

Marketplace Liberia

Liberian National Security: A Review

Notes on Liberia June 2018

US-China in Africa: A Comparative Study



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Editor's Note

Liberia managed to get through a difficult presidential election. It was a peaceful transition. Everyone is grateful. The peace in the transition is significant as it has been several decades since it has happened. This another reason to be encouraged in Liberia's recovery and progress. But there is still a mountain of work to be done, and no time to rest and take a break.

We have been reflecting on the importance of culture and what the late US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan had to say about it: "The central conservative truth is that it is culture,

not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself." This is not too different from what the late Czech President Vaclav Havel observed as a paradox: that a society get the leaders it deserves, and that a society is a mirror of its leadership. This latter is closely link to the Zen thinking: "I have never seen anyone who was personally upright whose community was not orderly." The fact here is that good leadership can change culture. Some of these concerns are addressed in this issue in an article entitled *Notes on Liberia, June 2018*.

This issue of *Marketplace Liberia* includes a piece on Center of Excellence where we are exploring the establishment of a national institution centered on research and training for national development and nation building. We have included a brief on Liberian national security. Of first importance in any state that aims to be truly viable and strong and independent is its security. There is in this issue an article about implementation. Implementation as a practice is a great challenge in Liberia and most of Africa, and this is so even when a policy has been carefully crafted. Implementation is about how to do what you say you will do. Implementation ultimately has to do with purpose. Where there is a will there is a way.

Finally, we have included two articles on China. China may be the single most important outside actor on the African continent. One of these articles compares US-China investments in Africa and the other briefly considers Chinese thought and culture. This latter was presented as a lecture at the University of Liberia Honors College June 2018. These two articles are a part of a larger research paper that I hope to publish in the *Liberian Studies Journal* next year.

Thanks to my many faithful research interns, research and editorial assistants, research fellows, senior fellows and

research partners who continue to help me expand the research agenda of the Liberian Initiative. I am deeply appreciative and sincerely hope the all our efforts proves most efficacious for good in Liberia and Africa.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donald L. Cassell, Jr.', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

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Notes on Liberia, June 2018

By Donald L. Cassell, Jr., Architect, AIA, Senior Fellow, Isoko Institute

“...we start where we are, use what we have and do what we can... We can’t start where we are not, use what we don’t have or do what we can’t.” – Lorne Sanny

I left for Liberia on Sunday, 20 May of this year. I was accompanied by a US technologist volunteer, who I will call BP. The transatlantic flight to Monrovia was much better and shorter than previous flights. We arrived in Liberia in the afternoon on a bright sunny day. My mother was there to meet us as usual. I was delighted to see her again and eat her preparations of one of my favorite Liberian foods, Jollof rice. Arriving in the afternoon allowed us some time to recuperate from the flight.

Here are some notes I wrote in my journal each day during my five-week stay:

Thursday 24 May 2018: I meet with two persons for different reasons and at different times of the day in Monrovia at a local international hotel. The one was to

discuss the development and growth of the architecture profession in Liberia, the other the development and growth of the health sector in Liberia.

Liberia suffers such a deep deposit of loss and error. Poor Liberia. It is hard to comprehend the meaning of her deep spiritual and moral loss. This day’s journal entry was made using portable light. There was a rather strong rainstorm and the electric current was loss. On the whole the current has been consistently on, though certainly not industrial grade, but much more stable than in my earlier visits.

Yesterday we meet an aspiring young car mechanic with a genuine interest in his work. His extended discussion with BP revealed a deep concern for knowledge and mastery as goods in themselves.

Friday 25 May 2018: I got fitted for two African/Chinese jackets, and though I waited my turn, my attendant somehow got accused of giving me preferential treatment. I wondered what went wrong. What could I have done better? Perhaps, it might be best if there was a ticket machine where we could impartially take a ticket from. But this might be too much for Liberia being poor and technologically challenged. Though so much harder, we could show each other more grace. We left for Ganta on this day. BP has come with me for work at the Agriculture Research Center (ARC) at the Liberian International Christian College (LICC).

Saturday 26 May 2018: I had my first session with Isoko Leadership Workshop (ILW) 2018 participants. I think that this is as yet the strongest class of participants.

Some of our discussions included Vaclav Havel's consideration of Marxist fallacies. Marxist scholars arrogantly believed that they had scientifically comprehended the entire history of the world. They had wrongly diagnosed human history as marked by violent revolutions and vicious power struggles. The idea that the world could actually be changed by the force of truth, the power of a truthful word, the strength of a free spirit, conscience, and responsibility with no guns, no lust for power, no political wheeling and dealing- is quite beyond their horizon of understanding. Naturally, if you understand decency as a mere "superstructure" of the forces of production, then you can never understand political power in terms of decency (p.22). This reminded me of Liberia's critics of the 1970s.

Havel believed that genuine politics, politics as devotion was simply a matter of serving those around us: serving the community,

and posterity (p. 23). Vaclav is preaching to himself for he says of these reflections that "as in everything else, I must start with myself." (p.24) He thinks that morality is in fact hidden in everything, many problems in the life of the individual and the state could be attributed to apathy, an unwillingness to recognize personal error or guilt, reluctance to give up certain positions and advantages flowing from them, envy, an excess of self-assurance, etc. (p.25). He believes that improving the civility of everyday life can accelerate economic development. Decorum is important. Havel thinks that a nation gets the leadership that it deserves (p.21). The former Czech President is convinced that the establishment of a democratic state based on the rule of law is not realized outside of a humane, moral, intellectual and spiritual cultural base. He thinks that the best laws and the best-conceived democratic mechanism will not guarantee legality or freedom or human rights if they are not underpinned by certain human and social values. "What good, for instance, would a law be if no one respected it, no one defended it, and no one tried responsibly to follow it? It would be nothing but a scrap of paper. What use would elections be in which the voter's only choice was between a greater and a lesser scoundrel? What use would a wide variety of political parties be if not one of them had the general interest of society at heart?" Democracy is no more but a working mechanism not a panacea. A good society is never made without good persons. The meaning of the state is first and foremost moral and intellectual. And "a moral and intellectual state cannot be established through a constitution, or through law, or through directives, but only through complex, long-term, and never-ending work involving education and self-education." President Vaclav thinks that science, technology,

expertise, and professionalism are not enough. President Havel maintains that “a better system will not automatically ensure a better life....only by creating a better life can a better system be developed.”

Sunday 27 May 2018: We lost current last night in the midst of a rainstorm. The current has since come and gone. These conditions can be so disappointing.

Monday 28 May 2018: US President Abraham Lincoln is described as a coherent personality, masterful in his gentleness (pg. 24). This quotation from Lincoln though in reference to judges reminds me much of Lee Kuan Yew (LKY) view of the press: “Our judges are as honest as other men, and not more so. They have, with others, the same passions for party, for power, and the privilege of their corps...” On interior growth and inner clarity: “Lincoln became calm in his demeanor, confident in his actions, and increasingly clear-minded and committed to his cause.”

Sometimes I think that Liberia is too insular in almost every level of society. Significant exchanges with the outside world carried out with discernment could be expansive in being and thought. Looking back at the 1970s when I grew up in Liberia, the development agenda seemed richer and human capacity in state and society was so much better and promising. At the state level, however, there was a poor understanding of state security. History has proven that ignorance of state security threatened everybody in Liberia and beyond. The cost have been so great that it may be firmly said that the first quality of a state leader is that he or she must know how to protect and secure the state from both internal and external threat or risk losing everything. Even Adams Smith thought state security imperative or else the gains of the gain of the

modern state be imperiled.

Malcolm Muggeridge on light: “Having seen this other light, I turn to it, striving and growing towards it as plants do towards the sun, the light of love, abolishing the darkness of strife and confusion; the light of life abolishing the darkness of death; the light of creativity, abolishing the darkness of destruction.”

Tuesday 29 May 2018: Intellectual development is best fostered by memory, analysis, meditation, study and discussion.

From Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership: “I have never seen anyone who was personally upright whose community was not orderly. Truly in this lies the meaning of the saying, ‘Looking upon the countenance of a virtuous person clears people’s minds.’”

Most ordinary Liberians have come to see that the experiment since the 1980s was a colossal failure. This reality brings under suspicion the accepted understanding of Liberia’s history. Everything is up for reappraisal.

The growth of the modern state on the West African coast might be a proper framework from which to understand Liberian history. In this framework of state formation we might be able to constructively discuss all of Liberia’s struggles, without breeding malice and distrust. The purpose was and is the formation of a modern nation-state and people. This is not a contrived framework as Liberia has long experienced a process of acculturation and deep fraternization amongst her various people groups from the inception of the state. It is however more conciliatory. This conciliation does not deny that there are problems, rather it affirms that we have a common interest, and that kindness and reconciliation are more creative and better

solution to our problems than the hatred, violence and destruction that have consumed us. This approach is in the best tradition of a Mandala or a King. In these negatives (hatred, violence and destruction), no building occurs, and there are no winners, only losers. A just society is not thereby even approximated. Notwithstanding negative emotions, the distinction in Liberia centered on the extent of embraced of the new modern era, the gradation and penetration of the modern-state structure and the expansion of its franchise. Our struggles may be rightly viewed as the travails of formation into a new nation and people. “A moral and intellectual state cannot be established through a constitution, or through law, or through directives, but only through complex, long-term, and never-ending work involving education and self-education. What is needed is lively and responsible consideration of every political step, every decision; a constant stress on moral deliberation and moral judgement; continued self-examination and self-analysis; an endless rethinking of our priorities” (Havel, p.36).

Reports about witchcraft in Liberia should be studied.

Wednesday 30 May 2018: “Study is an obligation to improve and strengthen ourselves. (Mandela, P.30).

“A distinguished person does not become demoralized and reckless because of the pinch of privation. (Confucius)

Poverty is an evil.

Thursday 31 May 2018: Narcissism hovers over Liberia like a thick heavy wet blanket. Selfishness is like a black hole. No light escape that enters in. Selfishness creates such a negative environment notwithstanding many

points of light and beauty. In selfishness all beautiful things are vanquished and goodness is all but lost.

Friday 1 June 2018: In conversation with the custodian at the Agricultural Research Center (ARC), she told me of her eight children, one of whom was ritually murdered only last year before the general elections. Her husband, who was a Churchman has abandoned her, their children, and the Church for another woman.

Today I met with ISOKO Leadership Workshop (ILW) alumni to discuss our progress into a membership base organization that will be attached to a reading curriculum, a teaching service and a stipend. I was very encouraged with their response. The turnout was better than the previous year, and the discussion was more robust. I hope and pray that all continues to go well with the ILW.

Saturday 2 June 2018: This marks the second ILW session. This class of participants are indeed much stronger, perhaps, than any previous class. A young lady in this class reads so very. She was educated at a Roman Catholic school in a nearby county. The Christian Church has proven over the millennium to be good educators of men and women, and not only in how to read and write, but more importantly, how to be in the world, to know and to love, ideas and practice.



