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The Applied Anthropologist publishes peer-reviewed articles, commentaries, brief communications, field reports, and book reviews on a wide range of topics. The journal's focus is on cultural change and adaptation in the modern world. It explores how humans approach, analyze, and develop solutions to cultural, ecological, economic, and technological problems. The journal is supported and underwritten by the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology. Guidelines for authors and electronic access to back issues are available on the website or by contacting Managing Editor Andrea Akers at andrea.akers.mader@gmail.com or Editor-in-Chief Stephen O. Stewart at stephen.o.stewart@gmail.com. Further information about the society is available at www.HPSfAA.org.



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POINT-TO-POINT

STEPHEN O. STEWART



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Applied anthropology is, of course, the application of anthropological knowledge and methodology to the possible resolution of the problems and situations that anthropologists encounter in their work with people. In the real world, this may take any number of different forms. The articles in this issue demonstrate applied anthropology each in a different way.

The article on Assiniboine and Sioux Reservation at Fort Peck, Montana, combines cultural anthropology and archeology, but even more importantly, showcases applied anthropology's value system. The reservation is the location of important archeological and Native American cultural sites that are also part of the home of Assiniboine and Sioux peoples. But there are also economic possibilities for tribal members since their home sits on a massive oil shale site. Assisting these people to learn to work with this industry while protecting their homeland is important applied anthropology.

Two articles demonstrate a common occurrence for anthropologists. The article on Ecuador shows an anthropologist beginning work on a fisheries-based research project, and through his participant-observation he gets to know the fishermen and their families. We never learn the outcome of this research, because he accepts an invitation to visit an inland community with a school in need of assistance of various kinds, and he finds himself developing plans for outside funding for the school. I'm confident that the original research went well, but I'm equally sure that he gets as much satisfaction from the applied work with the school and community.

The second article comes from Haiti, where a young woman gets involved with another school and learns how the very poor in Haiti develop and utilize personal networks to survive. When one becomes part of such a network, one has an obligation to respond and help others in her network whenever she is asked, and conversely, she can ask for assistance from those in her network. The author of the article found herself in just such a network and described its workings admirably. She also pointed out how the survival network might find itself in conflict with the workings of outside funding organizations if a network member were also the recipient of funding from abroad. The article has important lessons for these funding organizations, through these insightful contributions of an applied anthropological nature.

There are three articles based on three African countries: Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Ghana. These articles are excellent as descriptions of the country situations, but their importance for applied anthropology lies in the possible future work in these countries in the areas of agricultural innovation (Ghana), exploitation of minerals (DRC), and the rights of LGBT individuals (Cameroon).

Members of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology have become well aware that the lessons of our discipline can be succinctly expressed through a medium that would seem to be far distant from our concerns: poetry. This stems from the fact that the HPSfAA has its very own Poet Laureate in the person of Howard Stein. Howard was a practicing applied anthropologist for years in medical institutions in Oklahoma and a regular participant in our meetings and organization. But his greatest contribution has been his ability to observe daily life and transform it into the most wonderful combinations of applied anthropology and wisdom as it becomes poetry. In *The Routing Slip*, we have a poem and the application of anthropological knowledge joined together in a magical way to help us see the human endeavor in a truly unique light. Thank you, Howard, once again.

Our thanks to those who served as peer reviewers for the current issue: Clare Boulanger Ph.D., Peter Van Arsdale Ph.D., Lenora Bohren Ph.D., Arthur Campa Ph.D., David Piacenti Ph.D., Kreg Ettenger Ph.D., and Michael Brydge M.A.



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APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY WITH THE ASSINIBOINE AND SIOUX
TRIBES, FORT PECK, MONTANA

MICHAEL S. BURNEY

ABSTRACT

Between August 2013 and February 2014, the author lived in Wolf Point, Montana, working on the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Reservation in northeastern Montana, administering and supervising twelve tribal members (Assiniboine, Sioux, and Blackfeet) and monitoring nonnative contract archaeologists on two large archaeological inventories in advance of 3-D seismic surveys on the reservation's east end. During the seismic surveys, tribal monitors accompanied the vibroseis trucks to help the drivers avoid previously recorded prehistoric sites. The employment, training, and education the monitors received over six months gave them marketable archaeological skills that may be useful for future tribal archaeological contracting opportunities. Tribal "contract archaeology" creates jobs and opportunities for tribal members while preserving their lands, resources, and traditional way of life. This is especially true for reservations rich in energy resources, such as Fort Peck. Federal undertakings on and off the reservation, and development of the Bakken oil field, should become sources of funding and employment for a thriving Fort Peck Reservation-based historic-preservation contracting office.

KEY WORDS: archaeology, Assiniboine, Bakken, Sioux, Fort Peck, reservation, Poplar (MT), seismic, Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO), Wolf Point (MT)

INTRODUCTION

The Fort Peck Reservation occupies primarily Roosevelt County and small portions of Valley, Daniels, and Sheridan counties. Originally established in 1871—carved from the Blackfeet Reservation, which extends from Browning, Montana, to the North Dakota border—the current Fort Peck Reservation boundaries were set on May 1, 1888. The reservation is 110 miles long and 40 miles wide—about 2,093,310 acres or 3,200 square miles. Total Indian-owned land is around 926,000 acres, mostly given to cattle and horse grazing and the cultivation of wheat and flax. Of the estimated 10,000 enrolled tribal members, about 6,000 live on or near the reservation in small communities along U.S. Highway 2 and Burlington Northern Railroad. The proportion of Assiniboine to Sioux is unknown. Big Muddy Creek defines the reservation's east boundary and Porcupine Creek the west boundary. Glasgow is the largest community near the reservation's west side, with a population of 3,250.

The Tribal Executive Board (Tribal Council) is composed of fifteen enrolled Assiniboine and Sioux tribal members, including a chairperson, vice chairperson, sergeant at arms, and twelve voting members. Elections are every two years. The administrative centers for the Fort Peck tribes and the Bureau of Indian Affairs are in Poplar, an hour's drive west of Williston, North Dakota. There are also general councils for the Assiniboine and Sioux that are formally recognized by the tribal council, as well as the unrecognized Fort Peck Treaty Council.

The Assiniboine and Sioux—with their respective bands and divisions—reside on the Fort Peck Reservation with their

nonnative neighbors. The Assiniboine, or Nakoda, includes the Red Bottom and Canoe Paddler bands. The Sioux are made up of divisions of Sisseton and Wahpetons, Yanktonais, and Teton Hunkpapa. In addition, Tiller (1996:404) noted that approximately 500 natives from other tribes live within the reservation boundaries. A recommended comprehensive study is *The History of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Montana, 1800–2000* (Miller et al. 2008).

Survivors of the 1862 Sioux Uprising in Minnesota fled to Fort Peck. After the 1876 Battle of Greasy Grass (Battle of the Little Bighorn), Sitting Bull and his followers fled north to Canada, but not before stopping on the Fort Peck Reservation, specifically the Chelsea area west of Poplar (*Fort Peck Journal* 2013b:9–10; Montclair 2014:14). A Sioux elder took the author to the place where Sitting Bull attended a Ghost Dance on the north side of Tule Creek, a strikingly beautiful spot overlooking a scenic stretch of the creek. Survivors of the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 also ended up at Fort Peck.

I arrived for the first time on the Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Indian Reservation in northeastern Montana during mid-August 2013 for what turned out to be a six-month residency in Wolf Point, the reservation's largest community. With the exception of the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or THPO, whom I had met at a 2005 workshop at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming, I did not know any Fort Peck Assiniboine or Sioux. I had source material on several South Dakota Sioux reservations (Pine Ridge, Rosebud, and Yankton) but nothing specific to the Fort Peck Reservation beyond the brief description in

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Tiller's Guide to Indian Country (Tiller 1996:404–405). I acquired some books on the Assiniboine and Sioux of the Fort Peck Reservation (Boller 1972; Denig 1961; Lopach, Brown, and Clow 1990; MacDonald 2012; and Shields Jr. 1998). I came to appreciate the *Fort Peck Journal*, a reservation newspaper that came out weekly, which provides a very different view of the everyday economic, social, and political issues on the reservation. The paper has a small staff and few reporters but yields significant information nonetheless.

Clearly, my six months on the Fort Peck reservation does not constitute a formal research project with the Assiniboine and Sioux as subjects and was never intended to be. There was no research design other than to stay safe, work hard, and inform the Tribal Executive Board and Tribal Historic Preservation Office of the benefits of developing a Fort Peck archaeological contracting office. My motivation for going to Fort Peck was simply to do everything possible to bring some hope and better future to as many tribal members as possible.

I did take the opportunity to learn about the reservation and native and nonnative residents. I met with the tribal chairman, council and elders, and attended weekly sweats. Many hours were spent at the Roosevelt County Library in Wolf Point identifying, reading, and photocopying everything available concerning the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux, eventually leading to three volumes of field journals with my observations and experiences.

Beyond the anthropological and historical literature, I came to know Fort Peck first hand in a much different way as a relatively isolated and extremely poor place where jobs are scarce and low paying. Many Fort Peck families need financial assistance for food and propane, safe housing, and other basic services (transportation and medical). As with all people, basic survival depends on employment and regular paychecks. Many families do not have one regularly employed family member.

THE BASIC APPLIED ARCHEOLOGICAL WORK

The tribe's cultural department director (and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or THPO) had asked me to hire and supervise twelve tribal monitors. This was agreed upon with the condition that the seismic companies, not the tribes, were responsible for paying my invoices. The eventual arrangement was that both seismic companies would provide retainers from which to make bimonthly payroll. I had to balance my responsibilities as tribal archaeologist working for the tribes with building client relationships and capturing as much business as possible to keep the tribal monitors employed.

The 12 new hires were responsible first for "monitoring" the nonnative archaeologists who would be conducting two large archaeological surveys in advance of two 3-D seismic surveys on the reservation's east side. A monitor accompanied each contract archaeologist during survey for personal interaction and information sharing. These monitors were also responsible for monitoring the vibroseis truck drivers undertaking the later seismic surveys to insure avoidance of the sites identified in the sum-

mer and fall of 2013. Several tribal members had prior monitoring, surveying, and/or excavation experience and some had had a minimal college experience. Fort Peck Community College in Poplar represented a potential partner beneficial to the tribe's development of an archaeological contracting service (coursework and field school).

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) required that the archaeological inventories be completed before the 3-D seismic surveys could begin. Although the archaeological surveys were to have started in early May, it was late August before they began. An archaeological contractor had been hired by the seismic companies to conduct sample surveys of the 540-square miles comprising the 3-D seismic projects.

Although severe weather conditions can interfere with the efficiency and progress of a seismic survey, seismic companies operate year round. The seismic surveys could not begin until the archaeological surveys were completed, but a light snow with cold temperatures could be enough to bring a halt to the archaeological field season. Fortunately, the surveys were completed, recording hundreds of prehistoric sites, including burials, vision-questing places, stone rings, cairns, drivelines, medicine wheels, rock art, and star constellations (Pleiades). Also identified were effigies of turtles, lizards, birds, salamanders, butterflies, and "unidentified" rock patterns (Montclair 2014h). Disagreements occasionally arose over whether these "unidentified" rock patterns were "cultural" or "natural." Because the seismic projects and archaeological surveys took place on the Fort Peck Reservation, tribal opinion prevailed.

With winter fast approaching, the seismic surveys finally got started. The twelve tribal "monitors" now spent long days in vibroseis trucks to make sure the drivers avoided previously recorded archaeological sites. I continued supervising the tribal monitors, arranging their scheduling, payroll, transportation, and to a limited extent housing. High winds and exceptionally cold temperatures (once reaching 57 degrees below zero) and too few monitors made this second half difficult. With an insufficient number of monitors I hired two nonnatives to maintain the schedule.

ASPECTS OF WORKING AT FORT PECK

Tule Creek is the acknowledged line separating the reservation, with the Sioux on the east and the Assiniboine on the west (*Fort Peck Journal* 2013a:8, 10). The tension between the two tribes (whether joking or serious) came up almost daily with my field supervisor and crew. Most tribal members favored the Assiniboine and Sioux living and working together more constructively and cooperatively. The Assiniboine and Sioux, however, have a contentious past. Lopach, Brown, and Clow (1990:102) wrote, "On the Fort Peck reservation, divisiveness stems primarily from the confederation of the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes. Their early history included frequent warfare, occasioned by the Sioux following the dwindling buffalo into Assiniboine country. Also, the tribes' political cultures were different."

To illustrate this divisiveness, a middle-age Sioux man warned me not to associate with “the Assiniboine.” He threatened to report me to the Tribal Executive Board for making such a big mistake. It was necessary to inform him that my job required that I strive to hire equal numbers of Assiniboine and Sioux, and treat them equally in every respect.

Prior to the monitors being hired, I was told that no women would be considered for employment. The reason given was the native sites encountered during the surveys are sacred and full of medicine. A woman “on her moon” (that is, menstrual cycle) possesses strong power and should not endanger herself or others by being near these sacred places. Nonetheless, four women monitors were hired and the issue did not come up again. Women need these jobs every bit as much as the men. Single mothers with children are numerous on the reservation, and many of them are eager for work.

A number of issues requiring patience, empathy, and flexibility came up during the work at Fort Peck, among them tribal enrollment, driver’s licenses and access to a dependable vehicle, mandatory drug and alcohol tests, Social Security cards, advances, payday check cashing, and absenteeism. The Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) makes sure that jobs are advertised to enrolled tribal members, providing the applicant has registered his or her interest in employment. The TERO also monitors on-reservation projects to ensure that the contractor(s) are in compliance with their hiring guidelines. None of my twelve tribal monitors were TERO hires, but instead were selected by the director of the cultural department (and THPO), or recommended later by already employed tribal monitors. Most of the monitors were followers of the sweat lodge, Sun Dance, and other traditional activities and ceremonies. Their employment in the management and preservation of their land, water, plants, animals, and cultural sites was natural and exciting.

