experts have pointed out that providing money will not solve the issue alone.¹¹⁴ To create sustainable habits, aid must be allocated to sectors outside the economic field. This means looking past trade and investment and putting resources into education, government, and agriculture. A more developed education system will give workers a higher skill set to enter the labor force and decrease unemployment. Furthermore, developing a stronger government will allow for better management of resources. It will also encourage Sub-Saharan African countries to advocate for themselves when making agreements with other countries rather than relying on others. Developing agriculture sectors will help countries address current hunger and poverty crises. It will also help them provide their citizens with necessities so that they can focus on building careers rather than survival. By developing these different fields, African citizens can maintain economic growth without relying on foreign aid.

When discussing the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa, it is

108 Signé, "How the France-backed."

109 Signé, "How the France-backed."

110 "Overview," World Bank, accessed July 31, 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview#1>.

111 Javier Blas, "What Happened to Africa Rising? It's Been Another Lost Decade," *Bloomberg*, September 12, 2023, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/features/2023-09-12/africa-s-lost-decade-economic-pain-underlies-sub-saharan-coups?embedded-checkout=true#xj4y7vzkg>.

112 "Economic Issues No. 23--Promoting Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa," International Monetary Fund, accessed July 31, 2023, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/issues/issues23/index.htm>.

113 Will Kenton, "Human Capital Definition: Types, Examples, and Relationship to the Economy," Investopedia, July 14, 2023, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/h/humancapital.aspx%20Human%20Capital%3Fsuch%20as%20loyalty%20and%20punctuality>.

114 Kenneth C. Upsall, "How Sub-Saharan Africa Can Become a Stable Economic Region," *E-International Relations*, December 23, 2013, https://www.e-ir.info/2013/12/23/how-sub-saharan-africa-can-become-a-stable-economic-region/#google_vignette.

essential to examine the economic structures of these countries. During the Scramble for Africa, colonizers of Africa extracted its resources, such as natural minerals, and transported them to other continents to help bolster these economies. This type of colonization has impacted Sub-Saharan African countries to this day. Once these countries achieved independence, their economies still depended on their colonizers economically. The World Bank suggests utilizing Africa's rich natural resources in a profitable way for Sub-Saharan African countries, such as by using natural gas with renewable energy for domestic energy production. This way, African countries can rebuild their economies without relying on foreign powers.

Current Status

Attainability of Economic Independence

When discussing the various consequences foreign involvement has on Sub-Saharan African countries, it is worth noting the different types of solutions that can lead to realistic economic independence. There are certain policies or actions both foreign and Sub-Saharan African countries can take to ensure that aid is utilized effectively. It is also imperative that Sub-Saharan African countries obtain a sense of formal and informal control over their economies to contribute to long term independence and prosperity.

To start, critics have pointed out that achieving political independence does not guarantee economic independence as well. When colonization ended and Sub-Saharan African countries established their own forms of political rule, their economies did not experience a similar transformation. Even though there is no longer a colonial political system, there is still a colonial economic system. In other words, Sub-Saharan African states did not establish ways to achieve domestic economic growth independently and instead diverted to

relying on foreign aid. By doing this, they are participating in similar practices that occurred during colonization, as they are still relying on other countries to run their economies. To overcome this situation, some experts suggest that Sub-Saharan countries focus on establishing permanent economic systems, such as a form of capitalism, socialism, or communism.¹¹⁵ Once these structures are established, the foreign aid countries receive can help stabilize and grow their economy rather than serve as a short-term way to keep the economy afloat.

It is also important to find sustainable ways to raise the number of employed Sub-Saharan African citizens. Additionally, delegates within SPECPOL must consider how best to raise the numbers of those in highly skilled positions that go past manual labor-based employment.¹¹⁶ Currently, some critics have pointed out that foreign countries bring in their own workers to support projects they fund in Sub-Saharan Africa. This creates fewer opportunities for Sub-Saharan African citizens. Additionally, if these workers choose to stay in the region past the project, it creates more competition for the limited number of resources in the region. The Conversation published an article analyzing data from 195 host countries that have allowed China to start infrastructure projects in their countries.¹¹⁷ They analyzed the different forms of government of host countries and its connection to the nationality of project employees.¹¹⁸ The study found that democratic governments are more likely to make China hire local workers than authoritarian governments.¹¹⁹ The researchers also concluded that authoritarian governments would be less likely to see long-term benefits from foreign aid because these projects did not hire domestic workers.¹²⁰ This outcome exemplifies that, for infrastructure projects, there are different types of effectiveness depending on the type of government of the host country. It also suggests that if more countries insisted on hiring local workers for these projects, this could increase employment rates while simultaneously improving other aspects of society.