Sunday 3 June 2018: The ILW young lady participant is a prime contact for more study abroad, but likely if she goes abroad she will not return to Liberia. This is understandable but not acceptable. I think that before the 1980s most Liberians studying or transacting business abroad usually returned home upon completion. It is symptomatic of change for the worst in Liberia that many are now willing to leave the country with little or no desire to return. Easterly writes of the West intervention in developing countries like Liberia disturbing the balance of power, does not improve the country but makes it worse. I read of LKY being pressured by the West to do something that he was not prepared to do. He told them that he was prepared to relinquish his job as Prime Minister if they were prepared to assume the responsibilities of Prime Minister of Singapore. This way they could do what they wanted in Singapore since they were now responsible. Ultimately though, Liberia's brokenness is reflective of Liberians. Of course, Providence is in order here. Outsiders can sometimes have a different perspective on a problem that can be helpful. LKY understood this difference very well indeed. But LKY also understood deeply the importance of state security, and the very real perils of the anarchic nature of the international community. LKY was a realist. I am not certain how much Liberia leadership since the 1970s until now have appreciated the anarchic nature of the international community. In light of Elwood Dunn's book, *Liberia and the United States during the Cold War: Limits of Reciprocity*, I am inclined to think that they did not know or the knowledge was lost or the leadership overestimated its capacity. Those were in fact still the era of the heady days of African nationalism. Poor Liberia.

International partnerships will be very important to Liberia's national development. From what I can discern, international partnerships were strategic to Singapore's rapid development. The great African scholar Calestous Juma discusses an instance of partnership in the case of South Korea, where knowledge transfer was integral to partnership, and the partnership open-ended. In Liberia's case, international partnership should also include governance for the sake of transparency and accountability. I can appreciate the concern about sovereignty. Though I cannot imagine what sovereignty means if you are essentially unable or unwilling to properly care for your property. This situation is not entirely unusual. The Christian Church was a longtime partner with Western Europe teaching it how to care for its things, how to know and be in the world. The Chinese have begun a form of deep partnerships in East Africa, after having experienced failure at the level of mere technical assistance. Yet, even quality international partnerships are dependent on high quality national leadership for success.

Monday 4 June 2018: Today we are having more than the usual power outages. I pray that it was better. I been reading Frantz Fanon's, *The Wretched of the Earth*. I rather prefer Nelson Mandela and MLK. Notwithstanding his expose of European racism and arrogance, lust, and envy are never justified. And violence must always be handled with extreme care and use judiciously and with the utmost discretion. Additionally, Marxism is not the only valid critique of human society. It is interesting to note that his home town of Martinique remains a department of the French Republic, and a prosperous one to boot. The Old Testament book of Proverbs is still ultimately a better guide. And yet, I was

pleasantly surprised by Fanon's willing to boldly confront some rather unpleasant truth about Africa, and in so doing to challenge Africans to live up to their responsibility. Fanon is calling for nothing less than a new consciousness, a reeducation, and I think, a different way of understanding the world and of one's place in the world. I am still haunted by his remark: "Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity."

Whereas Wole Soyinka's work, *Of Africa*, was rather disappointing. I think that he might be disappointed with his Christian family, and disappointed that Africa is fast becoming either Christian or Moslem. As a nationalist, he is rooting hard for African traditional religion. Incredibly, like the old African nationalist, he references Christianity and Islam as foreign, as though that alone should make them unacceptable. Even so, it is hard to understand his assertion in light of Ethiopia's ancient Christian Faith commitments and the great Christian witness of St. Augustine of Hippo, a Berber. It is arguable that Islam has many deep African roots coming out of its many Afro-Asiatic peoples with their Semitic language base. In reading this book, I got the impression that for Soyinka, only the Bantu heritage counted as African and of that, only his Yoruba heritage was the most authentic. Soyinka does not seem to appreciate why the old way is being abandoned. He seems to set aside Chinua Achebe's critical reflections in *Things Fall Apart* as merely a corruption of the true Yoruba (Bantu) way (p.174). The change is painful for him. Occam's razor is rather harshly felt here, as he himself admits that the two great world religions is of greater majesty and glory. Perhaps Africans are rightly dissatisfied with a religion that celebrates impish mischief and scatology

(p.107). Notwithstanding the change that he so bitterly regrets, Soyinka carries within himself a new Africa even if a conflicted one. He was, however, careful to appreciate the high performance of Asia as a rebuke and chastening to Africa, and the waste of Africa's intellectual efforts on ideology. I hope he had pursue this line of thinking. He might have better appreciated why Africans are changing so deeply, and why he himself has changed notwithstanding his vociferous protestations, and why this change is an absolute necessity.

Proverbs 16:15, "In the light of a king's face is life." Comes so close to the quotation from the *Art of Leadership*. Proverbs 16:10, "The King should not err in judgement." Reminds me of what Mrs. Margaret Thatcher observed of LKY.

Paul Collier, the development economist, has complained that the international community is mostly concern about successful elections, not good governance or state capacity or even economic growth or human development. It would be very helpful if they were as deeply concerned about progress in these other areas. But the international community can do but so much. Ultimately, there must be an intense domestic interest in these areas of national development to make them a reality.

Tuesday 5 June 2018: The lack of capacity in Liberia is impressive indeed. So much that we want to do but cannot do because we do not know how to do. But this reality makes Liberia a great opportunity. It is not unrealistic to envisioned Liberia as a learned nation, where continuous learning and growth have become a fabric of the national culture, and the Liberian people have become predisposed to never settling for even the second best. To a limited and qualified extend, Tara Westover experienced in her book,

Educated, reminds me of my own experience of being educated – the struggle to understand new subject matter of which you have not been adequately prepared to handle, and when understanding come the change that is wrought within you. Truly, “the only real revolution is in the enlightenment of the mind and the improvement of character (Durant)” Ignorance is blindness. For me, that process of growth and human development is realized in one life time. Rather, it must be built with great discipline, focus and vision over several generations. Humility and discernment will be key to this process of appreciating your need without depreciating your value as a human person.

Wednesday 6 June 2018: Yesterday the lights in my room stopped working. This morning it was working. One of the expats thought that we might have suffered water damage affecting the current supply. It was not only my room, but other parts of the building.

It was said that there are better electricians in this part of the country than plumbers. Everyone remembers the horrors of dealing with the plumbers. It was not only that a good one could not be found in the Ganta area but that their repairs were hurtful to the newly installed plumbing system. They were asked to stop work and leave the project site. It is said that the good plumbers in Liberia today are often older. They are the remaining few who still remember how plumbing was rightly done.

Liberia’s most pressing need for defense and security, law and order, the economy and human capacity remains largely unmet.

In the rebuilding of Liberia, a premium should be placed on excellence and kindness, knowledge, prudence and discipline.

Vision alone is not sufficient. It is the will, the ability to implement the vision that is important.

The World Competitiveness Report has said that there are eight factors necessary to a nation’s sustainable economic prosperity: domestic economy, internationalization, government, finances, infrastructure, management, science and technology, and people.

Wealth creation requires a cultural context of education, savings, a spirit of self-sacrifice, social cohesion based on common social norms, the importance of learning, scholarship, hard work and thrift, stability and discipline, order, loyalty to family and community, and the importance of hierarchy.

A society is well ordered so that everyone can enjoy freedom to the maximum under law.

There is a connection between education, entrepreneurship, innovation and management.

Many western scholars have not appreciated the complexity and delicacy that mark the Liberian political experiment. I am not sure how deeply Liberian scholars themselves have appreciated this Liberian reality. We should all develop a sense of modesty and restraint in appreciating the complexity and subtlety that is Liberia.

“From small tribes to clans to nations, the father-mother-son-daughter relation has not changed. If children lose respect for their elders and disregard the sanctity of the family, the whole society will be imperiled and disintegrate. There is no substitute for parental love, no substitute for good neighborliness, no substitute for authority in those who have to govern.” (LKY)



Friday 8 June 2018: Proverbs 19:19, “Let people see the consequences of their sin so that they might gain a heart of wisdom.”

It is said that the Philippines is amongst some of the most corrupt, dysfunctional, intractable and poverty stricken societies in the world. Manila has been described as somnolent and purposeless. How would the pundits describe Liberia and its capital Monrovia?

Confucian values argue strongly for the necessity and primacy of virtue in the lives of leaders, that the leadership must be possessed of it. The success of Confucian values establishes the importance of good teaching and good teachers.

It is the extraordinary leaders who are especially attuned to the unpleasant truths about their own societies that need correcting. They are able to pierce the miasma of convenient rationalizations to see the harsh reality that confronts them. Good leaders are not self-deluded. A good leader is an efficient manager.

Today we went to Gbanga to attend a program at a school founded by an ILW graduate. Very good work, encouraging. We are grateful, and hopeful that our attempt to create value in thinking and practice, knowledge and life continues to grow and extend.

Saturday 9 June 2018: I have the opportunity to lead the ARC devotions this morning. Unpleasant truths: someone stole from the demonstration farm on campus. Unfortunately, this is a common occurrence.

In kindness and goodness there is life.
(Proverbs 21:21)

Tuesday 12 June 2018: It take courage to be committed to excellence even unto death itself.

Unpleasant truths: Liberia still strikes me as a very vulnerable society. The country is not strong. It remains a very weak state. I wonder how much do we understand about the proper ordering of a modern nation-state. Is Liberia ready for state responsibility? How much do

we understand about purpose and meaning concerning the human reality?

On deep change: Geshema, the Tibetan Buddhist academic degree, consist of only five books but takes about 12-40 years to obtain. Impressive. How is change wrought? How much study, and meditation and prayers? How well do I know the Bible? How well do I know the book of Proverbs? How deep is my study, thinking and practice?

Wednesday 13 June 2018: Hope is a virtue (Proverbs 23:18). One of my students after reading the essays of Singapore and the rise of Africa, noted that I was very encouraging to them, and give them so much hope. I responded, that I saw hope in their faces, that they had great aspirations. This remains true notwithstanding the fact that professional service in Liberia is poorly understood. That men feel justify in making threats for payments on services not properly rendered. And everyone around agrees that it is best simply to pay him and purpose not to use him again because this is Liberia where contracts are weakly honored.

Thursday 14 June 2018: The previous experience of dishonored contractual commitments was challenging indeed, spiritually and morally. A difficult growing opportunity for me.

Saturday 16 June 2018: Today is the last ILW session. Praying for many blessings.

Sunday 17 June 2018: Liberia is endured not enjoyed. The US Embassy has almost completely stopped giving visa to Liberians. Most Liberians given visas never return to Liberia, even those with property. When I was growing up in Liberia in the 1970s, most persons who went abroad to study or for business almost always returned. I think

that the rate of return may have been as high as 90%. I remember a Liberian official encouraging me strongly to return home after I completed my studies. This was before the fiasco of 1980. Things began to change for the worst after 1980. At this point, relatives and friends began to advise me not to return. They could not understand my abiding interest in the country. Forsooth, the devaluation of the country have been steady continuing until now. But see the contrast with Singapore and LKY, where there has been a continual and steady increase the value of the state in both people and things.