Not every tribal member has a valid driver’s license, and those who do often have no dependable transportation. As a result, the project provided tribal employees rides to and from work for six months as part of employment. Another example of the problems that lack of transportation causes those seeking to work was demonstrated in an article in the *Fort Peck Journal*, where it was reported that 53 new employees (mostly tribal) were being bused from Wolf Point to Sidney (about 94 miles) to work at a sugar-beet factory (Montclair 2014i:1). This demanding workday schedule required tribal employees to depart from Wolf Point at 4:30 a.m. for the hour-and-a-half-long commute each way, making for twelve-hour days.

Mandatory drug and alcohol tests were required of all new hires for this project. Unfortunately, a significant number of tribal applicants tested positive and were deemed ineligible (Peterson 2013). Failing their initial test, however, job applicants were given the chance to repeat it. Upon passing, they became eligible for employment.

Requests for payroll advances became so frequent, the practice had to be ended. Employees were paid every two weeks. With a few exceptions most managed their cash flow between paychecks. I was reminded that working tribal mem-

bers are financially responsible for many more individuals than themselves. Consequently, an individual’s paycheck can vanish well before the next payday.

Tribal members were required to have all their documentation before applying for employment. Many tribal members interested in working for the project did not have current Social Security cards, which meant they would need to travel to Glasgow, 50 miles west of Wolf Point, the nearest Social Security offices. A number of six-to-seven-hour trips were required over a month to shuttle tribal members from Poplar and Wolf Point to Glasgow. Tribal IDs were also required, which meant an additional trip to tribal administrative offices.

Payday presented its own unique situation, especially for employees not using direct deposit. Field crews were typically an hour from Poplar and farther from Wolf Point where their banks were located. At the beginning, on payday everyone left the field early to get to their banks before they closed at 3:00 p.m. This problem was minimized once everyone converted to direct deposit for their paychecks. A Wolf Point accounting firm, with extensive tribal accounting experience with the Fort Peck tribes, retains copies of all tribal employees’ job-related paperwork: driver’s licenses, tribal identification cards, Social Security cards, and drug and alcohol test results.

Absenteeism did occur. Although several employees were arrested and temporarily jailed for various offenses, while others just stopped coming to work for days or weeks at a time, funerals were perhaps the most prevalent reason for being absent from work. Funerals occur frequently on and off the reservation, meaning family members (including employees) can be absent for an unknown period of time.

THE BAKKEN OIL RUSH

The Bakken oil field to the east, around Williston, North Dakota, continues to experience a boom in development, resulting in jobs and big paydays. The impact of the rapidly expanding Bakken oil field has not escaped the attention of the Tribal Executive Board. A significant effort will be required to advocate and educate the Tribal Executive Board on the advantages of establishing a tribal archaeological consulting office made up of tribal members as well as some nonnative archaeologists. A professional tribal archaeological contracting program could flourish, creating the jobs, training, and education so many tribal members desperately need.

The immense Bakken oil field occupies the northwest portion of North Dakota, as well as a small area of northeast Montana (including the Fort Peck Reservation), and a large expanse south of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. The boomtown of Williston is the center of the rush to find and recover the oil and gas in this part of the Northern Plains, 50 miles from the Canadian border.

Reservations abundant in oil and gas, such as Fort Peck, can provide once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for tribal members and families. Development of the Bakken oil reserves on the Fort Peck Reservation will provide a substantial amount of oil, tribal employment, and future archaeological contract work. “Tribes Hopeful for More Oil Business” headlined the front page of the

Fort Peck Journal this past August (Montclair 2014k). Most reservation residents, tribal or not, remember earlier oil-and-gas booms and the economic and social impacts that resulted.

The oil-and-gas industry had come to the reservation in the early 1950s. Tiller (1986:405) reported 32 oil fields with 168 producing wells on the reservation. As a result of this earlier activity, a large aquifer under the reservation became polluted, rendering the water unusable (*Fort Peck Journal* 2014a; Peterson 2014a). With the advent of hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking”—a commonly employed extraction technique—pollution of aquifers, streams, and rivers cannot easily be dismissed. In addition to water-quality concerns, there is the potential for earthquakes, along with the unknown impacts to plants, wildlife, commercial stock, prehistoric and historic sites, traditional cultural properties, and other places of tribal significance. Cultural places are finite and easily obliterated, with little chance of rehabilitation.

Online articles and various newspapers (including the *Fort Peck Journal*) have reported on the human impacts resulting from the Bakken oil rush: lack of housing and essential services, high rents, a shortage of everyday necessities, and excessive alcohol, drugs, gambling, prostitution, crime, and violence. Boomtowns long have behaved in much the same way everywhere, attracting a variety of people and easy money. The *Fort Peck Journal* frequently carries articles about out-of-state individuals showing up on the reservation involved in something illegal. Weekly articles in the *Fort Peck Journal* remind tribes that meth (Clincher 2014a, b; c, e), alcohol (Peterson 2014b), violence, human trafficking (Montclair 2014j), and crime (see especially the “Fort Peck Tribal Police Reports” and “Roosevelt County Jail Roster” published in the *Fort Peck Journal*) is an everyday occurrence on the Fort Peck Reservation (Clincher 2014d; *Fort Peck Journal* 2014b; Montclair 2014b, d, g). Recently, the sheriff of Roosevelt County was found, passed out on a sidewalk, by Wolf Point police (Montclair 2014c, e).

TRIBAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTRACTING

The Colville, Makah, Navajo (or Diné), and Umatilla are only a few of the tribes to have had archaeological contracting programs before 1991, after which time Tribal Historic Preservation Offices slowly began to appear. There are 153 Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, or roughly one-third of the federally recognized Indian tribes in North America. The Samish of Anacortes, Washington, is the most recent tribe certified a Tribal Historic Preservation Office (Ferry 2014). Other tribes are just beginning to consider the merits of becoming THPO certified.

Not all Tribal Historic Preservation Offices have archaeological contracting capabilities. As a result, there is increasing opportunity for nonnatives to collaborate with tribes in developing their archaeological contracting and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Offices. Just a few examples of the literature concerning tribal archaeological programs and collaborating with tribes in historic preservation are: Swidler et al., editors (1997), Dongoske, Aldenderfer, and Doehner, editors (2000), Watkins (2000); Stapp and Burney (2002); and Silliman, editor (2008).

The Fort Peck Reservation is an excellent candidate to start building such a business. During my time on the reservation, there were several “federal undertakings” requiring extensive anthropological, archaeological, and historical services, including the TransCanada “traditional cultural properties” inventory, the “Assiniboine/Sioux Water Distribution System,” extensive oil-and-gas development, and numerous smaller projects requiring cultural resource studies ranging from oral histories, archaeological inventories and test excavations, monitoring, and extensive large-scale mitigation excavations.

The Assiniboine Sioux Rural Water Supply System recently awarded a \$58,986 contract to a North Dakota archaeological consulting firm to undertake a 171-mile inventory on the reservation (Clincher 2014f:6). If the Fort Peck tribes were the prime contractor, they could subcontract with the North Dakota firm, thereby retaining greater authority over the budgets, hiring, fieldwork, site recognition, and report preparation. Tribal employees providing cultural resource services could begin at fifteen to twenty dollars an hour. Crew leaders, field supervisors, project managers, and specialty consultants would be compensated by varying hourly rates.

With tribal council endorsement, a positive business environment, capable leadership, and motivated staff, the Assiniboine and Sioux will develop their own contract anthropology and archaeology consulting business as another way to provide opportunities for tribal members, thereby reducing the high unemployment. The two 3-D seismic projects were the beginning of a long-term model of archaeological contracting providing tribal members a better future. The immediate benefits could be considerable. Tribal members having employment on the reservation can stay with their families and near important ceremonies and traditional activities. Employment is fundamental to one’s sense of well-being. Work bolsters people’s self-image and pride in their ability to provide for their families and contribute to the tribal community.

I myself began advocating for tribal archaeological consulting services while working with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon in 1987. The program continues today, having employed tribal members and nonnatives alike for the past twenty-five years. I have also worked with tribes in the Southwest as well as the Northern Plains. The concept is for tribes themselves to provide all the historic-preservation services that arise from projects on and off their reservation. The primary goal is threefold: (1) acknowledging the sovereign right of tribal members to exclusively identify and manage their cultural and natural resources; (2) investing in each tribal member’s historic-preservation education and training; and, (3) providing employment. On the Fort Peck Reservation, conducting workshops for tribal members when forced inside due to inclement weather was a productive time to teach and/or talk about historic-preservation issues and topics.

From my experience over the years, it is clear that tribal members and nonnatives can successfully collaborate in a single, professionally administered anthropological and archaeological consulting group, and such relationships result in better archaeol-

ogy. The positive benefits of such an arrangement was demonstrated many times over during the initial archaeological surveys in advance of the 3-D seismic surveys. Assiniboine and Sioux tribal members, along with nonnative archaeologists, worked and socialized well together. We should be strong advocates for tribal historic-preservation programs made up of tribal and nontribal management and staff. It takes time and patience to build a tribal anthropological/archaeological consulting group from scratch, but the rewards can be well worth the effort.

CONCLUSION

A very satisfying part of the experience I had in the field through February 2014 was the work with outstanding native crews. Both crews worked hard, whether participating in the archaeological surveys or working with the vibroseis truck drivers to avoid previously recorded sites. Commitment, long hours, and hard work ensured successful projects for the archaeological and seismic efforts. Toward the end of the monitoring, my monitors were reduced by half, down to only six tribal members regularly putting in the long hours. Losing personnel was due to employees voluntarily leaving the project, absenteeism, taking another job, pregnancy, and legal matters.

There was an initial guardedness early on among the tribal members and nonnative archaeologists, but it quickly faded into camaraderie. Most of the nonnative archaeologists had never lived or worked on an Indian reservation, making their Fort Peck stay a once-in-a-lifetime anthropological experience. For the most part, everyone worked and socialized well together. It was satisfying to see everyone doing their jobs and spending time together after work. The group felt natural and competent working for a common cause: finding, documenting, and protecting archaeological and historical places on the Fort Peck Reservation.

Many of the nonnative archaeologists gathered weekly at a tribal member's home a short distance from the family's Sun Dance arbor to participate in well-attended sweats. There could be as many as eight visiting archaeologists on any given week. On one occasion, an Assiniboine native speaker and an enrolled Blackfeet residing with her parents north of Wolf Point generously took the time to explain to a group of us the symbolism associated with the Sun Dance and ceremonial dance grounds. That had never happened before for any of us.

After every sweat the hosting family extended a sincere welcome to all of the archaeologists, generously insisting that they join in the communal meal. Many of us made sure to contribute water, sodas, fruit, or other foods to the meal. These weekly gatherings on rolling Montana prairie were profound and moving experiences for everyone, especially those attending the Sun Dance grounds and sweat for the first time.

Through good times and bad, the Fort Peck experience was extraordinary for many of us. Young archaeologists with degrees in anthropology were afforded their first glimpse at native peoples they had only read about in books—the Assiniboine and Sioux in Montana. I was lucky to participate in and

witness this event. Archaeologists and tribes working together continues to be a major movement in American archaeology.

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REFLECTIONS ON ROLES

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ABSTRACT

The role(s) of the anthropologist represents an important space of debate within the discipline. This is perhaps most evident in discussions of the relationship between academic and applied anthropology and more specifically, the anthropology of development and development anthropology. Referencing important debates and recent contributions to the discussion of the role(s) of the anthropologist, this article reflects on the author's experiences studying development from an academic perspective and engaging in development from an applied perspective. This article argues for an understanding of anthropological roles as neither fixed nor bound, but dynamic and adaptive and often based upon serendipitous encounters and circumstances.

KEY WORDS: Anthropology of Development, Development Anthropology, Roles

REFLECTIONS ON ROLES

The position of applied anthropology within the broader discipline of anthropology has been a point of intense discussion throughout the recent history of the discipline and much of the ongoing dialogue has positioned applied and academic anthropology as being at odds with one another (Ferguson 1997, Gardner and Lewis 1996, and Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006). However, the assumption that a clear distinction is to be made between applied and academic roles is problematic, and it is becoming increasingly common for anthropologists on both sides to recognize the compatibility of applied and academic research. While the goals of each might be different, applied research and academic research share a great deal in common and what is often lost in exchanges that debate the applied/academic relationship is the role of the researcher. This is particularly the case when an academic anthropologist is conducting research of an applied nature.

In this article, I reflect on my own experiences as an ethnographer working in the context of community development in rural Ecuador and my subsequent transition to applied work as an NGO project coordinator. The goal of this article is less about coming to any steadfast conclusions regarding the role of the cultural anthropologists in the field and instead to lend insight on opportunities and challenges encountered by those of us who combine academic work with applied interests in a manner that corresponds to the recently written *Anthropology News* article by Hülya Doğan titled "The Anthropologist's Mission is Ambiguous" (2013) and that relates to a significantly longer history of debate within the discipline.