115 Upsall, "How Sub-Saharan Africa."

116 "Blue-Collar," Cambridge English Dictionary, accessed August 14, 2023, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/blue-collar>.

117 Pippa Morgan and Andrea Ghiselli, "Chinese Workers on Africa's Infrastructure Projects: The Link with Host Political Regimes," *The Conversation*, July 16, 2023, <https://theconversation.com/chinese-workers-on-africas-infrastructure-projects-the-link-with-host-political-regimes-195732>.

118 Andrea Ghiselli and Pippa Morgan, "Building Legitimacy? The Role of Chinese Contract Workers in Foreign Regimes' Political Strategies," *Review of International Political Economy*, October 21, 2022, 1–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2022.2127833>.

119 Morgan and Ghiselli, "Chinese Workers on Africa's Infrastructure Projects: The Link with Host Political Regimes."

120 Morgan and Ghiselli, "Chinese Workers on Africa's Infrastructure Projects: The Link with Host Political Regimes."

Incorporating more accessible opportunities for education- and job-related experiences can equip Sub-Saharan African citizens with the proper tools to obtain advanced positions. These types of experiences are also known as vocational training.¹²¹ According to Chinese companies, one of the reasons that they wanted to send their own workers instead of hiring locally is that their workers required less training and could complete projects faster.¹²² However, this prevents Sub-Saharan workers from receiving training that could help them obtain other jobs and new skills. The Learning Agency affirms this perspective. They published a study exploring the relationship between education and economic growth. This study found that workers with higher skill levels work more productively and innovatively. This has an overall positive impact on the economy.¹²³ Currently, 60 percent of Sub-Saharan African children ages 15 to 17 are not enrolled in school.¹²⁴ These children do not have the basic reading and writing skills that will help them achieve more advanced education and training in the future. With these studies in mind, delegates should consider how education at all levels, both basic and career-based, can be elevated in the region to promote economic growth in the long run.

Additionally, researchers at London's Brunel Business School found that Chinese employees work extensive hours, including weekends, and live in conditions that violate acceptable living standards.¹²⁵ This has led researchers to question what labor practices will look like for Sub-Saharan Africa in the future if this is the type of work normalized through foreign workers. Delegates should consider this study when discussing labor standards for infrastructure projects funded with foreign aid. Creating a safe work environment is essential to increasing the number of workers in an economy, as people will work more

productively and not be overworked.

Case Study: Ghana

In 1957, Ghana gained independence from the United Kingdom (UK). Many assumed Ghana could build its economy upon leaving the UK.¹²⁶ However, without the UK acting as an outside enforcer, it became unclear who was entitled to assume the government of Ghana. This uncertainty led to military coups and general political instability. This lack of cohesion also meant there was no centralized economy. These factors led to the IMF classifying Ghana as a “heavily in-debted” country in 1999.¹²⁷

In the 1990s, Ghana began to take steps towards a more organized government. Ghana held its first multiparty elections and began transitioning to a form of democracy.¹²⁸ In 1996, Ghana established Vision 2020, a national plan to become a middle-income country through human, rural, and urban development as well as economic growth by 2020.¹²⁹ More specifically, the plan addressed economic growth by establishing an open and liberal market. Vision 2020 outlines several components to reaching this growth. These include increasing foreign and domestic private investment and elevating the technology sector to reach the same levels as countries already classified as middle-income. Additionally, the plan accounts for changes that must be made to realistically reach these goals. Some changes include increasing productivity levels in every sector, expanding the number of goods and services offered, and raising prices to compete with the international market.¹³⁰

Due to the Vision 2020 plan, Ghana made progress toward economic recovery but not to the levels that the international

121 “Vocational Training,” Training Industry, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://trainingindustry.com/glossary/vocational-training/>.