Monday 18 June 2018: It is said that we improve the mind through the spiritual discipline of study in repetition, concentration, comprehension and reflection. Surely, this is some of what the Buddhist monks sought so intently to master. It is a good discipline to acquire as a culture, a way to wall of blank stares and deep ignorance.

Tuesday 19 June 2018: Liberia is first and foremost an intellectual and spiritual problem. Women in the Liberia remain so vulnerable. Their vulnerability is primarily a cultural deficit. Many men take advantage of this condition, abusing their position of relative strength and privilege. This is a form of misrule and irresponsibility.

Saturday 23 June 2018: I look forward to seeing my family again. This trip to Liberia has been very successful. I remain hopeful that the arrangements made with ILW alumni and participants, the University of Liberia and others will bode well.

Liberia has a significant human development capacity gap. My experience with services and products were very challenging. Pray that God would preserve the peace of Liberia and cause her to prosper.

Tuesday 25 June 2018: We arrived yesterday in Indianapolis a day late. We were stranded in Paris. Our flight to the US was canceled for technical difficulties. The airline was deferential and provide us with overnight accommodations. This quality of service was such a great contrast to service in Liberia, where shoddy service expects full compensation without delay or negotiation.

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On Center of Excellence

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...intense alertness and self-examination; Preserving for the future a core of good tradition, discipline, method, and intellectual rigor; a process of self-examination, reflection, and conscious resistance to decline; to foster an exemplary methodology, characterized by care and thoroughness.

...scholarship, as was true for art..., must indeed have far-flung grazing grounds, and in pursuit of a subject which interests no one but himself a scholar can accumulate knowledge which provides colleagues with information as valuable as that stored in a dictionary or an archive.

...the continuance of civilization depends on...strict schooling. People know, or dimly feel, that if thinking is not kept pure and keen, and if respect for the world of the mind is no longer operative, ships and automobiles will soon cease to run right, the engineer's slide rule and the computations of banks and stock exchanges will forfeit validity and authority, and chaos will ensue. It took long enough in all conscience for realization to come that the externals of civilization—technology, industry, commerce, and so on—also require common basis of intellectual honesty and morality.

— Herman Hesse

Introduction

Africa is a continent brimming with unrealized potential. With her rich natural and human resources, Africa certainly boasts many of the ingredients needed for success. However, despite the ubiquitous presence of such resources, Africa lacks a key ingredient: a focused, institutional commitment to scholarship and excellence. Africa needs centers of excellence to teach and to train, to provide good policy options to policy makers, as a model community of excellence and good order, and as an institution of scholarship and research. The vision is for a community of educated and efficacious scholars: a community that produces ideas that will be subsequently realized as results.

This community could become a reality via the creation of an institution such as a Centre of Excellence for National Development. A Centre of Excellence (CoE) is a team, a shared facility or an entity that provides leadership, best practices, research, support and/or training for a focus area, a coordinating function which ensures that change initiatives are delivered consistently and well, through standard processes and competent staff. This kind of community is uniquely positioned to address Africa's need for teaching and training.

CoEs are responsible for the undertaking of research. This research should have local and interdisciplinary relevance. CoEs also assume responsibility for educational and training. This should take the form of support for students pursuing, undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate degrees and development of scarce, high-level skills, both with a consciousness towards gender and racial equality. CoEs should further concern themselves with efforts toward information brokerage: maintaining data bases and disseminating knowledge. On the list of a CoE's responsibilities is networking. It is vital that a CoE foster and maintain relationship for local, national, and international collaboration. Finally, CoEs must be able and willing to render services by advising government, business, and civil society.

In order to perform these functions, a few requisite conditions must be met. Taking a top-down approach, the first condition that must be met is that of good governance, or at least a commitment to good governance. Several elements constitutive of good governance are a generous, knowledgeable and discerning leadership with a network both national and international, the formation of an advisory council, a well-articulated and centralized focus, techniques to avoid high employee turnover, and a model of sustainability beyond the initial contract period. These structures should be supported by an appropriate and adept staff of diverse and multi-disciplinary researchers. The centers must incorporate international staff exchange programs to hasten knowledge and technology transfers, and promote intellectual and professional growth. Location should be strategic, and funding effective, with efficacy of funding being advanced by a model that includes seed funding for development, seed

funding for establishment, core funding, a standard costing model (full declaration of costs, equipment grants, a salary subsidy for the director, contributions by the host institution, project income, and alternative sources of raising funds. One possible source of funding could originate from within through taxation or small fees from the country's sources of wealth -- agriculture, iron ore mining, oil, etc. Centers should also strive for inter- and intra- community involvement, with intercommunity involvement taking the form of relationships with industrial and governmental bodies with a focus on the clear dissemination of information and intracommunity involvement consisting of the maintenance of relationships with current and former students and staff.

The fulfillment of these conditions can magnify the positive effects of a center of excellence, such as assuring the autonomy and long-term viability of projects undertaken. CoEs can also prove propitious for their surrounding communities by providing a platform for multi-disciplinarity, a point of contact for external stakeholders, and a disincentive for what is colloquially referred to as 'brain drain.' In fact, a report by presented the international organization, Physicians for Human Rights, as 1 of 6 recommendations for the maintenance of the African health professional diaspora, the establishment of top-quality CoEs: specifically in rural or under-developed urban areas. The report references an incident in which a physician at the Botswana-Baylor Children's Clinical Center of Excellence noted the phenomenon of health care professionals who have formerly left Botswana contacting the Center in hopes of returning to the country.

However, CoEs are not without their faults

or criticisms. For example, in their 2011 paper, Hicks and Katz suggest that the mission of a center of excellence may run contrary to “democratic and equitable goals” by discouraging epistemic diversity. Other critics posit that the outside funding upon which centers of excellence rely can dilute the quality or focus of research at the center.

CASE STUDIES

EMBRAPA

In the 1960s, Brazil’s economy bore an unfortunate similarity to Africa’s current discrepancy between potential and reality. Although Brazil was the fifth largest country in the world, it had fashioned virtually no platform for itself in the world market. Through the 1960s, the country was the recipient of food donations. This situation was somewhat ameliorated by the 1970s, however, Brazil was still primarily a food importer rather than a food exporter. Today, Brazil’s share in the world agricultural market is second only to that of the United States (8 and 17 percent respectively). EMBRAPA is central to this positive trend in Brazilian agriculture.

EMBRAPA, or Embresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuaria, was created in 1973 in affiliation with the Brazil Agricultural Research Corporation to address the underperformance of Brazilian agribusiness. The center was founded as a public corporation, allowing them to coordinate with private partners, including universities, research institutes, and private corporations. 95% of EMBRAPA’s funding comes directly from the Brazilian government, with officials viewing EMBRAPA as an instrument of both agricultural advancement and foreign policy (due to its international ties). EMBRAPA’s international ties were furthered and

strengthened with the creation of virtual labs abroad (labex or Laboratories of Excellence). The first labex was established in the United States and these virtual labs were soon spreading internationally, and 2006 saw the establishment of an EMBRAPA Africa in Accra, Ghana (discussed in depth below under “Key Organizations for Coordination”).

As an instrument of agricultural advancement, the organization’s success can be seen in the fact that a 1 percent increase in EMBRAPA’s research expenditures has been linked to a .2 percent increase in Brazil’s Total Factor Productivity: a measure of the portion of output not explained by the amount of inputs used in production.

EMBRAPA achieved such efficacy as indicated in these statistics by adhering to a few key characteristics:

- public corporation model of organization
- spatial decentralization
- specialized research units
- enhanced training and remuneration of human resources
- vision of agriculture based on science and technology

It is most important to consider EMBRAPA’s approach to human capability development. EMBRAPA attracts employees via the establishment of careers that strategically stimulate the desire of individuals to study and progress. Concomitant to the establishment of attractive careers is the assurance of competitive salaries in respect to similar institutes of research or higher learning. Payroll expenditures for the over 9,000 EMBRAPA employees account for

65-75% of the agency's total expenditures. EMBRAPA employees are also provided retirement plans supplemental to government-based models of retirement, as well as a meritocratic promotion system, on both an individual and a research group/unit level. Employees may advance within this system by taking advantage of the postgraduate and post doctorate training programs that EMBRAPA offers. Between 1974 and 1982, the expenses for such training and education programs constituted 20% of EMBRAPA's budget. Partly because of such programs approximately two-thirds of researchers at the organization hold a PhD. These programs include the opportunity to partake in training abroad in the highest-quality institutions across the globe.

Advancement is encouraged within the institution and outside of the institution. Researchers are encouraged to engage in entrepreneurship and to interact with the outside world, specifically and especially through the dissemination of technology and research. Besides encouraging researchers to engage in the implementation of research findings, EMBRAPA also strategically utilizes its communication program to disseminate research results to individuals and institutions with the capability to turn ideas into realities.

Singapore Economic Development Board

The Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) was established in 1961 for the purpose of innovating and implementing, as is stated on their website, "strategies that enhance Singapore's position as a global center for business, innovation, and talent." The EDB achieves this purpose via a multiplicity of efforts, we will focus primarily on the agency's R&D efforts.

The EDB devoted \$7.6 billion of its total

expenditures toward R&D in 2013: a year which marked the end of a six-year span that saw a 30% increase in the number of researchers that the EDB supported. The agency's approach to R&D clusters public and private research institutes into what it calls "integrated innovation ecosystems." These ecosystems are designed to encourage multi-disciplinarity; allow access to shared talent, facilities, and services; lower initial costs; and facilitate open innovation and collaborations. In a manner reminiscent of EMBRAPA's establishment as a public corporation rather than a government agency, the EDB is known officially as a "statutory board." This status allows the EDB to exercise greater autonomy in its policies, administration, and finances, and thus in its relationships with private entities. Cynthia Tang, a Senior Officer within the EDB, asserted in 2008 that "Information flows easily through the organization due to its network architecture that eschews formal hierarchy."

EDB's, and indeed, EMBRAPA's success may be largely attributable to strong institutional support, specifically from the government. This kind of strong institutional support may be a challenge in the Liberian context. The lesson from the Singaporean model is that good governance is necessary to excellent economic performance. Developing countries like Liberia will need to improve their practice of the rule of law. This includes strengthening public trust in local law enforcement officials, as well as ensuring that no individual is free from the constraints of the law. Developing countries like Liberia will need to curtail corruption. These countries must reform public institutions such as the civil service, government bureaucracy, and public administration. And finally, the economic situation must be aggrandized by regulatory

reforms and provision of clearly-defined property rights. Progress toward all these goals could be accelerated by an institute like EMBRAPA or EDB, which focused on research and human capacity development.