While a scholarly dialogue pertaining to the intersection of academic and applied anthropology and the corresponding roles of the anthropologist is nothing new, it remains a relevant and timely topic. Supporting this are numerous publications of relevance over the last decade including Brondo (2010), Clarke (2010), Mullins (2011), and Rylko-Bauer et al (2006) to name a few. Each, while paying varying degrees

of attention to role of the anthropologist in the field, shed light on a longstanding issue within anthropology; the issue of whether as anthropologists we are to study, understand, and analyze, or advocate and push for change. In this article I draw on my own experiences to illustrate how even when the role of the anthropologist appears clear prior to entering the field, one's role can change as a consequence of the interactions that we have and the relationships that we forge throughout the fieldwork process. I approach the issue of the anthropologist's role from the perspective of Buckner (2014) and her assertion that much of what we find ourselves doing as anthropologists is a consequence of serendipitous interactions. That is to say, that our apparently clearly defined role can change in unforeseen ways. The present article addresses the longstanding issue of the role of the anthropologist, while suggesting that critical reflection and an ongoing dialogue about our various roles as researchers is a worthwhile endeavor. Moreover, I posit that there is merit in understanding how our roles as researchers change throughout the course of our interactions with consultants. This is especially true for anthropologists engaging in longitudinal research projects.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

Anthropology and development have shared an often contentious relationship. Indeed, much early anthropological research had an applied development component while still holding true to the basic tenets of ethnographic research in the form of extended fieldwork, participant observation, and cultural immersion. The question of the relationship between academic and applied anthropology and the role of the researcher is not an issue of recent origin. The relationship between academic and applied anthropology and the associated role of the anthropologist was the topic of the 1931 Presidential Address to the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (Myres 1931) and lively discussion pertaining to the applied versus academic relationship took

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place in the pages of *American Anthropologist* in the mid-twentieth century, with contributions coming from Chapple (1952), Embree (1945), and Leighton (1946), among others. And certainly not to be overlooked, Malinowski and Mead played fundamental roles in the growth of applied anthropology as evidenced by their scholarly contributions to the discipline and their prominence in the development of the Society for Applied Anthropology. Malinowski urged for the application of anthropological knowledge into “useful practice” (1938:xi) and pushed for an anthropology of advocacy for native rights (1945). In the 1970s Mead reflected on the changes in the discipline following WWII and the growing recognition by anthropologists that “their skills could be applied fruitfully to problems affecting modern societies...They learned to apply themselves to problems they had not themselves chosen” (1973:1-2). Despite this storied history, academic anthropology has maintained a close, albeit at times antagonistic, camaraderie with applied anthropology and scholars continue to reflect on the same issues that anthropologists have been grappling with for decades. These issues include the relationship between applied and academic anthropology and the position of the anthropologist, and are of particular interest when discussing applied development anthropology.

In a noteworthy contribution to the ongoing discussion of the relationship of anthropology and development, Ferguson (1997) suggests that academic and applied anthropologies are morally divided, with academic anthropology emphasizing the maintenance of the local and the traditional while development anthropology proves destructive to the local and the traditional. Central to Ferguson’s argument is the role of the anthropologist. Early scholars working in a tradition of “plain old anthropology” were concerned with documenting culture in its local and traditional forms (1997: 151). Problems notwithstanding, the concepts of the local and/or the traditional have been at the center of academic anthropology dating to the beginnings of the discipline and one need not look further than early modernist ethnographies to see these ideas expressed through text. Changes in academic anthropology in the mid twentieth century resulted in a more nuanced understanding of the interconnectedness of cultures and a need to question the conceptual validity of longstanding ideas such as the local and the traditional. The increased recognition of, and questions pertaining to, culture change became increasingly couched in terms of development. This is especially true during the post-colonial era and the growth of applied development anthropology. In tracing the history of the discipline and the outgrowth of applied development anthropology, Ferguson concludes that development anthropology is the “evil twin” of academic anthropology in that development seeks to transform or destroy that which academic anthropology holds dear (1997: 169). This conclusion is based on the underlying assumptions that academic anthropology and applied development anthropology are distinguishable from one another and that their goals are at odds with one another.

Gow’s (2002) response to Ferguson (1997) argues against the demonizing of development anthropology and reframed the

critique in order to highlight the importance of development anthropology to the discipline of anthropology. In particular, Gow presents development anthropology as an engaged and morally driven endeavor. With a historical focus on subaltern peoples, anthropology has a moral obligation to become engaged in critical issues that affect those whom we study and to think critically about our own representations of those whom we study (Gow 2002). In short, for Gow, development anthropology should not be demonized as an “evil twin” to academic anthropology, but should be viewed as fulfilling moral obligations to contribute to the betterment of society by providing a voice for those whose voices have been suppressed and to offer support to groups that have a history of economic, political, and social marginalization. Most if not all of these characteristics tend to be reflective of the groups that we work with as anthropologists.

The contributions of Ferguson (1997) and Gow (2002) speak directly to the persistent tensions that many anthropologists face as they negotiate their roles in research that blurs the boundaries of the academic and the applied. While the applied versus academic debate has provided valuable influences to the discipline of anthropology, little has been done to address the roles of anthropologists who work in and crosscut the academic/applied divide. In what follows I aim to provide insights into my experiences with changing anthropological roles and how my experiences relate to the broader discussion of the relationship between applied and academic research.

A STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT

This article is based on longitudinal fieldwork conducted in south-central coastal Ecuador. As early as the beginning of my doctoral research in 2002, I gave significant thought to how I would position myself as a developing academic with interests in applied projects. Specifically, I had a strong interest in community based development and I had read the great debates present in anthropological literature, Ferguson (1997) and Gow (2002) being the most intense. I became acutely aware of the perceived difference between “development anthropology” and the “anthropology of development” (Gardner and Lewis 1996:50). Development anthropology is the application of anthropology to development projects or what we may conceive of as applied anthropology while the anthropology of development refers to the anthropological study of development. Even so, I did not know with any great certainty how to position myself when I began fieldwork on community based tourism development in rural Manabí province. I had read pages of literature that emphasized maintaining professional distance from my subjects of study. I had also familiarized myself with a significant amount of the “post-modern” literature that questions the objectivity of ethnographic research. Both positions seemed far easier to accomplish in text than the experiences that one encounters upon beginning field research, particularly when the research itself is academic, but when the topic of research lends itself to an applied perspective.

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I arrived in coastal Ecuador in the summer of 2002 with the intention of conducting preliminary research relating to economic transitions in a rural fishing village. My interest in studying local-level economic changes (e.g. development) placed my research in a category that is commonly referred to as “the anthropology of development” (Gardner and Lewis 1996:50). That is, I was concerned with gaining an understanding of development practices and their impacts on the local community where I was working. This corresponds to what Gardner and Lewis (1996) reference as “The social and cultural effects of economic change” and “The social and cultural effects of development projects” (52). At the time of my initial research, I had a general sense of what I intended to study and not unlike most young doctoral students, I did not know exactly what to expect upon entering the field. My research was preliminary in scope and I was concerned with getting a feel for life in a rural Ecuadorian fishing village, establishing rapport, and creating relationships. I did however know, with a sense of naïveté, that I wanted to study development broadly defined. A key point here is that I was interested in studying development and my goal was not necessarily to practice development or to engage in applied anthropology.

I met Diego on a warm afternoon as the sun beat down from above. He waved at me from a distance, underneath the shade of a thatched roof. I slowly walked over and he introduced himself with a curious look and a question about what I was doing. I explained that I was an anthropology student with an interest in the local economy. Diego shared with me that he was a diver, an occupation that is common in this small, oceanside community of approximately 1400 residents. In subsequent conversations Diego would share with me that he and a number of other divers had recently started a tourism cooperative under the guidance of a European NGO. Diego would later introduce me to his brothers, cousins, and close friends, all of whom were members of the budding cooperative. Diego and all of the other members of the cooperative were eager to invite me, *el antropólogo* (the anthropologist), to attend reunions and share in conversations with them about their ideas. I offered little input as I viewed my role to be that of a participant observer who was there not to give advice or to interject with my own opinion, but to listen, document, and understand. My job as a developing scholar was to obtain knowledge for understanding as is the goal of the anthropology of development, as opposed to knowledge for action, concepts that reflect nicely the oft made distinction between academic anthropology and applied anthropology.

For my own research, I was concerned with understanding how Diego and the other members of the cooperative reflected on the process of development, why they were interested in tourism, what their motivations were, and how they negotiated their relationships with one another and with a foreign NGO. My attempt to remain impartial and not get too involved meant that I could not take sides when conflicts and accusations of dishonesty among cooperative members arose, and this ultimately resulted in the disbanding of the cooperative a few years later.

The end of the cooperative was such a painful breakup that Diego and Alfredo, best friends since childhood, severed ties and stopped speaking to one another altogether. This was quite agonizing for me to see as well, as I shared a strong relationship with each. In the case of Diego, I lived with his extended family and we interacted on a daily basis. I shared an equally close relationship with Alfredo, so much the case that he asked me to be the godfather of his young daughter. After the breakup of the cooperative I found myself in the middle of an internal conflict that required me to divide my time while avoiding choosing sides.

In the years following I kept in contact with both Diego and Alfredo, our relationships strained due to the dissolution of the cooperative and their own conflict, not all of which I understand even today. Both Diego and Alfredo went their separate ways and worked hard to start their own small tourism companies, Diego partnering with one of his brothers and Alfredo partnering with his brother and his father. At the time, restrictions on tourism were minimal and individuals interested in tourism would run tours to the local island in small fiberglass fishing boats that were often modified to have seats for passengers. Diego and Alfredo would ask for my input on how to improve their businesses and in many ways I became their consultant just as both of them were my consultants. I worked with each of them to put together simple publicity in the form of flyers to be hung in the nearby tourist hub of San Clemente and we would often spend time talking about their visions for their respective futures. I travelled with Diego and his brother when they purchased a rough old fishing boat with the intent of rebuilding it into a tourism boat. They also consulted with me on designs for the new boat and asked about my experiences with tourism in Mexico and Costa Rica. All the while I negotiated the tenuous relationship that Diego and Alfredo shared as competitors in a growing tourism economy. At times I felt frustration, and meetings of the local tourism bureau were especially difficult as both Diego and Alfredo would be in attendance and I often found myself in the awkward position of choosing sides.

My interest in the entrepreneurial activities of Diego and Alfredo was something that I kept with me throughout the course of my research, but it was never a direct part of my research. I tried to maintain a degree of separation as suggested by Kloos (1969), but I was never able to do so completely, nor would I have wanted to. I preserved a strong interest in the lives of Diego and Alfredo and a close personal relationship with each while focusing my academic efforts on understanding and documenting the emergence of community-based tourism projects that were being coordinated by the local communal organization. It was this work that allowed me to examine development processes as they were negotiated at the level of community and my research on this proved to be a fruitful avenue of investigation that would form the core of my doctoral dissertation and lead to subsequent publications.

My route to examining community based development was serendipitous and I must credit Buckner (2014) for this perspective, a perspective that focuses on infinite possibilities due to



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changing interactions and accidental encounters. From the very beginning, I had an idea that I was interested in the economic changes that were taking place in the Ecuadorian fishing village that I called home to my research for more than a decade. However, my ideas were very vague. It was only through a co-incidental encounter with Diego and the subsequent formation of our friendship that my research developed and much of it was by accident, or at least it did not correspond to the plan that I had in mind.

As I progressed deeper into my research, I made other significant encounters that helped to shape the scope and direction of my study and that would ultimately end up providing a significant amount of the material for my dissertation. One afternoon I was helping Diego's brother Manuel clean the undercarriage of his new pick-up truck. Well, the truck was new to him. In fact, it was an early 1970s Chevrolet Luv that had been cod-dled together with an assortment of parts and mechanical flair. Manuel had removed the wooden bed and he enlisted my help in cleaning the frame and passing oil along the worn metal in order to serve as a protectant to limit corrosion. While working under the relentless sun, a young woman passed by and Manuel greeted her. He proceeded by introducing me to Juana. I attempted to wipe the grease from my hands on a dirty rag and extended my hand toward her in a fist. She grasped my wrist and shook it as though shaking my hand. This custom of offering a clenched fist is extremely common in rural Ecuador as hands are tools and they are often soiled with oil, grease, and in many cases fish guts and scales; all things that are a part of daily life in a rural fishing village.

In the brief conversation that followed, I shared with Juana my research interests and she informed me that she was working with the communal organization on a set of tourism based projects that had just received approval for funding from Ecuador's *Consejo de Desarrollo de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador* (CODENPE). This chance meeting led to a new direction for my research and a focus on the implementation of community based tourism development projects. My involvement did not come in the form of practicing development, but of documenting and attempting to understand development practices. I attended community meetings, planning sessions, work efforts, and all other sorts of related activities. I interviewed community participants, leaders, and NGO representatives and generally observed the daily activities associated with community based tourism projects. I was partaking in the anthropology of development in much the same way that I had done with the tourism cooperative. However, as my time in the field and my research progressed, my role would change.

DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION: FROM ACADEMIC TO APPLIED

Diego's brother, Carlos approached me and said that their sister would like to speak with me. I knew Rosa, one of Carlos' eight siblings, and had a very good relationship with the entire family. I learned early on in my fieldwork that when someone would tell me that they wanted to speak with me directly, or

present a request for a third party, as Carlos did, it was usually followed by a serious conversation. I have always known Rosa to be reserved and soft-spoken. She raised three daughters on her own and leaned heavily on her faith to help her to cope with a difficult separation from her husband. Rosa approached solemnly and greeted me with a straight-faced "*Hola Daniel, ¿como esta?*" (Hello Daniel, how are you?). She spoke with a formality that deviated from the normally jovial interactions that I shared with most of the family. She informed me that a friend of hers was a teacher at a small community school in an inland hamlet about twenty minutes away. The school was funded by parents and in recent months had experienced challenges in meeting the monthly salary of \$80US for the teacher. Rosa knew of my previous support to area schools and asked if I would be willing to help to keep the school open. She said that she would like to arrange for me to visit the school. I shared with her that I would be happy to do so and we tentatively coordinated a meeting for the upcoming weekend.

I would later learn that the two room school at San Antonio had at one time been supported by the Ecuadorian government as a public school. However, oversight being what it is in rural Ecuador, the previous teachers would often not show up and as a consequence the education was inconsistent at best. The parents in this small community of approximately two hundred residents began pulling their children out of the school and sending them to a larger school that required the students to walk four kilometers each way. The number of children attending the school at San Antonio dwindled to few more than a dozen. Government funding was pulled and the committed parents were in need of a teacher to manage the school. Doña Alexandra, Rosa's friend, was recruited to teach at the now community-run school. She had been there for a few months and some of the students had returned, but the parents could not manage to scrape together the money to pay a consistent salary.