122 Morgan and Ghiselli, “Chinese Workers.”

123 Anna Suderth, “How Important is Education for Economic Growth?” XQ, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://xqsuperschool.org/high-school-community/how-important-is-education-for-economic-growth/>.

124 Isaac Kaldezi, “Why education remains a challenge in Africa,” January 24, 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/africa-right-to-education-remains-a-challenge/a-60518000>.

125 George Ofori and David Sarpong, “The evolving perspectives on the Chinese labor regime in Africa,” *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 43, no. 4 (July 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X211102>.

126 Leigh Anderson and Travis Reynolds, *Aid and Self-Sufficiency: Case Study—Ghana* (Washington: University of Washington, 2017), https://epar.evans.uw.edu/sites/default/files/epar_uw_349d_self-sufficiency_case_studies_ghana.pdf.

127 Anderson and Reynolds, *Aid and Self-Sufficiency: Case Study—Ghana*.

128 Anderson and Reynolds, *Aid and Self-Sufficiency: Case Study—Ghana*.

129 “Ghana - Vision 2020,” Food and Agriculture Organization, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC174290/>.

130 Food and Agriculture Organization, “Ghana - Vision 2020.”



Foreign aid in Ghana.

Credit: USAID in Ghana: Economic Growth

community expected. Although Ghana's economy grew 5.5 percent in the 2000s, it was not enough to combat the high levels of debt it had already accumulated.¹³¹ Additionally, there were still high inflation levels, and the income per capita, or the yearly income per person, had barely increased. Ghana's government pointed out certain obstacles that hindered its progress. One of these obstacles is the high rate of population growth. The growing population in Ghana puts a strain on its resources. These resources include both necessities for survival, such as food, water, and shelter, and economic resources, such as access to education, jobs, and training. Additionally, Ghana is struggling to provide childcare.¹³² One of the plan's pillars is human development, which includes goals to reduce poverty levels, combat food insecurity, address child mortality, and increase access to healthcare. However, childcare access in Ghana is still insufficient. Lastly, a lack of coordination and planning efforts was also deemed an obstacle to achieving the goals laid out in the plan.¹³³

Although Vision 2020 did not meet its goal, it is worth noting the progress the program did make. Specifically, foreign aid played an important role in the successful parts of the

131 Anderson and Reynolds, *Aid and Self-Sufficiency: Case Study—Ghana*.

132 Food and Agriculture Organization, "Ghana - Vision 2020."

133 Food and Agriculture Organization, "Ghana - Vision 2020."

134 Yaya Sissoko and Niloufer Sohrabji, "Foreign Aid Effectiveness in Ghana," *International Review of Business and Economics* 1, no. 2 (June 2018), <https://doi.org/10.56902/IRBE.2018.1.2.4>.

135 Sissoko and Sohrabji, "Foreign Aid Effectiveness in Ghana."

136 Sissoko and Sohrabji, "Foreign Aid Effectiveness in Ghana."

program. A study by the International Review of Business and Economics researched the effectiveness of foreign aid in Ghana using data from 1961 to 2012.¹³⁴ The study found that the largest official development assistance donor, or donation given by a non-governmental entity, was the World Bank. The largest state donor was the United States. The study identified that most foreign aid was provided through conditional agreements about adjusting structural policies. A conditional agreement is when a country agrees to make certain changes to receive the aid. The study concluded that conditional aid does not have short-term positive effects but does have long-term ones. Ghana benefited due to its increasing involvement in the foreign aid process. Because the Ghanaian government had to adhere to certain conditions, it became more actively involved. Although they did not meet every plan requirement, researchers believe there would have been less progress if the Ghanaian government had not been as involved.¹³⁵

It is important to note that the study measured economic growth through public investment, private investment, human capital, and policy environment.¹³⁶ Policy environment refers to all aspects surrounding policy-making, including social

and economic impacts.¹³⁷ A good policy environment is one with low inflation levels and an open trading market.¹³⁸ This is because decreased inflation is associated with increased investment. Increased investment, whether in the private or public sector, is positively associated with growth. This is because the more money put into different sectors, the more likely these sectors are to improve or develop. Moreover, an open trading market allows Ghana to increase its exports. To achieve economic growth, a country must have more exports than imports. With more exports than imports, Ghana makes more money from selling goods to other countries than it spends buying goods from other countries. The measurements and parameters of the study are important to consider when analyzing the role foreign aid can have in economic development.

Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are global goals created by the United Nations that target different global issues that, if solved, could contribute to achieving world peace and prosperity for all by 2030.¹³⁹ All UN member states adopted the 17 SDGs in 2015. The SDGs guide the UN and individual countries in creating policies to address global issues. Multiple SDGs can be applied when considering the effects of foreign aid in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The first SDG related to this topic is Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. This SDG promotes economic growth for all countries and aims to decrease unemployment and increase technological innovation.¹⁴⁰ According to the UN, unemployment has tripled from 1991 to 2015 for the middle class, and many countries are still suffering from global recessions. Focusing on creating more jobs and increasing productivity can help Sub-Saharan African countries become more economically stable. Addressing SDG 8 can also help

countries determine whether foreign aid is helping them achieve their economic goals and if anything must be changed. Economic growth is a key aspect of addressing this issue, as it is one of the main reasons behind the introduction of foreign aid.

The second SDG related to this topic is Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. This SDG overlaps with SDG 8, which also works toward economic growth. SDG 9 outlines how the development of infrastructure could improve industry and technology.¹⁴¹ Examples of types of infrastructure that can be improved are transportation systems and renewable energy. These apply to Sub-Saharan Africa, as about 600 million Africans do not have access to electricity. Additionally, about 900 million do not have access to clean cooking fuels and technology.¹⁴² In 2019, the European Union funded the implementation of the Energy Sub-Saharan Africa program. This program, which will run until 2024, supports Sub-Saharan African countries such as Benin, Senegal, Zambia, and Rwanda in transitioning to more sustainable and accessible energy usage to ensure that even low-income citizens can access reliable energy.¹⁴³ These sustainable development projects in the region can help delegates consider where foreign aid should be allocated and how to promote long-term development.

The third SDG to consider is Goal 4: Quality Education.¹⁴⁴ This SDG emphasizes the role that improving education can play in creating self-sufficient communities and how best to make education more accessible for those in developing and rural areas. Increased vocational training and literacy rates can provide Sub-Saharan African citizens with more opportunities to obtain higher-skilled jobs. This could, in turn, help stabilize the economy. Education can greatly benefit the economy, especially when thinking about long-term goals.

The final SDG that should be acknowledged is Goal 17:

137 "The Policy Environment," World Animal Net, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://worldanimal.net/our-programs/strategic-advocacy-course-new/module-3/advocacy-research-and-analysis/the-policy-environment>.

138 Sissoko and Sohrabji, "Foreign Aid Effectiveness in Ghana."

139 "Sustainable Development Goals: United Nations Development Programme," UNDP, accessed August 14, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>.

140 UNDP "Sustainable Development Goals: United Nations Development Programme."

141 UNDP "Sustainable Development Goals: United Nations Development Programme."

142 Kingsley Ighobor, "A just transition to renewable energy in Africa," *Africa Renewal*, November, 2022, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/november-2022/just-transition-renewable-energy-%C2%A0africa>.

143 "Energy Sub-Saharan Africa," IAEA, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.iaea.org/programmes/energy-sub-saharan-africa>.

144 "Quality Education," UNDP, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals/quality-education>.

Partnerships for the Goals.¹⁴⁵ This SDG recognizes that a key component to achieving any of the SDGs is collaboration. Examples of collaboration from the UN include helping developing countries increase their exports and manage their debt.¹⁴⁶ Delegates should collaborate to create joint solutions to address this issue.