South African National Research Foundation

As an illustration of the government's emphasis on R&D efforts, the South African National Research Foundation currently supports fifteen Centers of Excellence. These CoEs are distinguished from others around the globe due to the fact that they are highly collaborative with the higher education system in South Africa, which commonly serve as the hosts of CoEs, and make special effort to assure that the "gender relevance of all research efforts is made explicit."

The country's current mechanism of establishing and funding a CoE was introduced in 2004: the year that South Africa's first seven CoEs were initially established. Since then, there have been eight additional centers opened, with five of them being opened in 2014. The CoE program was initiated under the National Research and Development Strategy (NRDS), approved by the South African Cabinet in 2002. The NRDS outlined the purpose of the CoE program in a statement listing 5 key objectives:

1. Ensuring that South Africa take the lead in cutting edge research
2. Building South Africa's research capacity
3. Elevating South Africa's status among the international research community
4. Distinguishing South Africa within the knowledge community

5. Researching key questions for South Africa

South Africa's efforts towards achieving these objectives can be seen in the country's recognition of the need for economies of scale and critical mass within their research communities. The CoE program specifically recognized this need by combining small and related research initiatives from both traditionally disadvantaged and historically established universities into large, collaborative programs located at the more established universities. The program then advanced by adhering to a stage-gate model with 5 stages. These stages are, as set out by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report on South African Centres of Excellence:

- The forming stage (12 months): establishment of CoE board, recruiting of research staff and students, fine-tuning long term strategies and setting short term goals, and establishing the management team.
- The storming stage: (6 months) production of early outputs, demonstration of good academic and financial management, and synergies and team spirit.
- The norming stage (6 months): research and capacity development outputs, examples of networking, knowledge transfer and service delivery, and growing team spirit.
- The performing stage: (24 months) steady flow of research and utilization of the CoE's outputs and interactions to generate alternative funds.

- The exiting stage: impact is assessed, funding secured from other sources, future continuation and/or winding up strategies are developed.

The strategies and successes of this model will be further discussed in the implementation section of this paper featured below.

Implementation

This section will discuss the implementation of ideas, and currently-established Centres of Excellence. We will first identify key organizations with which the leadership of a Liberian CoE should coordinate. This will be followed by a detailed account of the South African model for establishing CoEs, framed as a proposed methodology towards establishing a CoE and National Development.

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

Liberia's Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) is a newly established agency addressing an age-old issue. Created in September of 2013 by an Act of the National Legislature, the ministry is responsible for the consolidation of "core public finance, economic management, and development planning functions of Government." The need for such an agency arose from inefficiency among the country's public-sector ministries, as evidenced by multiple incidences of duplication and overlap. The organization could be critical to the establishment of CoE because of its potential as an oversight agency.

The MFDP becomes particularly relevant to our efforts in light of its history in furthering R&D endeavors within Liberia. Most recently,

on July 3, 2018 the ministry was responsible for establishing the country's first economic forecasting lab: known as the Liberia Macroeconomic Policy Analysis Centre (LIMPAC). At the dedication ceremony, the director of the MFDP emphasized that LIMPAC would play a crucial role in the government's newfound focus on building capacity: specifically human capacity. This sentiment was echoed by the executive director of LIMPAC, who cited a 2017 meeting of the MFDP leadership, in which officials committed themselves to the development of human capacity. In light of the ministry's commitment to human capacity building, it may be strategic to seek coordination with the MFDP as an oversight agent within the government.

African Capacity Building Foundation

It is critical to recognize that LIMPAC's establishment would not have been possible without the assistance of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). ACBF, founded in 1991, has provided over 700 million US dollars towards human capacity building projects in Africa. This is ACBF their core focus. The foundation believes these goals are most efficiently pursued via the promotion of good governance, adept leadership, and skills training in underdeveloped areas such as STEM.

ACBF's foci has positioned it to be an excellent partner in the development of LIMPAC. A statement from the MFDP recalled that,

"during the ACBF Mission's 2017 visit to Liberia, the head of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), Professor Emmanuel Nnadozie, reaffirmed the ACBF's support to Liberia and disclosed that the Foundation was keen in supporting building

the macroeconomic forecasting capacity of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, as well as providing support for the revitalization of the Liberia Macroeconomic Policy Analysis Center (LIMPAC) to become a robust and independent research think tank in Liberia.”

ACBF could provide financial support and expertise for the establishment of a CoE for National Development in Africa.

EMBRAPA Africa

As discussed earlier, EMBRAPA began in an effort to vitalize Brazil’s failing agricultural sector. After achieving appreciable success, the organization moved to expand its reach to other countries, and even other continents. This resulted in the 2006 establishment of EMBRAPA Africa in Accra, Ghana. EMBRAPA’s emphases in its relationship with African countries include skill transfer, capacity building, enabling local workers, and projects fitted to the multidimensional issues of the continent. Claiming Brazilian roots, EMBRAPA Africa is uniquely situated for the transference of relevant knowledge, due to the regions’ economic and topographical similarities. The company’s interest in participating in such knowledge transference is not wholly benevolent or indicative of humanitarian concerns. Brazil is cognizant of the benefit of developing a relationship with Africa in order to pursue open new markets for Brazilian raw materials, processing and logistics industries.

EMBRAPA currently boasts 78 bi-lateral agreements with 89 institutions in 56 countries. An African Centre of Excellence and National Development could find it advantageous to be in partnership with EMBRAPA. With a budget exceeding 1 Billion US dollars, the organization has the

potential to provide technical, financial, and personnel support to a recently initiated CoE. EMBRAPA’s abilities to aid smaller, less established institutions of research can be categorized into 4 key sections: Products, Processes, Information, and Services.

Products

- Varieties
- Hybrids
- Animal clones
- Germplasm
- Bioinsecticides
- GMOs
- Agricultural machinery
- Equipments
- Diagnostic Kits
- Vaccines

Processes

- Crop Management Systems
- Crop Adaptation Processes
- Food Processing Methodology
- Plant & Animal Transformation
- Gene Prospection Methodology
- Integrated Pest Management
- Fingerprinting
- Agroecological Zoning
- Traceability & Certification

Information

- Cultivar Evaluation Networks
- Forecasting and Analysis
- Biological Security Networks
- Genomics and Biological Functions
- System Automation
- Monitoring
- GMOs & Biosafety

Services

- Germplasm Exchange
- Quarantine Analysis
- Information Networks
- Franchising
- Quality Control
- Consultation
- Trainings
- Business Incubation

As evidenced by the figures above, EMBRAPA should be considered a key partner in the development of a Liberian CoE. EMBRAPA's unifocal agenda on agricultural development is not a limitation but a pathway toward national development.

Application and Approval Process

The South African model, is could serve as a template for the creation of the Centre of Excellence and National Development. The model has a unique methodology concerning the application and approval process for Centres of Excellence. South Africa's National Research Foundation works closely with the country's Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to identify a host organization for a CoE. The process requires both an oversight agency within the government, as well as an HEI to envision, design, and host the CoE. The following is a detailed account of the model.

The process begins with an open call *from* the governmental oversight agency to HEIs for pre-proposals for a certain Centre of Excellence. Other non-HEI entities shall not be excluded; however, HEIs will take precedence in the consideration of proposals. These pre-proposals will be evaluated by a board constituted of both public and private

actors and established for the purpose of assessment at the pre-proposal, proposal, and post-establishment stages. These pre-proposals will subsequently be assigned to either the "development" or the "recognition" route. The development route indicates a need for "further pre-proposal development where potential exists or strategic importance is identified." Pre-proposals identified as candidates for the development route will become recipients of seed funding and expected to re-submit a proposal after a period of 12 months. Pre-proposals assigned to the recognition route will warrant an invitation for submission of a full proposal. Assessment of a proposal is subject to international review, site visits, and external recommendations.

Funding and the Contract

Funding and contractual obligations follows after proposal acceptance. A decision regarding funding is issued after consideration of a standard costing model. Normally, funding is determined on the basis of the extent of multi-discipline, focus of the center, maturation, funding leverage, outside resources, and need. Contracts are designed to last for an initial period of ten years. Contracts are drafted to bind the funding agency, host institutions and CoE director.

Assessment and Evaluation Process

Contact includes, and is center on, the assessment and evaluation process. The South African model for these processes imposes both yearly and quarterly requirements upon established Centres of Excellence, as shown below:

Yearly Requirements

- List of students being supported or trained
- Detailed business plan
- Audited set of financial statements
- Progress report
- Statement of compliance

Quarterly Requirements

- Report of research being undertaken or published
- Cash-flow statements

General Recommendations

It is important that the leadership of the CoE and National Development is discerning in determining research priorities. Centers should offer internships and mentorships opportunities for local students and professionals, and international partners. CoE should be greatly concerned with the transference of knowledge and technology from its international partners to its local constituents. Centers should strengthen their ties with local government, as well as with the international knowledge community by providing policy recommendations and securing international research contracts.

Conclusion

Let us consider these words from some churchmen as we go about our task of excellence in national development: *“It must be clear that development is not only about the growth of the economy in general; it is about the development of the human being with his/her capabilities and relationships with intermediary social groups -family, social, political, cultural groups etc. - within which he/she lives. This requires a change in perspective that recognizes peoples as united by a common factor, their humanity being*

created with the imprint of the common God creator. Only by starting from this premise can we aim, within pluralist institutions, toward the achievement of the common good, which needs to be the primary objective of any society. The common good is neither an abstract goal nor a simple list of targets. It is simply the realization of the primary needs of the person: the need of truth, love, and justice.”

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Project Implementation

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“Great accomplishments come only with sacrifice and unyielding purpose.” – King Goujian

Crafting national development policy is well and good. For national development policy to become a reality, however, the say-do gap must be bridged by effective and efficient implementation of approved policies. Well-thought-out ideas and policy statements have occasionally been crafted for national growth and development. But these have been stymied at the point of turning them into reality. Lacking the proper tools and knowledge, many good ideas with potential for good societal change have failed in the implementation phase. How to turn good policy into reality? What are some of the most important ingredients for a successful implementation? How to turn great ideas into great realities?

Introduction

Effective project implementation in Liberia and other African states is, and will continue to be, important to the success of public and private organizations. Successful project implementation could bring to fruition new infrastructure facilities, public services, and could “create a conducive environment for appropriate investments; and new products, services, or procedures” (Rwelamila and Purushottam 2012). Many of the problems related to project implementation stem directly from poor project management, and communication, corruption, and organizational problems within the private and public sectors. Human capacity development is central to any

successful project implementation.

One of the most important component of a project implementation team is a strong project manager. Strong project management leadership is paramount to a successful project. Eight out of 10 project managers in Africa are accidental or lack the proper project management training (Rwelamila and Purushottam 2012).