I first visited San Antonio in 2006. Our trip left in the mid-morning hours. We took a local bus to the regional capital where we hired a driver with a pickup truck to take us inland to San Antonio. The drive to San Antonio is a winding drive into the hills on bumpy unpaved roads that eventually channel into a single road that leads past San Antonio and deep into the mountains. The entry into San Antonio is a dirt road trampled by cattle that graze along roadside vegetation. The road dips down a gully and back up on the other side where scattered houses surround a clearing adjacent to the local school. Hills rise in the distance and a mosaic of horticultural plots are cut out of the forest.

Upon our arrival we were greeted by community members and invited to enter the school. I was struck by the humility and generosity of the residents. Carlos, Rosa, and I met briefly with the parents in the school and we were then invited to a nearby house for a meal of roast goat, rice, and salad. The meal was a treat for all of us, as goat is not something that is normally eaten in the villages along the coast. However, goats are common in the inland community of San Antonio and as guests we were





treated to this local delicacy.

During the meal our hostesses stayed in the kitchen watching as Diego, Carlos, Rosa, and I enjoyed our meals with each of us taking a side of the small plastic table that was separated from the kitchen by a concrete counter. As we ate I contemplated how I would handle the request. At the time I was a cash-strapped graduate student even if my financial situation was significantly better than the people that I had come to visit. I did, however, want to help. Another consideration was the implications of providing the help. Was I in coastal Ecuador to study, understand, and analyze, or did I have a moral obligation to help as suggested by Gow (2002)? From an academic perspective, I was there to study and understand, but not necessarily impact the local culture. Certainly providing financial support for a teacher's salary would have an impact. But, I could see the need and a direct request had been made for me to help. I had previously provided monetary support for school celebrations, community festivals, and the like, usually taking the form of a small donation to purchase soccer uniforms for the yearly matches to commemorate the anniversary of the local secondary school. I had also fulfilled requests for school materials including books, pencils, crayons, and notebooks. All of these seemed to be fairly small requests compared to the request for what amounted to permanent funding for the salary of a teacher. I did not have time to think about all of this in the moment, nor did I feel that I could leave without making a commitment one way or another, and from a more humanistic perspective, I wanted to help.

I worked closely with the community of San Antonio for the next two years. I would wire money to Ecuador and Carlos would pay the salary for Doña Alexandra and provide me with a signed receipt at the end of each month. When I was there, I would visit the school and with near certainty I would be met with a hearty meal of roast goat or roast pork, rice, fried plantains, and salad. By 2009 the number of students at the school increased to over fifty and an improved focus on education by the Ecuadorian government resulted in government funding returning to the school. This funding would cover the salary of Doña Alexandra. Even so, the school had many needs and during a visit in late 2009, Doña Luisa, the affable leader of the local parent organization presented me with a request. The bathroom situation at the school was deplorable. Approximately fifty meters from the school building stood a small concrete bathroom with three stalls. The bathroom lacked running water, tanks on the toilets, sinks, and a door on one of the stalls. Children needed to bring their own water to school to use the bathrooms and the conditions were far from sanitary. Something needed to be done to improve the facilities.

I returned to the United States in January with the idea of formalizing my charitable activities in Ecuador. I had previously studied development projects and had a pretty good familiarity with the on the ground workings, but I had very little idea about how to start an NGO from the ground up. I poured through paperwork and by early 2010 I filed papers to for-

mulate my charitable work in Ecuador. The result was the formation of the Rural Ecuador Development Initiative (REDI).

My return to Ecuador in the summer of 2010 was for the first time not geared specifically toward conducting research on development or any other aspect of culture in coastal Ecuador for that matter, but was aimed at engaging in the process of development and partaking in "development anthropology" (Gardner and Lewis 1996:50). In 2010 with help from Diego, Carlos, and local community members, we began construction of a water system and a complete overhaul of the bathrooms at San Antonio. The plan was fairly simple from the beginning: respond to a local need utilizing local resources. The goal was to empower community members and to make them stakeholders in the development process. All labor was provided by community members through the coordination of a *minga* or communal labor effort. REDI provided all materials for the project and community members were consulted throughout the entire project. Ideas and implementation for projects were community driven and not imposed.

Since that time, my return trips to coastal Ecuador have focused in no small part on implementing community driven development projects. I have involved local community members and we have expanded our efforts to include school expansion projects comprised of the construction of classrooms in multiple coastal communities while all the while working closely with local community members in order to address their needs. Diego continues to facilitate our work as he serves as a local project coordinator.

LESSONS/CONCLUSIONS

My research in coastal Ecuador began with the goal of examining development practices in a rural Ecuadorian community. However, as I continued to travel to and from Ecuador over the course of more than a decade, my focus changed as I developed lasting relationships with residents of numerous coastal Ecuadorian communities. While it was never my intent to study the relationship between the anthropology of development and development anthropology, it seems to be a natural progression as I have shifted roles throughout the course of my work in Ecuador.

As my experiences indicate, the distinctions between academic anthropology and applied anthropology, distinctions that remained a point of discussion for decades, are based on frequently ill-applied notions that the two realms of inquiry are somehow not compatible or, minimally, at different ends of the anthropological spectrum. This understanding corresponds closely to Scott and Shores distinction of "knowledge for understanding" and "knowledge for action", a distinction that indicates that there are fundamental problems in reconciling research that is academically oriented toward the production of theory and applied research that emphasizes the practical application of knowledge. In my experience, this could not be further from the truth. In fact, what has made my work most rewarding personally, has been my ability to involve myself in applied pro-



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jects while also continuing a program of scholarly research. I have withheld from applying an anthropology of development perspective to my own development anthropology. This choice is largely ethical, whereas my choice to get involved in development in the first place corresponds to Gow's (2002) focus on the moral responsibilities of anthropology. I believe that anthropologists should attempt to impact positively the communities that we work in. Personally, this means engaging in community development projects that support education. I also believe that it would be disingenuous to professionally benefit from those activities by conducting research and publishing on those activities. With these things in mind, I find it to be of great value to recognize the concomitant relationship of the development anthropology and the anthropology of development. My experience working in an academic setting and conducting scholarly research on community development gave me the opportunity, through an unplanned encounter, to shift roles and work in development anthropology. I would not have been able to do so without the knowledge and experience that I gained through my academic research agenda. Simultaneously, my experiences working in rural development provide me a perspective that I did not have prior to actually doing development work. In following the line of thought presented by Gow (2002), my experiences indicate that a synergy can exist between applied anthropology and academic anthropology. For me, this synergy was a consequence of serendipitous turns in my own research, a consequence of unintended interactions and opportunities. I went from conducting academic research to coordinating development projects. With regard to the recent commentary by Doğan (2013) on the ambiguous nature of the mission(s) of the anthropologist, I suggest that the role of the anthropologist, particularly one working at the intersection of applied and academic research, is not so much ambiguous as it is ripe with opportunity. As such anthropologists should not limit themselves to a specific role, but should embrace the possibility of taking on multiple roles.

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SHARING NETWORKS AND INTERNATIONAL AID: A LOOK AT THE ROSEMILA PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

An estimated 10,000 Non-Governmental Organizations currently saturate Haiti with foreign aid and development programs that, in their hurry to save Haiti and solve the systemic problems that plague it, seem to have largely overlooked existing Haitian strategies for combatting these issues. International organizations would greatly increase their effectiveness if they took the time to learn about existing structures and strategies and designed their programs to work with them, rather than running programs that risk being redundant at best and harmful at worst. The Rosemila Project is a small non-profit working in Gonaives whose funding comes largely from the United States but is entirely managed by Haitians on the ground. The following paper is a case study of the organization, the community it serves, and the ways in which the two work together to combat the issues of income insecurity, poor education and child malnutrition.

Daphne Pierre is a 28-year old woman from the village of Gourmonnes, Haiti. She has two children: Jennifer Clercius, age 6, and Darvens Sainthillien, age 3. Neither of their fathers have been involved in their lives and she has never been married. Like most adults in the community, she never finished high school and has never had a steady job in the formal economy—a job like that is practically unheard of. Daphne's best hope was only ever to find work as a maid or a cook for a wealthy family or one of the many non-governmental organizations in the nearby city of Gonaives, so she left Gourmonnes after the birth of her second child. She hasn't found much though. Two years later, she takes whatever work she can find: washing or ironing clothes, preparing and selling pastries in the marketplace, selling charcoal door to door. Income is sporadic and meager at best; she lives day to day, unsure of when she will next have the money she needs to buy crackers or rice for her children or pay their school tuition. Some days, she will have money for food, others, she won't.

One might think, based on this description of Daphne, that I have just introduced a person who has been utterly robbed of her agency. Such insecurity must be utterly crippling, such poverty debilitating. This is what many think when they glance at the United States' impoverished island neighbor. Haiti: a country utterly devoid of agency, completely reliant on foreign aid, with no hope of self-sustainability and no future on its own. The 10,000 Non-Governmental Organizations (or NGO's) estimated to be working in Haiti certainly point to such an understanding (Klarreich, Polman 2012: 15). And this understanding—that the Haitians are helpless and need rescuing by well-respected development organizations—underlies the majority of development projects currently being carried out. Economic development models are designed and imposed by experts whose entire livelihoods are devoted to this, and the Haitian people are told to get on board.

However, in his article "Poverty and Livelihoods: Whose reality counts?" Robert Chambers calls this fundamental principle of international development into question, calling on the experts and their vast knowledge to set aside that knowledge to a degree and take a back seat to the people being "helped," to let the ideas, strategies and beliefs of local people drive the development projects as opposed to the widely-respected international development models in which they have been trained (Chambers 1995: 175). He calls for a paradigm shift, a change in focus from the reality as perceived by the development professionals to the reality of the people whose communities are seeking development. Chambers' ideas suggest then that these people—in this case, the Haitians—are not in fact as helpless or without ability to act but are actually innovative and agentive and capable of problem-solving. It even suggests that they may have had strategies for solving systemic problems long before the arrival of foreign NGO's.

With these notions as my backdrop, in 2012, I partnered with a pastor and entrepreneur from Gonaives named Maula Jean-Marie to help him start a feeding program in an elementary school he had started to provide affordable education to the poorest families of his community. I had met Maula on a two-month trip to Haiti in 2011 in which he shared his vision with me of starting a feeding program in his community. Inspired by his passion and burdened by the obvious need, I agreed to connect him with whatever resources I could. Maula designed the program and put together the budget, and I worked to connect him to donors and nutritionists who could lend their funds and expertise to the project. I convinced a Minnesota non-profit named World Link Associates to serve as our parent organization, allowing us to receipt all donations through them as long as their board was granted oversight of the project's activities. World Link Associates' vision is to tackle the world's biggest issues in economic development one small problem at a time. They are especially interested in



projects involving the education of young people and have done work all across North Africa as well as in Minnesota. So it was that the Rosemila Project was founded in March 2012 to provide daily meals for all students in Maula's school and monitor their health and growth through monthly checkups. My role today continues to be one of networking and fund-raising, as the program remains entirely funded through foreign charitable donations.

The above story seems to only affirm the assumption that Haitians can only cope thanks to foreign generosity and have no agency of their own. But I found myself questioning this. Of course, there was a place for foreign donations—I myself was soliciting them—but I couldn't help wondering if after centuries of struggles with food insecurity, the people of Gonaives hadn't developed some strategies of their own for coping with this problem. If such strategies did in fact exist and we failed to understand them, the Rosemila Project's activities risked undermining them at worst and overlapping with them at best. I thought it imperative for us (meaning myself and the World Link Associates' board of directors) to gain an understanding of how the people served by the feeding program perceive the problem of child malnutrition and how they've gone about combating it in the past, so as to ensure that the program works with and not against local beliefs, practices and strategies.

And so I spent six weeks in the city of Gonaives conducting ethnographic research consisting of participant-observation and interviews with 22 informants selected from among the staff and parents of children in the feeding program. One of the many things this research revealed was that the people of this community do in fact have a long-standing strategy for dealing with food and income insecurity: they develop wide networks composed of reciprocal relationships in which food, money and other commodities are shared freely according to need. These sharing networks are a tremendous source of agency for the people of this study. Of perhaps greater interest however, is the way in which these sharing networks have shaped these peoples' understandings of possessions. Most items are not seen as belonging to one person or another and most people do not refer to items with possessive pronouns, such as "mine" or "yours." Rather, items circulate from those who have to those who need. In this paper, I shall unpack the concept of sharing networks and communal possession to reveal a fundamental difference in the way Haitians and foreign NGO's perceive foreign aid.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FIELDWORK

With a population near 300,000, Gonaives is dwarfed by Port-au-Prince, but is nonetheless, the third-largest city in Haiti (Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique 2009). It is located in the Artibonite region, about halfway up the coast between Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien. While it was untouched by the infamous 2010 earthquake that placed Haiti in the global spotlight, the city did suffer considerable damage and casualties in Hurricanes Jeanne and Hanna in 2004 and 2008 respectively. I have found no existing scholarly literature on the city's economy, but it appears to center around agriculture and

fishing, as it is surrounded by rice fields and located on the waterfront. The two largest physical structures in the city are the coal-based power plant owned by the EDH (Electricity of Haiti) and the large, whitewashed Catholic church in the town square. Across from the church is a monument in the honor of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the man who declared Haiti's independence from France on that very spot in January, 1804. Today, the square, called "*la place*" by the locals, is littered with street vendors selling meat-stuffed pastries called *pate*, used books with pages faded by the sun and wrinkled by the rain or ice-cold bottles of Haiti's award-winning Prestige beer. Nearly every corner of the city is within walking distance of "*la place*," but those who prefer not to walk can take a brightly-colored "tap-tap," or motorcycle taxi, anywhere in the city for no more than 50 cents.