Bloc Analysis

Points of Division

Many countries have pre-existing views on supplying foreign aid to Sub-Saharan Africa. By understanding the different types of activity countries have had in the region, delegates in SPECPOL can learn what actions their country might take in the future. For this topic, there are three different blocs. These blocs are aid-providing countries, countries opposed to aid, and aid-receiving countries. Many countries providing aid are involved in both the economic and political aspects of the region. This means they not only care about stabilizing the economy but the government as well. This can look different depending on the political makeup of the country, as some may support a democratic, authoritarian, or completely different structure of government. Additionally, countries in this bloc have historical, political, and trade ties with the region. Many of these countries were also colonizers of Africa. This means that these countries must factor in their role in colonization when developing policies and solutions about the topic. The second bloc, countries opposed to aid, includes both countries that do not want to receive aid and countries that do not want to provide aid. Although countries in this bloc might benefit from foreign aid, corruption and other failures of foreign aid in the past have caused them to be hesitant towards it. The last bloc, aid-receiving countries, will examine how the other two blocs impact them and how their specific situations apply to this topic. They will want to work towards policies that provide them the help they need while ensuring they do not

become dependent on foreign aid.

Aid-Providing Countries

Countries in this bloc have engaged in both political and trade relationships with Sub-Saharan African countries. Countries in this bloc will support policies that further their own political views in the region. SPECPOL Member states include the United States, Singapore, Canada, and Japan.

The United States, for example, is one country in this bloc. The United States is currently the largest donor to Ethiopia. The United States has given Ethiopia USD 1.8 billion in aid since 2022.¹⁴⁷ China is also in this bloc. For example, the Chinese Communist Party International Liaison Department has invited Sub-Saharan African political party officials to visit for meetings, training, and tours.¹⁴⁸ By doing this, China is strengthening its relationship beyond an economic partnership, as it now has the opportunity to influence the policies of Sub-Saharan African leaders.

Countries in this bloc often try to spread the political ideology that most aligns with their governments in Sub-Saharan Africa. China supports the spread of communism, as that is the form of government that it operates under, while the United States supports policies that help spread democracy in the area. Despite differences in these countries' desired outcomes for foreign aid, all the countries in this bloc will support foreign aid in Sub-Saharan Africa. There might be differences in how these countries believe aid should be provided, however, as mentioned previously. While the countries in this bloc have provided aid to Sub-Saharan Africa that has helped spur economic growth, many of them have also provided aid that exploited citizens in the region. Countries in this bloc should consider both the intended and unintended consequences of foreign aid and consider ways to help countries in Sub-Saharan Africa while also encouraging their economic independence.

¹⁴⁵ "Partnership for the Goals," UNDP, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals/partnerships-for-the-goals>.

¹⁴⁶ UNDP, "Partnership for the Goals."

¹⁴⁷ Ellen Knickmeyer, "Millions of Ethiopians go hungry again as international aid is paused after massive theft," *PBS*, June 21, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/millions-of-ethiopians-go-hungry-again-as-international-aid-is-paused-after-massive-theft>.

¹⁴⁸ Abhishek Mishra, "China's political influence activities in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Observer Research Foundation*, September 14, 2022,

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/chinas-political-influence-activities-in-sub-saharan-africa/>.

Countries Opposed to Aid

Many Sub-Saharan African countries are opposed to aid. This opposition typically stems from unwanted involvement by other countries in their economy and politics. Countries in this bloc include: Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Tunisia, and Côte D'Ivoire. Though countries in this bloc would benefit from foreign aid, government corruption has prevented the people of these countries from actually seeing any of its benefits.

Many countries in this bloc are opposed to aid because they no longer support French involvement. Many of them were formerly French colonies and are hesitant to accept foreign aid due to the political, social, and economic impacts colonization has had on their countries. Historically, nearly half of the countries in Africa were under French rule or considered a French colony.¹⁴⁹ During the Scramble for Africa, the French conquered African land and transformed it into military territories that would be run by French Army officers.¹⁵⁰ In Algeria, French rule led to European immigrants having higher political and economic statuses than Indigenous peoples.¹⁵¹ Similarly, in Tunisia, local citizens argued that French immigrants were being prioritized over them in every aspect of life, even though French involvement would lead to the development of transportation, healthcare, and the economy.¹⁵² Along with direct control of African territories, another outcome that came with colonization efforts was the spread of the French language. Africa currently has the most French-speaking members on a continent, and, in some states like Côte D'Ivoire, it has even become more popular than local dialects.¹⁵³ This provides a direct example of how other countries play a long-term role in the growth of the region. From a political standpoint, it is clear that even though

African countries have formally broken away from France, French ideas and support still remain largely enforced in the region. In 2021, Niger civilians attempted to speak out against the French government and were met with violence, resulting in two deaths.¹⁵⁴ France is also still heavily involved in trade with these countries. In 2000, France accounted for about 10 percent of Africa's international trade; since then, numbers have dropped below five percent. However, the country remains involved as it relies on its natural resources, such as uranium.¹⁵⁵ The influence France has had over these countries makes them hesitant to receive foreign aid from other world powers.