Successful Project Management

The following five principles are essential to successful project management:

1. Tasks must be effectively delegated and managed to completion at every phase of the project to avoid stagnation and ensure progress.
2. Team members must be motivated in order to keep working and stay focused. There must be a strong, clear and compelling purpose.
3. Yielding good results is not enough. There needs to be proper documentation to determine each team member's contributions to the project as there may be some team members carrying a heavier workload than others (Watt 2014).
4. Adaptations and adjustments must be made to manage current barriers and avoid potential threats that could harm the implementation of a project/
5. The team members must have the skills needed to complete the project. In developing countries, policies are often not implemented to their full extent due to a lack of

skilled workers and financial resources (Rahmat 2015).

Participation and Communication

Once the project management leader is aware of these five basic principles, the policymakers, the leader, and the team must foster a community of participation and communication. According to The 2017 World Development Report on Governance and the Law, which addresses questions related to formulation and implementation of policies in Africa, too often policymakers overemphasize “best practices” and leave out other factors, such as communication and inclusive participation. While these may seem commonplace and basic, they are fundamental to the success of any project.

Everyone involved in the implementation process must have a clear idea of the overall goal of the project as well as their individual role in achieving that goal. This begins with a well-written policy that clearly states the purpose of the project. Creating a sense of unity by focusing on a central goal will help all parties involved— especially the team members—feel connected to the project and therefore more likely to work hard to see the project through to fruition. People who feel as though they are a part of something larger, are often more motivated as a team, and the promise of recognition for a successful project provide intrinsic rewards (Kerzner 2015).

Building a unified team also reduces the likelihood of jealousy and sabotage from those who feel excluded and have no stake in the results of the project.

Effective communication is necessary for team cohesion. As Afifa Aisha Rahmat argues, “Communication is an essential element of policy implementation. Through communication, orders to implement policies are transmitted to appropriate personnel in a clear manner [that is] accurate and consistent” (2012). Communication ensures everyone knows their task and increases the probability that this task will be accomplished, producing the desired results.

Many of the “best practices” that are often prioritized come from outside sources that have little to no knowledge of the culture in which they are being implemented. Often “Western” practices are not the most effective within an African context. “Policy formulation and implementation cannot be removed from the context in which it takes place. Countries have different political systems and forms of government, in addition to various social, cultural, and economic systems and levels of development” (Mthethwa 2012). In order for policies to become a reality, the reality of the society in which they are being implemented must be understood.

After the leader has been selected and the appropriate culture introduced, the team or organization must evaluate their organizational capacity. The issues associated with overreaching will be discussed later in this brief, however it is important to note that without realistic expectations and goals, no plan will become a reality. While high aspirations are admirable, ignoring reality will ultimately lead to dashed hopes and stagnant or receding development.

Project Failures

Corruption has been a major reason for failed

policy implementation in Africa in the past. Public resources often dissipate as funds are misappropriated or even stolen (Imurana et. al 2014). Resources must be managed and carefully monitored to prevent misuse and ensure viability of the project, as many projects do not reach their full potential due to a lack of financial resources. As mentioned above, a project’s requirements and objectives may also change, so it is important to ascertain that resources continue to be available to match the changing needs of the project.

Failure in project execution or policy implementation often occurs due to organizational problems within the private and public sectors (Graham and Englund 2004.) A majority of failed projects fall under these four categories within the private and public sectors: *1. inefficient projects, 2. competing and weak stakeholders, 3. unsuccessful business/or unsuccessful development strategy, and 4. unsustainable potential.*

1. Inefficient projects occur when leaders do not set accurate expectations, leading to overdrawn budgets and schedules that cause the project to fail. The project or policy must be within reach. Overreaching can be a huge detriment to any project; not only are all goals not accomplished, but unrealistic goals may negatively influence all aspects of the project. One reason overreaching has become such a prevalent issue is the political atmosphere. “The politicization of public policies in Africa has led to the formulation of overambitious policies by political parties to win political capital coupled with excessive bureaucratic procedures” (Imurana et. al 2014). These overambitious policies create distrust of the government and affect the political efficacy of a nation.

2. Within any project, there will always be a variety of stakeholders; the expectations and influence of these stakeholders must be managed for a project to be successful. Many times, stakeholders have competing interests and therefore varying ideas on how the project should be implemented and even on what the overall goal of a project should be. Stakeholders will compete at every level in the “policy implementation chain” and will utilize a variety of tactics to prey on the weak links within this chain to gain power and influence in the policy implementation process (Rahmat 2015). Among competing stakeholders, there must be, “cooperation, coordination, and commitment at all levels of the implementing machinery starting with the ministries at the Central State level through the various non-secretariat organizations in the field at district, block or village level” (Rahmat 2015). Managing stakeholder expectations will ensure the policy achieves its original purpose instead of the ideal of one powerful stakeholder.

However, weak stakeholders can be just as detrimental to project implementation process as strong, competing stakeholders. Klein and Knight state, “A policy designed without meaningful stakeholder engagement may be more difficult to implement because it neither considers the needs of nor engenders buy-in and ownership from those who will implement or benefit from the policy” (Mthethwa 2012). “Implementation is essentially about trying to accomplish public objectives, the process by which and the structures through which policy is intended to affect societal conditions and outcomes” (Rahmat 2012). Essentially, the goal of public policy is to improve the lives of the people in the society or community. They understand their situation the best because they live it; if they are

not consulted or engaged in the project, it likely will not make impactful change, or will achieve a lesser degree of success. Therefore, stakeholder engagement and input for a project will be necessary in order to guarantee successful implementation.

3. A project should be able to achieve commercial success if it is in the private sector and achieve development goals if it is in the public sector (Rwelamila and Purushottam 2012). To avoid failure, the leaders tasked with the implementation of a project should use developmental strategies to reach the goals of the project whether it be in the private or public sector. The development of strategies is the step between determining the goals of the project and making the necessary changes to reach the goals, or how something is going to get done. If there are no development strategies on how the team will accomplish a goal, time, capital, and opportunities will be wasted in abundance (Chapter 8. Developing a Strategic Plan”).

4. If a project is unable to create new technologies, markets, products, or improve the standard of living, the project is unsustainable and will become less desirable, leading to a lack of investment and the death of the project. To ensure the sustainability of a project, there should be constant meetings with all the stakeholders whether they be investors, employees, customers, NGO’s, citizens, etc., essentially all those affected by the policy being implemented. There should also be clear reporting on the current state of the project and consistent threat analysis to determine any factors that may jeopardize the health of the project. This practice will allow the project leaders enough time to adapt, plan, and potentially fix any impending issues. Winston Churchill once said, “Let our advance worry-

ing become advance thinking and planning.”

Conclusion

Learning how to implement projects successfully is one of the best ways to help struggling African nations succeed in the task of nation building. African states must recognize the unique challenges they face and develop unique strategies to help overcome them. The most important factor in bridging the say-do gap in Africa is the capacity and will of the people to make it happen. “Purpose is a strong force for establishing a base. It even exceeds talent, because purpose has a vision. It can see the finished product long before it begins to work. There is power in being able to see and know that this going to be important. (Joyce S. Hifler)” Not only must people have the ability to complete the tasks necessary, but they must also have the vision and incentive to follow through and make sure the project accomplishes its goals on time and on budget. “Good intentions are not enough;” in order for African nations such as Liberia to grow and develop, they must learn to move from ideas and into reality (Blair 2005).

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Liberian National Security: A Review

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This article summarizes research conducted by Anderson University researchers (Kyle Childress, Chandler Clark, Gabrielle Guerra, Rachel Knies, Zach Van Duyn, and Michael Weigel) on Liberia's national security. The study is a result of a research partnership between Anderson University and Sagamore Institute. The complete study may be found at sagamoreinstitute.org.

Liberia faces a number of national security threats that if left unaddressed, could lead to state failure. Corruption, low political efficacy, leadership challenges, tribalism, and hostile neighbors all pose major concerns to the nation and threaten its ability to provide for and protect its citizens. In order to combat these threats, Liberia must make drastic changes in the near future such as increasing administrative competence, accountability and transparency, as well as establishing a plan for a long term shift in cultural norms that will allow for lasting change to take place.

Liberia's recent history has been tumultuous. The troubled state of Liberia's national security reverberates a tale of past conflict, political strife, violence and the intrigues of realpolitik in international affairs. Twenty-five years of civil disturbances have left the economy and the country in shambles, severely limiting public services. Liberia was established by

former American slaves and an assortment of other Black migrants from the Caribbean and the Congo River basin in 1847 as Africa's first independent republic with a constitution and polity mirroring the United States. The country remained relatively stable until 1980 when it suffered a violent military coup (BBC, 2018). The military coup disrupted a long and delicate process of Liberia's coalescence into a nation-state, and marked the beginning of Liberia's decline and destruction. The enormities of the coup and its aftermath lead to a second violent upheaval in 1989. The 1989 upheaval disintegrated into a fourteen year civil war. The war officially ended in 2003 with the assistance of the international community.

The civil disturbances - including the war - robbed Liberia of any meaningful development as a nation-state, leaving its people poor and devastated. Liberia is heavily dependent on foreign aid. The US bilateral assistance alone was equivalent to two-thirds of the government's budget (US Government, 5). Corruption and selfishness wreaked havoc on Liberia's economy. Consumed with survival, the country had no energy for improving developmental resources, and so the nation regressed. Its infrastructure crumbled. The national security sector was but one of many casualties of Liberia's civil disturbances. Liberia has since struggled to develop its administrative capacity, legitimacy, and security. The 1980

Coup d'état and subsequent civil war, have soured the Liberians' faith in good governance. These disastrous events have led Liberia to the nation it is today: a struggling, divided country facing numerous threats with no realistic plan to combat them, except a hopeful people.

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), which has been on the ground in Liberia since 2003, developed a security plan in an attempt to aid the Liberian government in addressing the numerous challenges it faces. However, since 2003 few lasting changes have been made. UNMIL has given into the corruption that runs rampant through the country and enabled Liberia's crippling reliance on foreign aid. Often UNMIL officers take bribes or pay them to other officials in order to achieve their short-term goals (Sheets). These acts perpetuate the problems Liberia is already struggling to combat and erode trust in foreign organizations. The Liberian security plan developed by UNMIL is problematic. While theoretically it is a well-constructed plan, it is clear that no thought of Liberian culture or governmental capacity were considered when creating the plan. The mission itself admitted that while "UNMIL was effective at stabilizing Liberia 2003-05 [it] was not effective at state-building or security sector reform" (Liberia Peacebuilding Office, Republic of Liberia, UNMIL 2017). The plan they laid out, while well-intentioned, does not address the true security threats Liberia is facing or provide practical steps for security sector reform.