About a 15-minutes' walk (or a 5 gourdes tap-tap ride) from "*la place*," just off Avenue des Dattes, is a two-story building with a corrugated tin roof. Most people in the city are familiar with the structure and the family who owns it. A white placard with the words "Eglise en Mission" (Church on a Mission) painted in blue is fixed to the cement wall on the second story so that it can clearly be seen from the street. As one of the only two-story buildings in the neighborhood, the building is somewhat of a landmark, referred to as "the big house" by the locals. Equally iconic is its primary resident: Pasteur Maula. Born to rural farmers who spent their earnings trying to earn the favor of the Voodoo spirits, Maula very nearly didn't survive his childhood of chronic disease and malnutrition. As a teenager, he once went five days without food and began to seriously believe he had reached his end, only to be taken in by a generous pastor who fed him and introduced him to evangelical Christianity. Maula converted soon after and began feeling God was calling him to raise up Haiti's next generations. He received his theological training from a non-denominational U.S.-run organization called Youth With a Mission (YWAM) operating a divinity school in the nearby town of St. Marc. He has maintained ties to YWAM throughout the years and through them, has made connections to U.S. churches who support his ministry. "Blans," or foreigners, can often be seen frequenting "the big house." He has thus established a reputation for himself in the community as a man of means, despite the fact that little of the money entrusted to him by the foreign churches is designated for his personal use and his family lives on a fairly meager budget. The lot on which "the big house" is built is approximately 150 square meters and houses a church, an elementary school, an orphanage, a feeding program and Maula's private residence. The ground floor is mostly reserved for the church (which also doubles as a school room on weekdays) and the school, though there is one room toward the back of the building where Maula's youngest son sleeps. The second floor has two bedrooms (one for Maula and his wife and the other which served as my room while I was there), a bathroom with running water and a kitchen. The third floor houses 20 orphans and their "mother."

The second-story kitchen is about 100 sq feet and is the primary center of activity in the building at any time of the day.





In the early hours of the morning when it is still comfortably cool, the orphan children use it to prepare their morning meal (usually either a flour and water paste or a plateful of rice and boiled “lalo” greens). Starting around 7 a.m., Dieula, the primary cook for the feeding program, arrives and begins preparing the day’s meal for the children in the elementary school. In the midst of this, Maula’s wife Elda, prepares breakfast for her husband and son: usually a pot of coffee on the stove, some bread purchased from the neighbors, some home-made peanut butter to spread on it and a few bananas. Two other cooks, Nana and Jacqueline arrive by 8 a.m. and join Dieula in her work. By 10 a.m., it is time to serve the meal to the elementary school children who file into the kitchen one by one in their bright red uniforms to receive their plate of food. Following the meal, the children wash the dishes in the open-air courtyard on the first floor while Elda and the kitchen staff turn their attention to making Maula’s family’s afternoon meal. The afternoon meal is the primary meal of the day and hours of preparation go into making it. There is always some combination of rice, beans and plantains and a few times a week, there will be chicken or beef. When school lets out at 12:30, the orphan children change out of their school uniforms and several are called into the kitchen to help—there are always piles of onions to be chopped, “lalo” greens to be cleaned or peanuts to be shelled. Around 2:30 p.m. Maula’s family have their afternoon meal and the orphan children set about preparing their second meal of the day (usually rice and beans). Meanwhile, Dieula turns her focus to getting everything prepped for the next day before heading home around 5 p.m. The orphan children set about tidying the kitchen and Elda prepares an evening snack for her family to have around 7:30 p.m., most often hot chocolate and bread or oatmeal. By 8 p.m., Elda and Maula are in their room on the other side of the house and the kitchen once again fills with the quiet footsteps of the orphan children who dig through the cupboards and freezer for whatever leftovers may be found.

It was in this kitchen that I spent nearly six hours every day during my six weeks of fieldwork. Though I was principally interested in the activities of the feeding program, I found it was often difficult to distinguish between work being done for the program and work being done for the family or the orphanage. Food, kitchen utensils and labor all circulated freely among the three different entities all confined to this tiny space and I tried to make myself useful. This participant-observation research was the main component of my research methodology. I asked the staff of the feeding program to put me to work doing whatever it was they themselves did on a daily basis, and as I worked with them, I peppered them with questions and often made them laugh at my incompetence. Whenever I found a free moment, I would run back to my room, crawl under my mosquito net and take detailed notes of what I had observed in my notebook. But in addition to the participant-observation, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with all five staff members of the program, all five teachers at the elementary school and 9 parents whose children were enrolled in the program. I conducted all the interviews in the informant’s language of choice (either Creole or

French). Because I have been fluent in French since my childhood and had been to Haiti enough times to learn Creole quite well, I did not need an interpreter and conducted all the interviews myself. It was through these interviews that I met Daphne. She serves as an excellent example of the biggest agency strategy I observed for coping with the problem of malnutrition and food insecurity.

DAPHNE’S AGENCY

Daphne was among the first parents I interviewed. We met in the school’s only administrative office on the ground floor of the building which doubled as a church meeting space on Sunday mornings and also served as a sort of community internet café in the evenings, housing the neighborhood’s only desktop computer. It had a large space for a window without any glass overlooking a small courtyard where the children would wait for their parents to pick them up after school. On my first day in Gonaives, Maula arranged a meeting with the majority of the parents in the program during which I explained my research and asked for volunteers who would agree to take part in my interviews. Daphne was among those who agreed. The following is a transcribed excerpt from our interview, which took place in my second week of fieldwork, and which I have translated into English.

Daphne: So I work to pay for the doctor, I work to pay for the school, I can’t let them be. But I’ve been feeling like I can’t work so much anymore because I’m getting sick, so that’s where I’m at now. But I still put in an effort for my kids so I can give them an education.

Me: Okay. So you are able to work?

Daphne: Yes, I work. I went to try and find work in Port-au-Prince. I wash, iron, make food, I stay busy.

Me: You do it all.

Daphne: Yes, but now the work has been bad since... since nine months, there’s not enough work, even in Port-au-Prince, I can’t wash. It’s as if, washing, ironing, I can’t do it anymore.

Me: Mmmm

Daphne: I wanted to do that. To make food, do housekeeping, do ironing but I’m not capable of doing that anymore here. [1 second pause] Well. I’m staying here though. It’s because of my family, I ask them “give me,” you don’t understand? “Give me some fish, give me some bananas, some little [unintelligible] I don’t have money.”

It was here that I was first exposed to the most important agentive strategy the people from Gonaives have at their disposal—but I did not catch it at first. It had to be laid out for me by Maula’s son, Casimir, one evening early on in my research over a cup of Elda’s hot chocolate. Casimir is 22 and grew up in “the big house” watching the “blans” come and go. As such, he has gotten a front row seat all his life to the cultural faux-pas’ of the well-intended short-term missionaries and is able to identify and describe some of the biggest cultural differences and misunderstandings between the two peoples. As such, he proved a fantastic resource for me throughout my fieldwork. Indeed it



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was he who first alerted me to the notion of a sharing network. "If a person has more than you, they are expected to share with you," Casimir said. "For example, if you can't feed your child, then you take them to your neighbor or relative and tell them about how your child hasn't eaten anything yet today and they will give you food if they have any. If they have food, they must share with you. To not share—it's not possible." He went on to explain that there is no shame in asking for food or money from someone you know has it. In turn, it is understood that they can go to you when they do not have enough and anything you have, you will share with them. Casimir said it best when he said: "In Haiti, we give whatever we have." This overt explanation of such a complex and deeply-rooted set of beliefs from an insider to an outsider was doubtless simplified and likely an explanation that he has performed before. But I went on to verify all he told me in my subsequent formal interviews as well as in many informal conversations and found it to be a very useful framework for understanding Haitian views of possessions—starting with Daphne.

Although Daphne has little personal control over her income or her ability to purchase food for her children, she is far from helpless. She has a network of reciprocal relationships which she can turn to anytime she or her children need food or medical assistance. This network is, for the most part, an established, defined entity, and one of the principle rules of sharing, as explained to me by multiple informants, is that one can only seek help from within this network. To ask for money, clothes or food from a stranger or an acquaintance (someone outside your network) is to beg, and to beg is shameful. Maula's wife, Elda, explained this to me during our interview:

If someone needs some help, he's not going to ask just anybody. He can ask his friend, or he can ask one of his parents. Sometimes if someone manages to send someone abroad, he calls that person abroad and asks that person 'Can you help me? I have some problems. I have some children to send to school. I share with others. Can you help me?'

As Elda explained, if a person is in need, there is a very limited pool of people from which he or she can choose to ask. This pool of people is what I will refer to from here on as a sharing network. One is born with a preexisting network: one's family, but one must constantly be seeking to grow one's network to include more and more people. In his essay *The Gift*, Marcel Mauss observes that among the Trobriand Islanders of the southwest Pacific, the transfer of possession creates a bond between the two individuals and that "this bond created by things is in fact a bond between persons" (1967: 10). The same can be said about the people of Gonaives, who continuously use the transfer of possessions to create bonds with those around them, bonds which eventually become permanently established components of that person's sharing networks.

I picture the process of creating a sharing network as occurring in tiers, the first tier being the family, the second tier being most often one's neighbors and the third tier being one's friends. The most important component of the sharing network however

remains the family and to be separated from one's family is to be bereft of a crucial source of security and stability.

This became most obvious to me during my interview with Maritane Merilus, a mother of three children enrolled in the feeding program. Her family lives in Henri, a small town an hour away, and she has little contact with them since she moved to Gonaives four years ago. She has been unable to find work in Gonaives and describes her daily life as, "Everyday, wake up, sit, wake up, sit, wake up, sit." Sometimes the meal from the feeding program is the only food her children receive all day. Having recently moved to Gonaives, she has not yet established a good network of friends, and she no longer has access to her family, leaving her with no recourse for providing for her children on days when she has no money.

Maritane: I don't have people to ask for help [2 second pause]. Well, if someone offers me something, I'll take it but I don't have anyone to ask.

Me: Who would you ask if you could? Your friends? Your family?

Maritane: My family if I had them would help me. But I don't have them.

Me: Could you ask someone you don't know?

Maritane: No. I don't like to ask people I don't know. I don't like to ask them. If I were to ask "give me this or that thing," even if I know they have the means but I don't know them, I can't do that, that would be shameful. And I don't want to be ashamed.

Maritane was not alone in her financial worries. Of the nine parents/guardians I interviewed, none reported a stable source of income. Five were single mothers, one was a married mother, one was a married father, one was an unmarried aunt and one was an unmarried cousin. All reported difficulties in providing adequate food for their children, and 46% directly blamed a lack of stable income for their children's health problems. However, Maritane was unique in that she alone of all the parents reported having no way to feed her children regularly aside from the feeding program. When asked the question, "how do you feed your child?" five parents reported asking family members or neighbors to assist them on a regular basis and two of the subjects were themselves caring for a family member's child (the aunt and the cousin). The other parents, Daphne being a prime example, had established sharing networks. Maritane had not. Building networks is a delicate social process and without the foundational tier of the family to begin with, it can be very difficult, as Maritane's example demonstrates.

CONSTRUCTING THE SHARING NETWORK

Not only did I discuss sharing networks with my interview subjects, I also saw them enacted around me every day among the members of Maula's household, members of the church and people in and around the feeding program. I not only watched people use and develop their sharing network, I watched them add to it as well. Adding someone to one's sharing network is a strategic process, not unlike the strategies of the Trobrianders





Mauss describes. Among the Trobrianders, soliciting and receiving gifts is the first step in creating an intentional partnership and “to receive one of these gifts means that one is desirous of entering into and remaining in partnership” (Mauss 1967: 25-6). From this example, Mauss argues that there are layers of meaning built into the act of soliciting, giving and receiving possessions, that all of these processes are in fact just a means of communicating something bigger: a desire to enter into a strategic partnership.

In much the same way, the people I observed in Gonaives used the acts of soliciting, giving and receiving possessions to bring others into their sharing network. I observed a number of different strategies for doing this. The times when these strategies were most clearly on display for me were when I myself was the person being solicited (though much of the time, I did not realize this was what was occurring until after the fact). Below are two examples where the strategies were most obvious.

THE GODMOTHER

One morning I was helping dish out spaghetti onto tin plates for the schoolchildren’s meal. Nana, one of the cooks, asked if I would be the “maraine,” or godmother, of her five-year old son Mikael “for his kindergarten graduation ceremony.” Her question startled me. I had gotten to know Nana and her son fairly well during my fieldwork and previous time in Haiti, but I did not know them well enough to be a good godmother, at least not by my understanding of the word. And what did it mean to be a godmother for his graduation ceremony? Honored and flustered and utterly unsure of what to say, I accepted. Nana, broke into a big grin and clapped. Later, she called Mikael over and told him, “Look. This is your godmother.” He smiled sheepishly and gave me a kiss on the cheek. I was sure at that point that I had no idea what I had gotten myself into so I took my questions to Maula and Elda.

Maula sighed when he heard what I had done and launched into a long explanation. “People ask for godparents for special occasions, particularly graduations and weddings,” he said. “Their role is supposed to be to offer advice and assistance as the person transitions from one phase of life to another. But that’s not really what it’s about. What is actually expected is that you’ll support them financially through it.” Maula went on to explain that he had been asked to godfather many young grooms. His two-story, finished house and semi-frequent white visitors give him the appearance of opulence in the eyes of the community. On more than one occasion, he tried to explain to them that he would happily mentor them through their marriage but he could not assist them financially. The grooms had agreed to these terms only to publicly come back and ask him for money after the ceremony. As the godfather, he was obliged to give them money he did not have. As Mikael’s godmother, I too was obliged to give him money—or rather, give it to his mother. I did so and in so doing, became part of Nana’s network through some very savvy cultural manipulation on Nana’s part. Nana used the Haitian cultural practice of godmothering and

my lack of cultural know-how as a form of agency to secure not only a small source of financial income at the present, but a source of future gifts later on if need be. This conversation marked a subtle shift in our relationship. From then on, I was repeatedly introduced around the house as Mikael’s godmother and Nana would often tell Mikael to “come kiss your godmother.” Nana also began talking to me more in the kitchen, asking me about my family and my health. At one point, she offered to braid my hair for me into dozens of tiny braids—a time-consuming task for which many women charge a premium price—for free. Although I recognize that this is subjective, I can only describe what happened after I “became” Mikael’s godmother (and joined Nana’s network) as a deepening in our friendship.