In addition to the Sub-Saharan African countries opposed to receiving aid, other countries are against providing aid. Many countries in this bloc are not opposed to providing aid itself but understand the effects that governmental corruption and misallocation of resources can have on the impact of the aid given to these countries. Many critics point to the fact that despite the massive influx of foreign aid that Africa has seen over the years, many African countries are currently struggling more than ever. The main focus of this bloc would be to ensure that the people of aid-receiving countries see the benefits of this aid.

A specific example of a non-Sub-Saharan African country opposed to aid would be South Korea. Though they still provide aid to Africa, their leaders have been hesitant about providing large amounts of aid. For example, Dr. Jong-Dae Park, the former South Korean Ambassador to South Africa, argued that "aid is ineffective in places where there is bad governance, and unnecessary where there is good governance."¹⁵⁶ In his book 'Re-Inventing Africa's Development,' he further argues that it is the responsibility of donors to ensure that the funds

149 Ruth Maclean, "Down With France': Former Colonies in Africa Demand a Reset," *The New York Times*, April 18, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/14/world/africa/france-macron-africa-colonies.html>.

150 "France in Africa," World Civilizations, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-fmcc-boundless-worldhistory/chapter/france-in-africa/>.

151 World Civilizations, "France in Africa."

152 World Civilizations, "France in Africa."

153 "Why do so many African Countries speak French?" RemitBee, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://www.remitbee.com/blog/why-is-french-spoken-in-africa>.

154 Maclean, "Down With France': Former Colonies in Africa Demand a Reset."

155 Elian Peltier, "A Shrinking Footprint in Africa for France, the Former Colonizer That Stayed," *The New York Times*, August, 5, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/05/world/africa/niger-coup-france-west-africa.html>.

156 Jong-Dae Park, "Assessing the Role of Foreign Aid, Donors and Recipients," *Palgrave Macmillan, Cham*, (January 2019): 37-60, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03946-2_2.

are properly utilized and that their aid projects are needed and sustainable.¹⁵⁷

Aid-Receiving Countries

This bloc contains the Sub-Saharan African countries that are recipients of foreign aid and involvement. Countries in this bloc experience high levels of political strife, economic instability, and government corruption, all of which are reasons these countries receive foreign aid. Most of these countries were colonized in the past, and many are still subject to the political and economic influence of outside countries. In committee, members of this bloc will likely support policies that benefit the individual needs of their country. Generally, Sub-Saharan countries prioritize greater economic freedom, which includes loan programs that could be paid back on time or grants allocated towards different economic sectors, such as the education sector. Countries in this bloc include Angola, Ethiopia, Gabon, South Sudan, Namibia, Chad, Mauritania, and Cameroon.¹⁵⁸

Ethiopia is one example of a country in this bloc. The Ethiopian government is currently experiencing tension as a result of the conflict from the Tigray War.¹⁵⁹ Beginning in 2020, the war consisted of conflict between the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the Ethiopian federal government, and the Eritrean military.¹⁶⁰ The Tigray people are considered an ethnic group in Ethiopia and rebelled against the federal government when they began to feel that they were not being properly represented. Actions taken by the Tigray people have included both violent actions and conducting independent elections instead of abiding by the country's election regulations.¹⁶¹ Eritrea also played a role in contributing to the violence, as they participated in border disputes with Ethiopia. This led to fights over where the border officially lies. All of these activities made Ethiopia vulnerable, which led to them accepting foreign

assistance.¹⁶²

Overall, countries in this bloc will work to create policies that support their countries while still encouraging their economic independence. They might want fewer restrictions and conditions on foreign aid as well. Although countries in this bloc might currently have different needs, they all are likely to support increased foreign aid that is not exploitative but rather supports their economic independence.