Corruption is one of the fundamental gaps within Liberian national security. Not only has it hindered economic development within Liberia, but it has also created an environment rife with political discord and subject

to governmental upheaval. Corruption at the top levels of government has made it virtually impossible for the country to develop a stable economy or reduce reliance on foreign aid (Transparency International, 2016). Liberia's lack of administrative authority has allowed the Lebanese mafia to gain a stronghold within the nation (Sheets). Currently, the Lebanese have control over the Liberian port, further restricting Liberia's already limited trade (Sheets). This has led to a negative trade balance of approximately \$5 billion USD (Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), 2017). The other threats that will be discussed in this brief stem from Liberia's inability to curb corruption; people have lost faith in the government, tribal authorities often hold more legitimate power in the eyes of the people than Liberian government officials, and the country is unable to secure its borders or even its own political system (Transparency International, 2016).

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected in 2005 on a platform based around curbing corruption. Not only has this campaign been unsuccessful, but Sirleaf herself has been a part of several corruption scandals (Brooks, 2017). Johnson implemented several pieces of legislation aimed at combatting corruption, but did not create an enforcement mechanism, making the acts almost completely ineffective (Brooks, 2017). Liberia is in need of a strong, disciplined, intelligent and ethical leadership class to survive and thrive.

Another major threat to Liberia's national security is the low political efficacy of many Liberian citizens. According to the Afrobarometer, "94% of Liberians believe that their country's police force is corrupt to some extent." Considering that "62% of Liberians have had something stolen from their home,

and 36% have been the victims of a physical attack,” it is clear that there is an extreme disconnect between the people and the government (Afrobarometer). After years of corruption and poor leadership, the Liberian people have little faith that positive change is possible. In fact, “46% of the country believes nothing can be done by solitary citizens to fight institutional corruption” (Afrobarometer). The detachment between the elites in power and the average citizen creates a group that can be easily mobilized by a leader who knows how to play to the feelings of envy, jealousy, anger, and apathy experienced by the lower classes, as was seen during the 1980 coup. This presents a massive threat to Liberia’s security; growth comes from stability. It is not achieved otherwise. The government must find a way to build a bridge that helps the ordinary citizens to meaningfully engage the political process, creating political legitimacy and a more stable government.

Tribalism also threatens the security of Liberia. As evidenced above, the corruption within the government has created a gaping hole between the elite political leaders and the average citizen. In place of governmental protection and leadership, people have turned to tribal leaders. Not only does this threaten the legitimacy of the national government, but also leads to inter-tribal conflicts which divide the nation and create a culture of turmoil and violence not conducive to nation building (Gompert 19). Liberia’s 16 tribes often discriminate against each other, deepening the already palpable tensions between them. Tribalism has created a sense of distrust between the tribes and produced a deeply divided society that struggles to find national unity or a common purpose. During the Ebola crisis, doctors were turned away from rural villages run by tribal leaders because of their fear of

outsiders, leading to many deaths (Nossiter). Unless Liberians are able to create a more cohesive national identity, they will continue to struggle to become a productive nation-state; people must be willing to work for the national good, and not only for the good of the tribe.

The last major concern for Liberian national security is the region in which the country is located and the potential volatility of its hostile neighbors. Liberia’s lack of administrative capacity makes it especially susceptible to these external threats as it has not developed a cohesive plan to handle them nor a reliable military establishment. While at this point an outside attack seems improbable, given the volatility of the region this remains a strong potential threat. The Liberia-Cote d’Ivoire border is prone to violent eruptions and militancy against both states. In 2010-2011, Cote d’Ivoire experienced a refugee crisis but had no legitimate government officials powerful enough to handle it. When many Ivoirian citizens attempted to reclaim their land, they found that militant dozors, or traditional hunters, had taken it over and threatened violence if they attempted to regain it (Allouche and Mohammed 17). One approach Cote d’Ivoire has taken to combat issues along the border is to offer money to ex-combatants in exchange for their agreement of nonviolence. This attempt has created further issues as it makes wealthy, and the wealth strengthens an already aggressive and hostile group. Cote d’Ivoire’s band of newly wealthy ex-combatants has formed a pocket of instability that threatens to spill over the border into Liberia (Allouche and Mohammed 21).

Sierra Leone and Guinea have had a negative history with Liberia dating back to the Taylor-era, but are relatively stable nations that do not threaten Liberia presently (Onoma 140).

While these nations seem to be relatively stable, viewing the Mano River region (Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire) on a broader scale reveals a troubling pattern. Some scholars go as far as to lump the first and second Liberian civil wars, first and second Ivorian civil wars, and the Sierra Leonean civil war as one large Mano River War. This perspective reveals that there are systemic issues with ineffective governance and political apathy underlying the region that could erupt at any time. The Mano River War "reflect[s] something of a conflict-prone regional and transnational malaise" (Allouche et al. 4).

Liberia's national police force is becoming operational at a slow pace. Because of the nation's history with the military coup, both the military and the police force have been kept intentionally small in order to protect the administration. The state security apparatus have, however, been regaining numbers and power, but at an abysmally slow rate. While the Liberian National Police Force (LNP) has received some training from foreign entities, many officers are uneducated, underpaid, and susceptible to corruption (Mehler 21). Liberia has also worked with the UN Mission in Liberia to better train the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), however they remain a small force that has not the capacity to take over full control of external threats although they have been "developing" since 2005 (Onoma 137). With suspicious neighbors and a small security force, Liberia faces a huge external threat in addition to their already burgeoning internal security issues.

Singapore faced many of the same issues Liberia faces today. They were disjointed, divided, and heavily reliant on foreign aid. The Singaporean Leadership was able to develop a plan that helped to reverse these trends and

turn Singapore into a model of development. The leadership educated the people on the dangers the country faced and induced the citizenry to become involved in elevating their country. One of the major unifying factors was the mandatory military service required of all men. No matter a person's social or ethnic status, every male was required to serve their country. This mandatory service created a sense of unity as well as equality (Government of Singapore 2012). Singapore's premium on education has helped to create a common identity, imprinting a sense of civic duty, and decreasing the number of people unemployed (Ai 1998). Singapore also used foreign aid to their advantage; while the country is too small to ever be completely self-sufficient (no country is an island, no country is completely self-sufficient), it has built partnerships that allow Singapore to obtain needed resources while avoiding over-reliance on their partners (Tan 2016). Finally, Singapore has a zero tolerance policy for corruption. Incentives were implemented to remove the "necessity" for corruption, and the public mindset was educated to no longer view corrupt behavior as normal, but to see it for what it is, a wrong and a great evil.

Liberia could benefit greatly by using Singapore as a model in good governance. An emphasis on a common goal and identity, and good education will help begin the process of changing Liberian culture for the better. The Liberian government must establish a hard line on corruption as Singapore did. Declaring this behavior unacceptable and following through on punishments will help decrease corruption, and increase capacity, legitimacy, and security. This change will contribute to Liberia's moral development and a deep sense of national purpose, effectively steering Liberia towards a brighter future. Liberia would

do well to establish strategic partnerships with nations such as the U.S., as Singapore did. Strategic partnerships could help boost their economy through FDI and trade. Liberia will struggle to implement these changes without strong ethical leadership. One of the major reasons for Singapore's success is in the strong ethical and intelligent leadership provided. Liberia must develop the capacity to implement change. Strong ethical and intelligent leadership with the ability and will to craft and implement new policies is necessary to Liberia's success.

Rwanda is another example of a country that experienced problems similar to those in Liberia, but was able to make great strides and advances in nation building, peace and good order. After the genocide in 1994, Rwanda found itself in the midst of a crisis. To combat the issues they faced, Rwanda established a strong central government that was able to make and enforce necessary changes within Rwandan society. Because the population and the country's resources were diminished in the genocide, the government was consolidated and all processes were streamlined (Republic of Rwanda 2017). The Rwandan Patriotic Army was converted into the Rwanda Defense Force for the protection of the nation (Republic of Rwanda 2017). This military force acts on a local basis to build relationships with citizens, rebuilding relations between the public and the government. As with Singapore, Rwanda has implemented strict anti-corruption laws. The foreign aid Rwanda receives goes towards development projects. The Rwandans have chosen to confront their ethnic conflict and address the problems that led to the genocide; they have implemented programs that focus on negotiation, mediation, conciliation, pacification and appeasement (Issifu 2015).

Liberia should see Rwanda as an example for addressing their own security problems head on, being willing to face unpleasant truths about the Liberian reality. Rwanda, confronting the issues of human capacity underdevelopment and the lack of natural resources, determined that a strong, central, streamlined government was a good option for them. This would help them to crack down on corrupt practices and create a strong national identity. While Liberia has begun some community policing initiatives, scaling up these initiatives, free of corruption, would significantly increase the impact of this program. As with Singapore, Rwanda has benefitted from strong leadership that created a compelling vision for the country and implemented policies that helped the nation to realize that vision.

The United States has played a fickle role in Liberia's history. As the TRC states, "In the decades since the United States began intervening in the fate of this small West African territory, it has alternately supported, exploited, welcomed, and abandoned Liberia and Liberians" (TRC 2009). At the nation's founding, American members of the American Colonization Society acted as the head of state, in 1926 the U.S. government played a large role in negotiating a deal between Firestone Tire and Rubber company and the Liberian government, and the U.S. considered Liberia an important talking point throughout the Cold War as a symbol of African democracy (Dunn 2009). However, this "special relationship" has not always led to American support or involvement in the country, often leading to disastrous consequences for the Liberians (TRC 2009). A major rift in the relationship occurred under the Tolbert Administration. Tolbert worked to "diversify Liberia's external relations"; this move worried US officials

and weakened Liberia's relationship with the U.S. and by proxy, Liberia's national security (Dunn 2009). The strategic purpose of Tolbert's policy trajectory regarding Liberia's security interest was not obvious, being in fact subject to considerable debate. The cost of this policy change was not counted. The US has not understood Liberia, and Liberia has not understood the US. "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace (Luke 14:31-32)."

The content of this statement from Luke was not appreciated by Liberian policy makers at the time. LKY understood that Singapore is a small country and would need to tread shrewdly with great States. This is wisdom. There is great power and depth in humility. It is in Liberia's security interest to understand the United States, even if the US does not find it necessary to understand Liberia. Restoring relationship with the United States in a more mutually beneficial way, and with greater clarity, would help to stimulate the Liberian economy, contributing to Liberia's stability, and providing an ally on which Liberia can rely for national security assistance. This partnership could add legitimacy to the national government, effectively decreasing the reliance on tribal governments and help to create a national identity. If negotiated and managed well, this relationship has the potential to deter external threats and offer the Liberian government a viable option in the event of an unlikely attack. International partnerships, however, are only as strong as the strength and interest of the national leadership managing these partnerships. Is Liberia conscious of her interest?

Liberia faces a number of security concerns that must be addressed in order for the nation to develop economically and become a contributing member of the global community. Corruption, low political efficacy, tribalism, and suspicious neighbors are only a few of the larger issues Liberia faces; however, these systemic problems must be addressed before any lasting change for better can happen. Taking cues from Singapore and Rwanda, as well as developing partnerships with countries such as the U.S., Liberia has the potential to begin experiencing meaningful development and growth.