“Have you eaten today?”

Islanda is a 14-year old from Maula’s church. I met her on my first trip to Haiti in 2011 and have kept in touch with her since through Facebook. When she heard that I was in town, she came to find me and we began spending a good deal of time together. As the school year came to an end, I asked her one day if she had gotten good grades and she sheepishly told me that she could not receive her report card until her parents paid the outstanding \$20 (500 gourdes) on her tuition bill. She then asked if I would be willing to help pay. I agreed and in so doing, was unknowingly added to Islanda’s family’s network, which did two things. First, it opened the floodgates for all sorts of other unabashed requests later on in my stay. Islanda asked me for my camera, for money for her sister’s baby, for my special stores of American snacks I had been carefully rationing and had hidden under my bed, for clothes. It seemed every time we got together, she asked me for something, which always made me squirm. But what I did not realize until later on was that, as a part of Islanda’s network, she was entitled to ask me for anything I had—and had I been acting competently, I would have given her everything she had asked for unless I had an immediate need for it (which I did not in any of these cases). Mauss too observes a similar morality about possession among the Trobrianders and goes so far as to state: “What one receives, no matter by what means, one may by no means keep for oneself unless it is impossible to do without it” (Mauss 1967: 28). This quite effectively summarizes the views of the people I studied on the moralities of giving and generosity. As Casimir reminded me on more than one occasion, “If I ask you for something and you don’t need it, you can’t say no. You have to give it to me.” Thus, I was morally obligated to give to Islanda that which she asked of me (and she was bound by rules of etiquette regarding how much to ask; rules I’m told she broke from time to time when I recounted her sizable requests to Maula and Elda). But the flip side of this was that as a part of Islanda’s network, she was now a resource for me too. She had become a part of my network. Ever since I first gave her the money she needed for her school bill, she began asking me “Have you eaten today?” whenever she saw me. This took me aback at first, but I realized that it was not an odd question in a place where people did not eat every day. As a member of my network, she was making herself



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available to me. She frequently asked me if I needed her to bring anything, and often, when she came to see me, her mother sent food along for me: a watermelon, some mangoes, crackers, chocolate—not lavish gifts per se, but treats in which Islanda herself was rarely able to indulge. And in return, she continued to unabashedly ask me for the things she needed or wanted.

A NECESSARY NOTE

It is important to note here that though these two examples are useful for identifying some of the strategies one can employ to bring someone into one's network, the way in which they played out was likely unique in some regards considering they involved me—a foreigner of apparent wealth. Such interactions would undoubtedly have looked quite different between two Haitian parties. However, I know from stories recounted to me by my informants that the strategies themselves are widely used. Although no one spoke in terms of “sharing networks” or “strategies,” they shared stories of times when people had asked them to share with them and the ways in which this impacted their relationship. To be asked seemed to be considered a display of intimacy because, as I was told repeatedly “you can only ask from family or close friends or neighbors.” For the giver to then share with the asker was an act of validation on the giver's part that he too considers the asker to be family, a close friend or a neighbor. This process is what I call adding someone to your sharing network. In the above two examples, the process involved the salient manipulation of existing social structures and norms. Network construction can be, and often is, a clever and calculated thing. But it can also happen organically, a natural product of deepening friendships.

SHARING NETWORKS ENACTED

Having looked at how people form and expand their sharing networks, I would like to now shift the focus to what it means to be part of a sharing network: practically, how do these networks play out in daily life? I was well positioned to watch a number of sharing transactions because my hosts were members of several sharing networks. The church, the school, the orphanage, the family, the neighborhood; each represents a network of connections so wide that Maula seems connected to nearly every person in the city of Gonaives. And not only is he connected, he is wanted. Because of his ties to the United States and his apparent wealth displayed in his big house, he and his family are often the recipients of sharing requests. These took different forms, some of which I witnessed myself and some of which were explained to me.

One of the most frequent sharing interactions I witnessed was with a 5-year old student at the school named Darline. Maula and Elda told me that her mother had recently abandoned her and her father, leaving one day without telling either of them where she was going. Her father has been at a loss as to how to find work to feed his child and take care of her on his own. He began leaving Darline in the care of Maula and Elda, dropping her off an hour before school and not coming to get her until well into the afternoon, hours after school had let out.

For however long she was in their household, she was allowed to participate in whatever meals they ate—I learned that to eat in front of someone and not share with them is incredibly rude. And so it was that Darline got three meals a day: her arrival in the morning was timed perfectly with the family's morning meal, she got a meal through the feeding program at school and she most often stayed late enough to join in the family's afternoon meal as well. Even on days when there was no school, she often showed up outside the gate, her father nowhere in sight, to receive food from Elda's kitchen.

Though Darline was the most frequent visitor to the kitchen, there were many others, adults and children alike, who made appearances. Neighbors, students, children from the church, distant relations—they all shared some sort of network with either Maula or Elda and they all came to be fed. And if there was food to be had, Elda gave it to them, unabashedly. She explained her reasoning behind this in our formal interview:

Elda: Yesterday, there was my niece, she lives not far from here, she sent me her daughter. Sometimes, she sends her kids here, sometimes she cannot manage to find anything to give to her children, and she sends them to me. That way if I've made food, I can share it with her kids. And so like this, she had sent me one of her children, and I gave her something to eat and before she left she told me: my mom said can you send her anything-- She has four children and her husband doesn't help her—can you help me? So I had 20 (Haitian) dollars that I had lent to someone and they had given me back my 20 dollars and so I said: give this, give this to your mom. If I hadn't had anything, I would have said: Oh, I don't have anything, I have no food at home, I cannot give you anything [...] It's like here, when we make food, even if we make it just for the family, we can help someone with the food.

Me: So do you always make some extra?

Elda: No, not really, we don't make extra, but we try to share anyway if somebody is hungry. Sometimes, there is someone who tells me: Oh I have nothing to eat today. For example, there is an old lady who lives here, who is a member of the church, even if we hadn't planned to add food for someone else, we have to share with her.

As Maula's son Casimir described it, to be a part of a sharing network is to not have any truly individual possessions. In fact, the very idea of individual possession seems to be somewhat foreign in this community. Whatever you have also belongs to your sharing network-- or networks, because indeed, individuals have the capacity to build multiple, separate but overlapping networks. I rarely heard any of my interview subjects use a possessive pronoun in reference to anything but their children or their house, though even a bed in a home was a commodity that I often saw shared among networks. When it came to talking about food or money, they simply referred to it in general terms, such as Elda did in the above interview transcript, saying “the food” rather than “my food.” I never heard anyone put anything in terms of “mine” and “yours.” Such distinctions





did not seem to exist when it came to material possessions and were not salient. Possessions flowed freely from one person to another within a network, with little fanfare and no documentation.

IMPLICATIONS OF SHARING NETWORKS ON THE ROSEMILA PROJECT

This understanding of possession is markedly different from that of market-centered exchange contexts where individual possessions are highly valued and possessive pronouns are clearly assigned. There is almost always a “mine” and a “yours” and possessions often go through a formal and documented process to change hands: a check must be written, a deed must be signed, a gift must be given with a little tag clearly indicating who it is from and who it is to. Americans are taught that to be responsible with one’s possessions means to keep good documentation of them. Although giving and generosity are encouraged, it is important to keep records of one’s gifts, to know how much one has given and whom they have given to. And on the other side, having managed the receipt of donations for the Rosemila Project from American donors for three years, I have learned that donors are most pleased when they can track exactly where their dollars have gone. Efficiency and accountability are among the most valued and sought-after qualities in charitable organizations. Thus, there is a rather loud clash when American donors meet Haitian recipients. There can be a bit of a panic when dollars land in Haitian hands and all trace of them is gone, when a carefully tracked, itemized donation becomes a murky blob of money, diffusing around the community.

As a Haitian-run, but foreign-funded organization, the Rosemila Project finds itself at this very clashing point. The American donors (not to mention the IRS) need to see receipts of purchases so they can follow their money’s trail, but this is a fundamentally puzzling request to the Haitians who do not think of possessions in terms of itemized lists and budgets. They perceive the donations as sharing transactions from others in their sharing network; in that way, it makes sense. But the part where they are asked to then give account for every dollar is quite counter-cultural. In the Rosemila Project, the donors expect the money to go toward preparing food for the children in the school, and exclusively children in the school. But as Elda explained in our formal interview, this is a seemingly bizarre request.

I explained to you earlier that when I make food and someone comes to me and says: Oh I’m hungry can you give me something to eat, I give it to them. But there is something Cara and you said, concerning, for example, the teachers, that we aren’t supposed to give them food. In our culture, it is not easy for us to do this. We like to give to the kids and then sometimes to the teachers because they too have problems.

Thus, I witnessed a tremendous fluidity in the way in which the Rosemila Project’s assets were handled. As I have already described, the kitchen space was shared between the feeding program, the orphanage and the pastor’s own family, and though there were theoretically meant to be distinctions be-

tween the food and resources of each entity, more often than not, this was not the case. To distinguish between feeding program food, orphanage food and family food while all were being prepared at the same time in the same space would be impractical and inefficient. In the same way, the three women who were supposedly responsible for each of the three entities shared the labor of them all among themselves. Children in the orphanage were often called on to help prepare the next day’s food for the feeding program and the children of the school did dishes indiscriminately, washing both the feeding program plates and the family’s pots. Plates bought with feeding program money were used by family members, the orphanage used the blender paid for by the feeding program, and neighbors who were around at feeding time got a plateful of feeding program food. Everywhere I looked, I saw feeding program resources and funds benefiting non-feeding program interests. American donors might call this an inappropriate allocation of resources or maybe even stealing. But Maula, Elda and the kitchen staff just call it sharing or helping. And we find ourselves back at Robert Chambers’ question: whose reality counts? When it comes to assisting the community of Gonaives in tackling the problems of child malnutrition and poor education, whose strategies, priorities and customs ought to be at the foundation? Chambers suggests the following:

“The differences between top-down reductionist definitions and objectives, and poor peoples’ realities present development professionals with challenges which are institutional, professional and personal. The challenges are paradigmatic: to reverse the normal view, to upend perspectives, to see things the other way round, to soften and flatten hierarchy, to adopt downward accountability, to change behavior, attitudes and beliefs, and to identify and implement a new agenda.” (Chambers 1995: 196)

In many ways, the Rosemila Project has undergone such a paradigm shift. Rather than fighting the deeply-rooted Haitian beliefs about possession, I have recommended to the American leadership of the Rosemila Project that we work with them. This has been and continues to be an ongoing process for the World Link Associates board whose desire for good accountability is strong—and rightly so. Their greatest fear is the misallocation of funds and they have always pushed for strong structures of accountancy, structures I still believe have their place. When I initially broached the idea of allowing Maula the freedom to share and exchange and develop the Rosemila Project’s sharing network, they were apprehensive and cautious, but I went on to explain the following to them.

As a small, young non-profit, the Rosemila Project is plagued by income insecurity. Though it employs several individuals tasked with continuously raising funds in the U.S., it is nonetheless at the mercy of the fickle generosity of its donors. Such insecurity can be crippling for fledgling non-profits such as the Rosemila Project—much as it is for the single mothers it seeks to help such as Daphne. But Daphne and the other Haitians I got to know have found a fantastic source of agency in the face of this insecurity: sharing networks. By continuously seeking to expand



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their network and nurturing their existing connections, they have a certain level of stability despite a lack of personal income security. Because this is the existing framework through which the people of this community see the Rosemila Project, I have come to the conclusion that we ought to work with it, not against it.

At a practical level, this has meant giving Maula greater leeway in the management of the program's funds. He is still required to provide receipts and detailed reports of his expenses every month, and his spending remains closely monitored by U.S. administrative staff. But the strict boundaries he was previously told to uphold between the feeding program's possessions and those of the people connected to it, boundaries that often mystified his staff and typically went unenforced, have been allowed to blur to fit with the cultural strategies already at work in the community. This means money designated for the feeding program might be technically spent on the orphanage or a neighbor—but this has also allowed the Rosemila Project to gain access to its own sharing network comprised of the parents and staff of the school and program and the neighbors which has already proved invaluable to the program's ability to continue its work. For instance, the American administrative staff sends a wire transfer at the beginning of every month to cover that month's expenses but it has happened on more than one occasion that the wire transfer has taken awhile to send and Maula and Elda are left waiting for a week or more with zero dollars in their account. Rather than halt the program's activities while they wait, however, they tap into their sharing network, borrowing money and food from their neighbors and staff and parents in the program and keep things running. Another example of a time when being a part of a network proved crucial was when the feeding program's stove began acting up but the Rosemila Project had no funds to replace it. Maula mentioned the situation to his church and someone in the congregation donated an old stove that they had been given. By giving Maula the freedom to work within the framework of the sharing network, all the while continuing to hold him to American standards of transparency and accountability in his spending, the Rosemila Project has greatly increased its ability to access resources in Haiti without compromising its relationship with its American donors.

CONCLUSIONS

In the face of tremendous employment and income uncertainty, sharing networks provide the people of Gonaives with a source of stability. Though they are often unable to maintain a steady flow of income, they are far from inactive and helpless. They are continuously empowering themselves by developing reciprocal relationships with those in their sharing network and expanding their networks to include more people. With these sharing networks comes an understanding of possession that is markedly different from that of the United States, particularly when it comes to money. Money, like most items in Gonaives, passes fluidly from one person to another in a sharing network without any documentation or significant attention paid to the matter. It goes wherever it is needed most. A foundational rule of sharing networks is that anything one person possesses must

go to the possession of another if they claim to need it. Thus, my informants' lexicon did not center around owning or possessing items but rather needing and asking for items.