Committee Mission

Delegates must consider the scope of SPECPOL when researching and formulating solutions to the distribution of foreign aid in Sub-Saharan Africa. Delegates must keep in mind SPECPOL's mandate as a committee, which is to oversee issues such as decolonization, peacekeeping, and political missions.¹⁶³ With these in mind, delegates should approach this topic from the perspective of how these different issues apply to the empowerment of Sub-Saharan African states. For example, delegates should factor in the colonization of Sub-Saharan African countries and how their current decolonized status has been affected by foreign aid. Delegates should also question whether or not Sub-Saharan African countries are considered truly decolonized if there are still strong foreign influences guiding their actions and principles. Additionally, it is imperative to consider how politics play a role in the distribution and usage of foreign aid.

It is also important to note that not every Sub-Saharan African country will have the same requirements for foreign aid, or be in the same situation. Delegates in SPECPOL should acknowledge that certain solutions may work for some countries but not others. They should also consider the different levels of development and economic stability in each country. There will not be a "one size fits all" solution, and

157 Park, "Assessing the Role of Foreign Aid, Donors and Recipients," 37-60.

158 "Sub Saharan Africa Data," The World Bank, accessed August 18, 2023. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/ZG>.

159 "Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption Efforts in Ethiopia," Anti-Corruption Resource Center, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption-efforts-in-ethiopia>.

160 "Conflict in Ethiopia," Council on Foreign Relations, August 10, 2023. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia>.

161 Council on Foreign Relations, "Conflict in Ethiopia."

162 Council on Foreign Relations, "Conflict in Ethiopia."

163 "Fourth Committee," United Nations General Assembly, accessed August 18, 2023. <https://www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/>.

being open to creating versatile solutions will lead to a more productive discussion.

When considering the scope of SPECPOL, it is important to be mindful of the variety of country policies and different perspectives countries will have on the issue. Countries with varying levels of involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa may hold contrasting opinions of how these countries should be assisted and in what ways. Identifying other members within a specific bloc may help foster collaboration toward creating similar recommendations and allow for a fruitful debate.

Research and Preparation Questions

Your dais has prepared the following research and preparation questions as a means of providing guidance for your research process. These questions should be carefully considered, as they embody some of the main critical thought and learning objectives surrounding your topic.

Topic A

1. Considering the legacy of conflict in Gibraltar, what can states do to prevent negative consequences in any long-term solutions regarding its sovereignty?
2. How has your country been involved with or impacted by colonialism? Has your country spoken out about its potential support for other countries that are a part of territorial disputes?
3. Has your country been involved or been affected by being in a territorial dispute? How were political relations between your country and other countries affected?
4. Has your country been a part of any past territorial dispute treaties or a contributor to any territorial dispute international laws?
5. If your country had a referendum, what was its stance? Has your country taken a stance in other international settings, such as other UN bodies or the EU? If not, why?
6. What stance has your country taken on the question of Gibraltar in previous SPECPOL sessions, if any?

Topic B

1. How active is your country in Sub-Saharan Africa? Does your country provide aid to Sub-Saharan African countries?
2. How can countries ensure that foreign aid, especially long-term aid, is utilized for its intended purpose?
3. What foreign aid plans have been implemented in the past by or in your country? How are they relevant for the formation of plans?
4. How has colonization impacted the current structure of Sub-Saharan African countries?
5. How can future solutions address the political instability caused by foreign aid, corruption, and influence in Sub-Saharan Africa?
6. How can SPECPOL address education so that more Sub-Saharan African workforce can transition to higher-skilled positions?
7. How can the international community ensure that exploitative or predatory practices are not present in future foreign aid agreements?

Important Documents

Topic A

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- "How the Gibraltar 2002 Referendum Foundered Plan for Joint-Sovereignty with Spain." *MercoPress*. December 5, 2013. <https://en.mercopress.com/2013/12/05/how-gibraltar-2002-referendum-foundered-plan-for-joint-sovereignty-with-spain>.
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Topic A

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Written by Alison Miu-Martinez, Amira Samih, Ellie White Sebastian Jimenez, and Therese Salomone

Edited by Christian Hernandez, Parthav Easwar, and Rekha Marcus
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