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US-China in Africa: A Comparative Study

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Context

With the passage of the Foreign Assistance Act in 1961, and the establishment of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. introduced to its foreign policy a new emphasis on long-range economic and social development. Thus, the U.S.-Africa relationship soon became defined by aid provided to African countries.

Around the same time, in 1956, China was also initiating its presence on the continent of Africa, although with somewhat differing emphases. Several decades later, in a post-Mao China now pursuing market liberalization, aid was becoming critical to the realization of public goals. Chinese aid to Africa targeted agricultural, industrial, and infrastructural development via three tools introduced in 1995: 1.) Government-subsidized loans; 2.) Government-supported joint ventures and equity stakes; and 3.) Grants in response to economic difficulties or crises (Brautigam 2008).

Chinese policy has since shifted from beneficence towards Africa to economic cooperation for mutual benefit. Since this shift, China's share of Africa's total exports has increased from 1 percent to

15 percent within ten years (Pilling 2013). Much of China's progress is attributable to the emphasis Chinese leaders placed upon investing in all African countries. The quality of exchange between the China and Africa has upgraded via the production of tangible material value on both sides—with China introducing services and aid to Africa, and with Africa providing places and resources conducive to Chinese plans for furthering food security and Chinese business investments on the continent.

Purpose

Engendered by the post-WWII phenomenon of the Cold War, U.S. foreign aid is largely anomalous to the eras following the Second World War during the throes of the Cold War, foreign aid was employed as an agent of American “soft power” and anti-communist efforts. Thus, we see American aid to Africa reaching its peak in 1985, during the zenith of the Cold War (Owusu 2007).

U.S. emphases slowly shifted to curtailing the liability that debt-ridden African countries posed to the world economy, eventually progressing to an effort towards trade capacity building (or “aid for trade”)

with post-apartheid Africa. Restrictions were lifted and a partnership developed in the 1990s, and by 2000, the US Congress introduced the consequential African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which fundamentally sought to provide Africa's Least Developed Countries (LDCs) a competitive advantage (Jones and Williams 2012).

However, post-9/11, U.S. foreign aid once again became a practical device in the ideological war against terrorism. This shift encouraged the Bush Administration to emphasize defense, diplomacy, and development in its foreign policy (known as the 3D approach), as well as to introduce the Millennium Challenge Account, which increased U.S. foreign aid by \$8.5 billion from FY2004-FY2006 (Owusu 2007). This increased aid was not only targeted at counterterrorism, but also at the construction of an alternative oil source for the U.S.

China's presence in modern Africa was first introduced in the 1950s, as a tool for advancing China's role on the international stage. The aggrandizement of China via strategic partnerships with Africa was specifically targeted towards supporting the country's "One China" foreign policy (Cassell 2013). The China-Africa relationship evolved from one of strategic diplomacy to one of mutual partnerships in trade and development, and in 2000, China established the Forum for China Africa Co-operation (FOCAC), which announces new China lending programs and development projects every three years (Shinn 2013).

China has infiltrated the Western aid monopoly in Africa without engaging in practices of Western conditionality. Although

some scholars may view China's maneuvers as neo-colonial in essence, China is in Africa to conduct business that it considers to be mutually beneficial. In sum, China has no enemies or friends in Africa; it only has permanent interests.

Principle

Complicating U.S.-Africa relations is America's abhorrent history with slavery and problematic Western practices of colonialism. In recent years, U.S. relations to Africa have placed an emphasis on, as William Miles puts it, "recalibrating the importance of African states from a failed state perspective and increasing the 'hard security' of America by improving 'human security' in Africa" (Miles 2012).

Critical to the understanding of U.S.-Africa relations is an understanding of what economist John Williamson in 1989 called the "Washington Consensus" (Pettinger 2017). The Washington Consensus gives specific policy recommendations predicated upon the neoliberalist vision of a free market.

With criticisms of the Washington Consensus as failing to acknowledge factors such as market volatility and the dangers of industry privatization came the development of the "post-Washington consensus." This view asserted that poverty levels can be addressed via legislative and judicial changes safeguarding citizen rights, non-market institutions, anti-corruption efforts, and dilution of power away from the locus of national government (Id.)

China's principle involves an independent foreign policy of peace, mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation, and cultural exchange (Quasem et al. 2007). Such concepts

have resulted in what economist Joshua Cooper Ramo calls the “Beijing Consensus.” This term refers to the Chinese approach to foreign aid, which emphasizes the 3 key concepts of innovation-based development, Human Development Index (HDI) as a measurement of economic success, and self-determination (Id.)

Approach

U.S. Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa is targeted at economic development in the mining, energy, and transportation industries and disbursed via bilateral and multilateral means (Eom et al. 2017). In contrast to China’s concentration of funds in Ethiopia, Angola, and Kenya, some of the primary beneficiaries of U.S. ODA are Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, and Mauritius (Id.) The mining & energy industries are not only favored beneficiaries of foreign direct investment (FDI) stock, but also of concessional loans from the United States Export-Import Bank (U.S. Exim Bank), receiving 71% of such loans to the continent, the sum of which reaches approximately 1.4 billion dollars (Id.)

U.S. ODA also takes the form of debt forgiveness, often in coordination with the countries of G7 and the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative sponsored by the World Bank and the IMF (Owusu 2007). HIPC offers debt relief to 38 countries actively seeking to implement better governing practices. 32 of these 38 countries are in Africa (Riddell 1999).

An unofficial route of aid to Africa can be found in the form of cash remittances (on the rise since 2015): transfers of money from African emigrants to those in their home country. Cash remittances are especially

relevant to the African situation given that eight out of ten of the fastest growing emigrant populations today are from sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Adegoke 2017).

Consequences

Foreign aid to Africa, however, is not without its unintended consequences. For example, one study found that, when factoring in taxpayer opportunity cost, the U.S. Exim Bank’s overall costs exceeded its benefits by 200 million dollars (Boyd 1982). Perhaps the most widely-criticized effect of foreign aid, however, is the tendency for foreign dollars to fuel corruption in local African governments. The African Union has estimated that corruption cost Africa \$150 billion a year (Anton 2012). Furthermore, aid to Africa poses unique issues, as it has historically differed from that provided to other countries (see Europe and the Marshall Plan) in that it has taken the form of open-ended commitments rather than time-specific grants. Such ambivalently-defined channels of revenue have given Africa countries a disincentive for producing real growth and establishing a wider tax base (Moyo 2009).

Official Initiatives & AGOA

Enacted in 2000, AGOA mandated that eligible beneficiaries receive preferential access to the U.S. market by claiming exemption from import duties on selected products (Jones and Williams 2012). Eligible beneficiaries were limited to those countries deemed to be actively seeking market reform and a limitation of human rights violations. AGOA-eligible countries were linked through the United States-sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum (the Forum) (Id.) To establish trade relationships, AGOA created the position of Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa: designed to

act as the primary point of contact between the U.S. and African countries (Id.)

Unfortunately, although various analyses indicate that AGOA has had a positive impact on overall African exports to the U.S (for every dollar increase in AGOA exports, there are 16 to 20 cents increase in overall sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) exports to the US), this increase is at the cost of reduced overall international exports, suggesting that resources in other sectors might be re-allocated to textile to match the AGOA-induced preference (Lawrence and Lawrence 2010).

Before AGOA, in 1998, a series of initiatives began to be introduced, starting with the Africa Trade and Investment Policy Program (ATIPP, 1998-2003) (Id.) This was soon followed by the Trade for African Development and Enterprise Initiative (TADE, 2003-2006), which had a successor of its own in the African Global Competitiveness Initiative (Id.). Each initiative employed a combination of concessional loans, trade capacity building, debt forgiveness, and remittances.

China Aid

In contrast to the emphases of traditional donors, China's aid and economic cooperation emphasizes infrastructure, production, and university scholarships, without the Western tradition of attached conditionalities. China's official finance in Africa consists of grants, zero-interest loans, debt relief, and concessional loans (which would all qualify as ODA) (Brautigam 2011).

Concessional loans provided by China are not disbursed to the borrowing government, but rather, the Chinese Exim

Bank pays the Chinese company directly. By keeping the funds in China, the risks of wholesale embezzlement by corrupt African governments are minimized (Id.)

Agriculture

China considers Africa to be a future source for agricultural and farming goods, constructing over 80 demonstration farms in Africa in the 1960s (Cassell 2013). This stands in contrast to the decreases observed in budget allocations to agriculture among African countries as well as international donors. With agriculture, a sector long recognized to be an area where Africa's potential comparative advantages have remained under-invested and under-utilized, the Chinese propose to introduce new techniques, seed varieties, and training programs inspired by their former experience of raising productivity amongst their own farmers. (Alden 2011). Beyond the Chinese government action taken to establish agricultural centers in Africa, private Chinese farmers have already set up farms in Uganda, South Africa and Zambia, while larger agricultural firms are in negotiations with African governments to lease larger tracts of land for production. (Id.)

Private Sector Aid

American private donations to developing countries exceed government funding for foreign aid, respectively amounting to \$95 billion and \$27.6 billion (Washington Times 2007). The government generally encourages private philanthropy, often through supporting organizations such as the South African International Business Linkages (SAIBL), which assists black-owned South African corporations in meeting ISO guidelines, attending trade shows, and identifying sources of finance (Jones and Williams 2012).

More recently, the international community has been witnessing the phenomenon of online giving. Especially popular are crowdfunding organizations that allow individuals to donate increments of necessary funds toward specific projects, institutions, or individuals.

Investment Treaties (China-Africa)

Bilateral Investment Treaties (“BITs”) have become the principal means of protection of foreign investment (Kidane 2014). The distinctive feature of many BITs is that they allow for an alternative dispute resolution mechanism (Mamlyuk 2010). These treaties have allowed nations that desire to host foreign investment, but otherwise might appear too risky for investors, to attract funds by agreeing to certain constraints (Campbell 2016).

China’s Vision

It is probably true that China, without the explicit goal of altruism, has done more to alleviate poverty in Africa than anything ever attempted by Western actors (Chidaushe). China’s experience as a fellow LDC makes it a more credible partner in economic engagement (Brautigam 2010). China’s firm-level strategies should follow a clear path in Africa. First, Chinese firms must find commercial success in their own domestic market. Second, they must find access points to global supply chains. Third, they should raise funds in the global capital markets. Fourth, it is necessary to pursue mergers and acquisitions to gain global economies of scale. And fifth and finally, they must develop and obtain global management expertise and technology (Chidaushe).

Africa’s Response

Strong, comprehensive and integrated

development and investment policies, with agricultural reform as a centerpiece, must therefore serve as a starting point in Africa. Africa must create truly independent central banks; build specialized infrastructure; demolish intra-African trade barriers; and invest to grow its human capacity. To benefit designated economic cooperation zones in Africa, African governments will need to emphasize business linkages, build human capacity, promote technology transfers, and ensure that most jobs are filled locally (Brautigam 2008).