I hypothesize that this fundamental difference in the understanding of possessions can be blamed for many of the frustrations and tensions between Haiti's 10,000 NGOs and their foreign funders. For better or for worse, these international organizations have become a permanent feature in Haiti for its foreseeable future and are in the process of irreversibly altering its cultural landscape. The development of Haiti's infrastructure and bureaucracy at all levels is needed beyond a doubt, and NGO's can and do play a formidable role in this process in Haiti. However, they must not overlook or undermine existing structures and local strategies for tackling systemic issues. Issues such as income insecurity, lack of access to healthcare and low education predate the waves of international aid that have arrived on Haiti's shores in the last decade. And likewise, the Haitian people—resilient, resourceful and highly socially-adept—have developed systems to tackling these problems that also predate the arrival of NGO's. I believe international aid organizations will be most effective when they develop strategies and development models that take into account local systems of agency in addition to macroeconomics, political theory and broad developmental models.

Nonetheless, this idea remains, for the moment, a hypothesis, one that is currently tested daily in the Rosemila Project. Thus far, its current operational model, based on the above findings about sharing networks has proven successful in that the Haitian project managers are still required to give account for their monthly spending but are given the freedom to extend services or resources to non-feeding program interests at their discretion if doing so will allow them to nurture or expand the project's own sharing network. By developing a sharing network, the Rosemila Project is working with, rather than against the dominant cultural model regarding possessions, to develop a strategy for feeding children despite income insecurity.

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SPECIAL SERIES ON AFRICAN ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

PETER VAN ARSDALE AND STACY STEPHENS

Just three years ago, a leading analyst of African affairs wrote: "The Horn of Africa is a dreadful place" (Dunbar 2011: 37). By implication, he also meant that most of Africa was struggling. The civil warfare, famines, piracy, corruption, and intertribal/interethnic conflicts seemed unending; substantial long-term change for the better seemed unlikely. Yet, within a month of that comment's appearance, the editorial team of *The Economist* (2011: 15) wrote: "Africa [is] rising.... The shops are stacked six feet high with goods.... [S]ix of the world's ten fastest-growing countries [are] African...." Strategic economic and political developments on several fronts, coupled with burgeoning trade with China and India, were presenting a contrasting, much brighter picture. From entrepreneurs to poets, African dynamos and intellectuals also were making headlines. Again at that same time, looking forward 40 years, the University of Denver's Pardee Center for International Futures (2011), in conjunction with South Africa's Institute for Security Studies, predicted economic gains for Africa that would exceed those of many other world regions.

Which picture is accurate as of 2014? A bleak struggle involving resource-strapped nations, or, a burgeoning set of opportunities involving resource-ready innovators? A continent trapped in darkness, or a continent serving as a beacon? From our perspective, as the three following articles demonstrate, both are partially correct. In the diversity and heterogeneity which is Africa *writ large*, contradictions and convergences abound. Somali refugees scrape a trail leading to an overcrowded camp in Kenya; yet mobile phone innovators from Nairobi are selling goods to people who live in the remotest of Kenya's villages. Disabled children in northern Ethiopia are hard-pressed to get even a mediocre elementary-school education; yet eleven new college campuses are being built throughout Ethiopia. Militias in South Sudan are again recruiting child soldiers; yet South Sudan is celebrating its status as the world's newest nation.

At the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School for International Studies, the African Initiatives Program – in conjunction with Students for Africa – is wrestling with some of these issues. It is informally partnering with NGOs and other institutions which maintain "footprints" in both Colorado and Africa. During the 2013/2014 academic year, these two university organizations sponsored a contest among the university's graduate students, seeking top-flight papers on the most pressing African issues. Seventeen papers were submitted. After a lengthy peer-review process, three were selected,

further edited, and readied for publication in *The Applied Anthropologist*. Covering gay rights in Cameroon, agricultural transformation in Ghana, and precious mineral exploitation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, they exemplify the best of what graduate students can help us learn. They also exemplify the range of tough issues Africans are dealing with everyday.

Peter Van Arsdale is Director of African Initiatives at the Josef Korbel School. He is semi-retired and also a former editor-in-chief of The Applied Anthropologist. Stacy Stephens is a Program Assistant with African Initiatives and a masters candidate at the Josef Korbel School. They would like to thank Katie McCarthy, Jordan Rief, Katy Kutzner, and Jon Steen for their work as peer reviewers.

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ABSTRACT

In light of ongoing violence and repression faced by LGBTI people in Cameroon, it is important to assess the complex framework in which Cameroon's anti-homosexuality law has gained traction and in which the human rights of LGBTI people are violated systematically and with impunity. This article explores how the pervasive discrimination against LGBTI people in Cameroon arises from the social and political construction of a hegemonic hyper-masculine standard to which men are expected to conform. The construction of this male ideal has occurred in the context of post-colonial narratives, which seek to portray homosexuality as a colonial import. International organizations have called on President Paul Biya to abolish this unjust policy. However, until local Cameroonian activists can force the government to recognize that homosexuality is not a western menace, the human rights of LGBTI people in Cameroon will remain immaterial to police and other officials.

KEY WORDS: LGBTI rights, persecution, prosecution, Cameroon

INTRODUCTION

On July 15, 2013, the body of prominent Cameroonian journalist and gay rights activist Eric Ohena Lembembe was found in his home in the capital Yaoundé. When police entered his domicile, they found that he had been burned on his hands, feet, and face with an iron. In the weeks prior to his murder, Lembembe issued a public denunciation of break-ins and other forms of vandalism that targeted gay rights advocacy groups. On July 1, he stated, "There is no doubt: anti-gay thugs are targeting those who support equal rights on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Unfortunately, a climate of hatred and bigotry in Cameroon, which extends to high levels in government, reassures homophobes that they can get away with these crimes" (Corey Boulet 2013). As a journalist and as Executive Director of CAMFAIDS, a Yaoundé-based human rights organization dedicated to promoting the rights of people who suffer from AIDS in Cameroon, Lembembe garnered much attention for his advocacy work. He contributed to several publications on the state of human rights in sub-Saharan Africa, including a 2012 anthology called *From Wrongs to Gay Rights: Cruelty and Change for LGBTI People in an Uncertain World*.

The U.S. Department of State published a press release that stated, "We condemn this terrible act in the strongest terms and urge the Cameroonian authorities to thoroughly and promptly investigate and prosecute those responsible for his death" (Harf 2013). Colleagues of Lembembe were skeptical as to whether the police would conduct a serious investigation. In previous incidents, authorities simply collected statements, failing to bring perpetrators of such hate crimes to justice.

The appalling murder of Eric Lembembe is but one example of the heinous way gay men, lesbian women, and people simply suspected of being homosexual are treated in Came-

eroon. This article will demonstrate how the pervasive discrimination against LGBTI people in Cameroon arises from the social and political construction of a hegemonic hyper-masculine standard to which men are expected to conform. The following section will briefly explore the history of anti-gay legislation in Cameroon. The third section will examine the way post-colonial nativist narratives have formed a heterosexual male ideal to which Cameroonian men are expected to conform. The fourth section will discuss some of the implications of legal and social prejudice against gays and lesbians in Cameroon. The fifth section will consider some of the global trends in human rights and discrimination against homosexuals. The sixth section will conclude with an assessment of Cameroon's discriminatory policies within the global context. It is important to bear in mind that the arbitrary application of Cameroon's anti-homosexuality law characterizes the country's fundamentally corrupt and archaic justice system. Until Cameroonian activists can force the government to recognize that homosexuality is not a colonial, western menace, the human rights of LGBTI people in Cameroon will remain immaterial to police and other officials.

LEGAL STATUS OF HOMOSEXUALS IN CAMEROON

Homosexuality is illegal in Cameroon as well as in thirty-seven other African countries. In Cameroon, same-sex interaction is punishable by fines equivalent to between forty and four hundred dollars and imprisonment for six months to five years. According to article 347 *bis* of the penal code – the anti-gay law which was enacted in 1972 – these penalties are faced by "anyone who performs homosexual acts whether in public or private, or who commits or is a party to the commission of any act of gross indecency with another person from the same sex" (see Ndjio 2012: 614). Furthermore, if the



defendants are between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, the penalties are supposed to be doubled (HRW March 2013: 31). In a report released in March 2013, Human Rights Watch clarifies, "In theory, the law only punishes homosexual conduct and not 'homosexuality' *per se*" in terms of identity (HRW March 2013: 8). However, this article will describe the ways in which authorities have extended the law to arbitrarily prosecute innocent citizens.

The parameters of article 347 are inherently problematic. Given the ambiguous nature of the law, authorities often use it to prosecute dissidents and people from underprivileged backgrounds. This practice illustrates the legal corruption and injustice that suspected and accused homosexuals face in Cameroon. Cameroonian anthropologist Basile Ndjio (2012: 614) explains, "Representatives of the post-colonial state also take advantage of the vague and imprecise character of this law, which allows for the arbitrary and fanciful interpretation of gays' and lesbians' sexual behavior as an 'affront to public decency' and 'contrary to accepted standards of sexual behavior.'" The following section will discuss the manifold process by which homosexuals – particularly gay men – have come to be portrayed and treated as threats to the wellbeing of Cameroonian society.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSTRUCTION OF AN IDEALIZED HETEROSEXUAL MALE

While the anti-gay law has been on the books since 1972, Cameroon has seen an upsurge in discriminatory action and legal prosecution particularly since 2005. Cameroonian sociologist Charles Gueboguo describes the situation: "The country's getting poorer and politicians have no answers, so they use homosexuals as bait, as scapegoats. Queer bashing has become a national pastime in Cameroon and an outlet for the people" (AFP 2009). In the period 2010 - 2013, at least twenty-eight people faced charges related to article 347 (HRW March 2013: 1). It is essential to examine the series of events and developments that influenced this increase in anti-gay prosecution in Cameroon.

In July, 2005, police raided a nightclub in Yaoundé and arrested thirty-two people. Eleven faced prosecution and nine were convicted of homosexuality. This event marked the beginning of several mass arrests under article 347. Near the end of 2005, rumors that the country was run by "sectarian pederasts" began to circulate. Starting in 2006, some of Cameroon's tabloids and news sources published lists of suspected homosexuals. Most of the people on the lists were prominent businessmen and politicians. Furthermore, media outlets began to make accusations that the state had begun to use sexual dominance – particularly of the weak, vulnerable, and impoverished classes – as a means of expressing political and economic power. In essence, the legal crackdown on suspected homosexuals and gender non-conforming people was largely reactionary.

Basile Ndjio (2012: 617), the anthropologist noted previously who is also a senior academic at the University of Douala, explains, "By launching their crusades against gays and lesbians, representatives of the state power in this country have been

desperately trying to fend off the accusation that the Cameroon government is promoting the homosexualization of society." By condemning homosexuality as a threat to society, the government attempts to create the perception that sexual deviance is fundamentally anti-African. Following this, from a political culture perspective, it is important to understand article 347 and its interpretations and applications as essentially anti-colonial. Ndjio goes on to write, "In a country such as Cameroon, African nationalist projects have resulted – as elsewhere – in the state's exuberant production of normative and moralizing discourses that not only categorize gays and lesbians as pervers, but also criminalize them as sexual delinquents" (2012: 627).

Cameroonian writers have constructed an idealized African male, called the Muntu, which has been explored and defined in multiple ways by sociologists, historians, and other Africanists. According to Ndjio, "This sexually conditioned subject has been trained, instructed, required or urged to be disgusted by other forms of sexual desire such as homosexuality and sodomy, generally represented as a threat to both his manliness and his Africanness" (2012: 619). The Muntu is expected to convey his masculinity by expressing his sexual dominion over girls and women. Ndjio explains that the Muntu "was especially meant to move the African phallus from a condition of impotency and devirilization in which it had been encapsulated by the aggressive colonial *ars erotica* to a situation of liberation in which the black phallus recovered its lost sovereignty" (2012: 622). Therefore, men who do not engage in oppressive sexual treatment of women are considered colonized and weak.

Human Rights Watch notes that, ironically, homosexuality is a victimless crime in Cameroon. According to Section 62 of Cameroon's Criminal Procedure Code, charges against suspected criminals may be dropped in the case that the person bringing the charges forward requests they be dropped. Martin Mbarga Nguélé currently serves as Cameroon's Delegate General for National Security, having previously represented the state as Ambassador to Spain and Police Superintendent. He told CAMFAIDS, the organization formerly headed by Eric Lembembe, that the victim in homosexuality cases is "society" itself (HRW March 2013: 11).

IMPLICATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION AND PERSECUTION

State violence and discrimination against gays and lesbians in Cameroon consists largely of "permanent harassment, blackmail, rackets, and the extortion of money...by representatives of the state" (Ndjio 2012: 613). Furthermore, with respect to the legal process as it is loosely applied in these cases, suspected homosexuals have experienced "arbitrary detention, scant regard for due process, and sentencing without evidence of homosexual misconduct" (2012: 611). Prison conditions in Cameroon are atrocious in general, but men and women sentenced under article 347 face particularly brutal treatment from the guards and from other inmates.

Cameroonian authorities – police and magistrates – employ these fear-based tactics designed to repress individuals who transgress normative sexual or gender boundaries. Not only





are they labeled perverse, gays and lesbians in Cameroon – and in other African countries that outlaw homosexuality – are condemned as anti-African. Their sexual actions are identified as remnants of colonial rule and contrary to native values and customs. Since 2006, representatives of the Cameroonian state have begun to associate homosexual behavior with witchcraft and the occult. By demonizing members of the LGBTI community and by associating their conduct with colonial occupation, Cameroonian authorities strengthen divisions and misperceptions that pervade the social and political spheres.