Development Goals

With respect to BITs, African countries must consider developing a common African position on BITs. Such an approach can discourage unhealthy competition among states, preventing a race to the bottom by investors, and strengthen the negotiating position of African countries (Ofodile 2013). African civil society should bring pressure for a parallel forum inclusive of business, labor, and consumer groups to be instituted at the biennial meetings of the FOCAC. They should bring together NGOs from China and Africa to enhance people-to-people relations, exchange of ideas, and perspectives and to lobby their respective governments to address the social dimension of China-Africa relations (Chidaushe)

The West should not see China as a threat to its hold over Africa. Africa should be granted autonomy in any decisions regarding which country or partner to engage with (Chidaushe). The current competitive approach is not beneficial to Africa, and the West should not see China as a threat to its relationship with Africa. For neither China nor the West is Africa’s savior but rather, its partner (Chidaushe).

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China: A Cultural Brief

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“Beauty is the beginning and end of all true knowledge: really to know anything, one must first love, and having known one must finally delight...”

– David Bentley Hart

Why should there be an appendix on Chinese culture and not one on the American or western culture? For better or for worse Africa knows the western world well. Many Africans are western educated, and have had long standing historical entanglements and significant cultural engagements with the West. Admittedly these have not always been particularly pleasant exchanges. In many ways Africans now share a common religious faith commitment with many Westerners, though this is under stress at the moment. Comparatively, Africa’s contact with China is recent, since the 1950s. There were some contact back in the 15 century during the Ming Dynasty, but that was soon discontinued for reasons internal to China. Now it is imperative that Africa gets to know China well and deeply. Africa’s partnership with China in nearly every area of life is expanding exponentially. Africa should be rushing to become sinologist under the circumstances. It is in Africa’s strategic interest.

The West has a way of presenting Eastern thought, particular China in rather rarefied terms. The great Belgian Sinologist, Simon Leys entitled one of his critical essays on deciphering official publications coming out of modern communist China as “The Art of Interpreting Non-Existent Inscriptions



Written in Invisible Ink on a Blank Page,” Leys is considered a shrewd observer of China, and though the essay was a critique, the title still reflects a rarefied air, an otherness and a mystique that surrounds China and its cultural influence. I can still remember an architect colleague describing to me the mysterious thinking undergirding the design and construction of the Japanese Katsura imperial villa suggesting that a non-Eastern mind could not even begin to hope to comprehend the subtlety of the Eastern mind that would create such refined work of art. But there are in fact real merits to the rarefaction of China and associated cultures, though we should be careful not to overstate it. Once at a meeting for the Construction Specification Institute in Indianapolis, an engineer returning from a visit to China said that China had people with such rarefied skills that if an egg was broken into a thousand pieces, they could reassemble the egg and give it back to you. It is true that China has capacity that has been accumulated over the years of its very long life as a people. Consider comparative philosopher Roger Ames’

remarks on Confucian role ethics and its deep appreciation for ritual and good order:

“A careful reading of the classical Confucian literature uncovers a way of life carefully choreographed down to appropriate facial expressions and physical gestures, a world in which a life is an embodied performance requiring concentrated and unrelenting attention to detail...this performance begins from the insight that personal refinement is only possible through the discipline provided by formalized roles and behaviors.... only with the appropriate combination of and balance between formality and functional personalization that family and community can become elegant, refined, and self-regulating. It is the hard-won culmination of an aesthetic project, and an unusual and most considerable accomplishment.” (Ames, 113, 177)

Impressive, certainly. The Chinese sage, Confucius was a very great artist indeed, and a communicator of a worldview that was essentially artistic. Life is art. Art is life. In Ames, reading, Confucianism is an aesthetic project. This sounds so very Japanese down to the very Japanese institution of Shintoism. The Japanese are so very skillful in recognizing a good thing when they see it and making that good thing their own. Instructive. Without apologies, a new state may be successfully constructed on an existing model. But at last, as rich and thick as Chinese thinking is, it is certainly not outside of this world. The Chinese do not live in a different world from the rest of mankind. They are certainly not the wholly other. It is probably best not to insist too much on differences and neglect similarities. China is part of the human family and so can be studied and fully comprehended as we do other men and

women. This is not to depreciate the great effort that must be expended in getting to know China.

This brief has benefitted much from comparative philosopher Roger Ames' monograph, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*. Confucianism, a richly textured worldview, is primarily concern with relationship and process. The concern with relationship and process gives practice a high value in Chinese thought. Practice here is bringing into focus what is familiar in the everyday and building on from there to a cosmic transformation. Focusing the familiar in the basic everyday thing of chopping wood and carrying water. This statement may capture what is being sought after: “If we wish to be perfect, we have nothing more to do than to perform the ordinary duties of the day well. Perfection does not mean any extraordinary service or heroic acts, it means what the word usually means: what is complete, consistent and sound: he, then, is perfect who does the work of the day perfectly, and we need not go beyond this to seek for perfection.” For the Confucianist knowing is a holistic and comprehensive process.

This Confucian way allows for a rather different understanding of human creativity as a kind of enhanced meaning. It is a form of continuous creativity where greater knowledge is sought after what is already known and understood, perfecting the understanding and practice of the things that are familiar. It is “...an insight into the way of things that takes one far beyond any mere skill.” This appreciation of creativity may explain the incredible stability and conservatism of Chinese cultural life and society. Enhanced meaning of the familiar assumes that the familiar is right to begin

with. This may or may not be true.

Ames presents Confucian philosophical thought as being concerned chiefly with the “*How*” of life, and not the “*why*.” We are a little doubtful of this presentation, though, admittedly, this people are some of the most practical that we have known. Good for them in many ways. Ames says that they are concerned with “...*how* the complex relationships among the changing phenomena of their surroundings could be coordinated to achieve optimum productivity.” (P.255) In this matter, Ames may be displaying his philosophical bias for American pragmatism than he might be aware. The question of purpose, the *Why of life*, still presses very hard: “Though in life no prize awaits me, yet am I sad to know the firewood is burnt out and soon the flame will sink” (Lady Murasaki). It is hard to believe that the ancient Chinese thinkers did not ask what is life all about? It maybe that life is all about family relations, but it treats the question of *why*. These are simply basic human questions that we all have as finite persons. No person can ignore the French thinker Jean Paul Sartre statement that any finite point without an infinite reference point has no meaning, without denying an essential component of the human experience. The Chinese system of thought is much too meaningful not to have address the *why* of life. Perhaps nothing supersedes family relations in the ancient Chinese worldview. Perhaps, family relations serve as the unifying principle around which all of knowledge and life must be ordered. Family as involving the whole panoply of ancestors in the spiritual dimension may be finally the ancient Chinese reason for being.

In Confucianism the sage, or becoming a sage is a kind of ideal. But the triumph of the sage is not for *domination or hoarding wealth*,

but understanding, [teaching] making, and healing, to preserve all things unstained (J. R. R. Tolkien). According to Ames, “...the image of the sage in...Confucian texts, far from being heroic, is rather one of a virtuous collaborator and communicator who inspires the cosmos by orchestrating a thriving, inclusive human community in the ordinary business of the day.” In this picture of the sage we have a brilliant and attractive image of a great artist or athlete at the prime of their creative powers of uninhibited virtuosity.

Sages like Confucius are not solitary and original. Rather, they “have evolving corporate identities that have implicated within them the patterns of communal deference and meaning that are ultimately constitutive of the ethnic and national character....The sage is the efficacious communicator, the embodiment of culture, the religious center of a tightly bound community” (P.253). Confucius himself was quintessentially that ideal sage. In fact Confucius influence was so marked that Sima Qian, one of China’s very great historians, numbered the teacher in his list of China’s emperors. Quite an extraordinary accomplishment for a teacher. This is truly meritorious genuine leadership. There is an impression that notwithstanding the many dynasties, historical epochs, revolutions, great violence and extraordinary destruction, the old man stands knowing with a gentle smile. Indeed, Confucius has made some insightful observation about human nature that will remains true as long as that nature remains the same. Notwithstanding modernism, these observations are not contradicted without meaningful consequence to human wellbeing. In spite of the fury of communism in China, it is not the Mao Institute that is on offer, but rather the Confucius Institute.

Despite Confucius creativity, he is taking his cues from history, indeed, proudly so. He is learning from the sage Kings that preceded him in Chinese history. The sage is the ideal ruler, that is, in this system of thought, the best ruler is a sage or sage-like. Every conscientious ruler or for that matter, person, aspires to be a sage. In the cultural ideal of the stage, scholarship, leaning and thinking were built into the culture fabric that has left a residue even into contemporary Chinese culture today.

Confucianism has a strong view of family. Establishing a family is like founding a religious congregation or an institution of learning. The family is where one becomes learned and virtuous. "In a Confucian world, there is a very real sense in which the disintegrative conduct of rude, thoughtless, and shameless persons is the ultimate source of immorality." It is in the family that men and women become morally competent. In fact, one may be legitimately concern that within Confucianism family relations have been absolutized in a profound philosophic sense, almost as an organizing principle for all of knowledge and life. Even in today's contemporary world, divorce still hovers around three percentage points in China. As Africans with a profound intuitive appreciation of human relations and family life, we should find the Chinese emphasis on process and relationships points of cultural contacts.

Where is the individual person in Confucianism? "The root of the Confucian *Problematik* lies in the fact that the boundary between the self and the group has not been conceptually articulated..." The late great Singaporean Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew (LKY), had this same critical reflection of the Chinese Confucian tradition as philosopher

Roger Ames. To deal with this Confucian *Problematik* LKY was partial to the Western model of an impartial administration of the rule of law. This is characteristically a practical solution. Conceptually, it will help to appreciate a dynamic interaction or tension between the individual and the group, and to hold that tension in mind as fundamental to a well-functioning civic order and community life.

We are not sympathetic to the now standard interpretation of the meaning of the Chinese great wall as being reflective of a fortress mentality. Rather the great wall is reflective of a genuine national security interest. There is no great wall in the south of China. In China's south we rather see a long pattern of Chinese migration and expansion. Critical concerns about China's attitude towards international responsibility do not account for China's prudence and proclivity to the sage exemplar. Henry Kissinger's book *On China*, is helpful here. The "*Great Learning*" begins with "*personal cultivation*" that ultimately results in "bringing peace to the world" (P.267). Want to change the world, change yourself first. Be the change you want. This does not mean that we need not be concern about developments in the South China Sea or what the *Economist* has called China's *sharp* power.

Confucianism greatest strength, the family, is also, it greatest weakness. Yet in our modern world today, Confucianism profoundest insight lies in prompting us to rethink the role of the family as the primary site of the consummate life and by extension, the life of society at large. The family is where we become morally competent, where we grow in wisdom and understanding, where we become learned. The recent American book, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, is a testament to this observation

on the importance of family life to the larger society—in the West, as well as the East.

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