It is clear that Cameroonians who do not conform to dominant sexual and gender norms are often subjected to dehumanizing treatment. For example, anal examinations have become a common practice – often court-ordered – to determine whether someone has engaged in homosexual activity. In addition to the appalling lack of respect afforded to these people, discriminatory policies impact research and funding pertaining to the general health of the LGBTI people. Authorities denounce AIDS research and treatment as a distraction from more important issues. This not only impacts the health of people suffering from HIV and AIDS, but also therefore precludes them from experiencing future social and economic opportunities. It is clear that political discrimination against LGBTI people in Cameroon can have far-reaching effects, particularly with respect to general development in the country.

Additionally, it must be noted that authorities target men who appear feminine, as well as women who are deemed masculine or who do not conform to societal expectations of femininity. Further, in February of 2012, three women were arrested and charged with homosexuality for living together.

Bigots in Cameroon do not only target suspected homosexuals. LGBTI advocates and lawyers who represent people accused of committing homosexual acts receive constant death threats. On June 16, 2013, vandals broke into the office of one such lawyer, Michel Tongué, and stole his laptop, confidential legal files, flash drives, and passport. Because of the death threats he received, his wife and children fled the country to seek asylum, but Tongué stayed in Cameroon to continue his human rights work (HRW July 2013). Maximilienne Ngo Mbe, the executive director of the Central African Human Rights Defenders Network (*Réseau de Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale*, or REDHAC), has received death threats by text message. On April 5, 2013, unidentified assailants attempted to abduct her son from his school. Human Rights Watch (July 2013) reported that in September, 2012, “men in Cameroonian security force uniforms kidnapped and raped her niece, in what Ngo Mbe believes was a targeted attack to punish her for her human rights work.”

From a policy perspective, the impunity with which these targeted crimes are treated illustrates the degree to which homophobic views have become embedded in Cameroon’s political culture.

DISCRIMINATION AND GAY RIGHTS IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT: GOING BEYOND AFRICA

Gay rights are a polarizing issue around the world. Clearly Cameroon is not the only state engaged in systematic repression of its LGBTI population – several countries recently have garnered international attention for their atrocious disregard for the human rights of LGBTI people. Homosexuality is ostensibly illegal in seventy-six countries worldwide. However, unlike Cameroon, many of those other states tend not to enforce their anti-homosexuality laws.

Russia received attention from the international media for the violence that broke out at a gay pride rally in Moscow on May 18, 2013. Russian authorities denied demonstrators’ request for a permit to hold the rally for the eighth year in a row. On the day of the parade, Moscow police arrested thirty people. Orthodox Christian vigilantes also went to beat the LGBTI demonstrators. Despite the fact that homosexuality was legalized in Russia in 1993, the upper house of the Russian parliament recently passed a law making it illegal to promote “non-traditional sexual relations among minors” (Kordunksy 2013).

In Iran, homosexuality can be punishable by execution. Mohammad Javad Larijani, secretary general of the Iranian high council for human rights, stated, “In our society, homosexuality is regarded as an illness and a malady” (Dehghan 2013).

While the human rights of LGBTI citizens are often systematically denied in the countries discussed above, there also has been much progress in terms of gay rights in various regions of the world. As of now, same-sex marriage is legal in fourteen countries. Despite the state of affairs for LGBTI residents of other African countries, South Africa was the first African nation to legalize same-sex marriage, in 2006. It was the second country outside of Europe, after Canada, to legalize same-sex marriage.

CONCLUSION

In 2013, Freedom House categorized Cameroon as “not free” in its annual Freedom in the World survey, which evaluates countries according to the level of political rights and civil liberties afforded to their inhabitants. Furthermore, Transparency International ranked Cameroon at number 144 out of 174 countries on its Corruption Perceptions Index in 2012. These rankings provide a sense of the broader context within which the human rights of LGBTI people in Cameroon are consistently violated. It is evident that advocates for social justice in Cameroon face substantial political obstacles, which also include the corruption that pervades the Cameroonian government.

According to Human Rights Watch, “Cameroon prosecutes people for consensual same-sex conduct more than almost any country in the world” (HRW March 2013: 1). Numerous international organizations have appealed to Cameroon’s president, Paul Biya, to abolish the hateful article 347. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch supported the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and Alternatives Came-



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roun in petitioning the Cameroonian government to release all of the people imprisoned for transgressing the discriminatory law.

As anthropologists and other researchers investigate the complex and dynamic systems that influence African social life, development, and governance, there are many aspects to consider. For example, it is important to be educated about the multifaceted, systemic challenges faced by some of the vulnerable populations with whom many fieldworkers and scholars interact in post-colonial Africa. Given the centrality of human rights to international development and to the global discourse on gender and sexuality, the field would benefit from further research on the persecution of homosexuals in post-colonial societies. It would be especially interesting and sociologically valuable to assess colonial legacies of discrimination, both in terms of legal repression and social persecution. Such research can inform advocacy and ideally policy formation as well as governance; it is imperative to build a comprehensive case in favor of every person's right to self-representation.

The UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) has determined that the criminalization of homosexuality – in Cameroon and in the thirty-seven other African countries where it is illegal – is incompatible with articles 17 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 17 states: "No one should be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honor and reputation." Also, "Everyone has the right to the protection of law against such interferences or attacks." Article 19 provides for freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, and "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds...through any media of his choice" (OHCHR 1966). In 2011, Roger Jean-Claude Mbede was arrested and imprisoned for sending a text message to another man that said, "I'm very much in love with you" (HRW March 2013: 2). In jail, he suffered from malnutrition and regular beatings. In December, 2012, his three-year sentence was upheld. Mbede's prosecution plainly disregards the above-mentioned UN international norms, first promulgated in 1966 and which came into force 10 years later. Like Eric Lembembe and numerous others who have been discriminated against and prosecuted under the broad scope of Article 347, Mbede's human rights were indisputably violated by Cameroonian authorities.

It is clear that Cameroon has yet to respond to international pressures surrounding the country's flagrant disregard for the human rights of its LGBTI community. In 2009, Cameroon "rejected all recommendations related to human rights for LGBTI people, including a recommendation to establish effective protection of homosexuals against discrimination and attacks," reported Human Rights Watch (July 2013). The situation has not improved since. The domestic institutions – formal and informal – that ban homosexuality are strong and entrenched such that they are basically impervious to the imposition of internationally recognized values. It is ultimately up to the dedicated activists and other indigenous civil society actors to continue

to challenge the repressive persecution of LGBTI people in order to change the status quo in Cameroon.

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TRANSFORMING GHANA: A STUDY OF AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the agricultural sector in Ghana, arguing that the development of Agricultural Innovation Systems (AISs) could positively impact the country. It posits that although Ghana recognizes the importance of agriculture in contributing to both economic growth and poverty reduction, innovation is necessary to improve current underproduction in the agriculture sector. The Ghanaian government must create an institutional environment that promotes domestic capacity for innovation in agriculture and agro-processing, in addition to creating linkages among the government, public sector organizations, research institutes and the private sector. This article suggests that the government must support local enterprises, improve access to modern technology and equipment at the university level, and reform its spending on R&D to achieve essential domestic innovations in agriculture.

KEY WORDS: agriculture, innovation, capacity building, Ghana

INTRODUCTION

Ghana celebrated success in July, 2011, when the country “moved” from a lower-middle income country to a middle-income country (World Bank 2011). Crop and livestock production within the agricultural sector between 2010 and 2011 grew at rates of 5.4 percent and 5.1 percent, respectively, contributing to total GDP growth (AEO 2012). Continued support for agriculture is not only necessary for future GDP growth—it also plays an important role in poverty reduction, as the majority of Ghanaians are employed by the agriculture sector, as well as in food security¹, with the demand for food in sub-Saharan Africa predicted to double between 2006 and 2015 (UNCTAD 2011: 70). Although Ghana has recognized the importance of agriculture through agricultural initiatives², analysis demonstrates the continued prevalence of underproduction in the agricultural sector due to rudimentary technology and a lack of domestic capacity, suggesting the need to better integrate agriculture with “innovation systems” (IMF 2012: 3). This article begins by conceptually exploring emerging trends in innovation systems and more specifically agricultural innovation systems. It provides an analysis of the current agriculture and food-processing sector in Ghana, as well as a thorough examination of the institutional and policy environment, identifying areas of innovation reform necessary to strengthen the agricultural and agro-processing industries. It concludes with five policy suggestions for building domestic innovative capacity in Ghana, with a heavy reliance on United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD) ideas.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Innovation systems have gained increasing importance when analyzing economic growth in development. The term “innovation” is defined as change and adaptation for im-

provement. Change and adaptation through innovation can contribute to improvements in products (a good or service) or process (organizational procedure for producing a good or service) (Cozzens and Kaplinsky 2010: 58). In their work, Cozzens and Kaplinsky describe innovation as “the introduction of new or adapted products, produced with new or adapted processes, and in new or adapted forms of organization that utilize new or adapted organizational procedures” (2010: 58). By improving product and process, they note that innovation allows producers to lower costs, increase competitive advantage, and better meet the demands of consumers with available resources.

The adoption of innovations is not automatic, however. Producers, in this case farmers, are often fairly conservative as concerns their methods and techniques. They have been working with these methods for long periods of time and understand what has worked well over the years. They rarely adopt new techniques, methods, crops, or varieties without careful consideration and without testing them themselves.

The usual way farmers learn about and decide to begin to test innovations is through the agency of agricultural extension and the extensionists that visit the farmer. These extensionists in some ways mirror the activities of applied anthropology in that one activity of applied anthropologists is to learn the cultural practices of local people and to analyze how innovative methods, techniques, and programs can fit with the existing culture. This is particularly important where small farmers are the principal producers. Without the applied anthropological techniques that extensionists use, top-down innovations often fail.

An innovation system must create an institutional environment for collaboration among a variety of formal and informal actors. An institutional environment is a system not only characterized by formal laws, regulations and procedures, but



also by informal customs and norms, and must link the formal and informal sectors. As defined by the World Bank, an innovation system is a “network of organizations, enterprises, and individuals focused on bringing new products, new processes and new forms of organization into economic use, together with the institutions and policies that affect the system’s behavior and performance” (Rajalahti, et al. 2008: 3). Further analyses of innovation systems in agriculture demonstrate that innovation, achieved through product and process improvement, can contribute to growth in agriculture.

Similar to the aforementioned concept of innovation systems, Agriculture Innovation Systems (AISs) *per se* emphasize developing connections among actors and institutions, such as the formal research sector, the private sector, technology agencies, farmers and the government (Rajalahti, et al. 2008: xi). AISs also delineate that these interactions must occur in an institutional environment with policies that promote investment in agricultural innovation (Klerkx, et al. 2012: 454). The World Bank describes several benefits of creating strong innovation systems in agriculture, according to Rajalahti (2008: x – xi). First, innovation systems allow the farming industry to respond to rapidly changing market conditions and remain competitive. Second, the application of AISs can and must be expanded to and improved in rural areas for continued growth). Third, innovation systems can function at multiple levels to fulfill different purposes, such as poverty alleviation, economic growth and agricultural development simultaneously. Analysis demonstrates that Ghana will need further improvement in the agriculture and agro-processing sector to fully experience the aforementioned benefits of an AIS approach.

AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION, INSTITUTIONS, AND PUBLIC POLICY

Agriculture has increasingly played a significant role in Ghana’s economy, reaching 28.3 percent of the GDP by 2011 (CIA 2012). Commonly cultivated crops include tubers, fruits, vegetables, fish and nuts, as well as cereals, maize, rice, millet, guinea corn, sorghum, cassava, yams and plantains (UNCTAD 2011: 72, 75). These crops are produced primarily by small- and medium-sized enterprises, also known as SMEs (IMF 2012: 34). UNCTAD (2011) estimates that in 2006 small and medium-sized enterprises comprised 92 percent of the industry (UNCTAD 2011: 72). Yet, low levels of technology contribute to the utilization of rudimentary farming techniques by small- and medium-sized enterprises, ultimately decreasing productivity (IMF 2012: 3). In 2006 it was calculated that over 30 percent of food produced in Ghana was lost because of poor storage, processing, and transport (UNCTAD 2011: 71). Earlier, the FAO noted that despite such challenges, Ghana’s government had made an attempt to promote agriculture through institutions, policies and projects (Dannson 2004: 25). Subsequent review of institutions and policies illustrate the current environment of agricultural innovation in Ghana.

Ghana possesses a diverse combination of public and private institutions engaged with production, processing and mar-

keting in the agriculture sector. The principal bodies in the public sector are the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Ministry of Fisheries, as well as the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Private Sector Development, along with President Special Initiatives, which supervise the processing and marketing of products (Dannson 2004: 25). The government additionally funds a variety of public research institutes through these agencies (UNCTAD 2011: 79). Prominent educational institutions include the University of Ghana, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), and University of Cape Coast (UCC), with KNUST and UCC offering degrees from the school of agriculture in food science and technology, and with the University of Ghana offering a degree in food process engineering (2011: 80). Ten polytechnic institutions in Ghana train mid-level workers, offering a National Diploma in engineering and management, but not in food processing technologies (2011: 80).

There is also a presence of non-governmental organizations active in the agriculture industry, such as associations of small-scale producers and exporters and food processing companies (Dannson 2004: 36). Multilateral and bilateral agencies, including German and Canadian development ministries, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the African Development Bank are also active supporters in promoting agriculture innovation in the country. In addition to the government, research institutes, education sector and multilateral agencies, international agro-processing companies are active in the agriculture sector (Essegbey 2009: 76). As outlined in the conceptual framework for an AIS, linkages among actors and institutions are necessary to promoting innovation. While the diversity and strength of Ghana’s institutions is rather impressive, an apparent lack of coordination exists among these institutions, limiting the potential for innovation (IMF 2012: 34). Further analysis demonstrates the roles of these institutions as reflected in Ghana’s public policy for innovation.

Ghana has strongly promoted policies that encourage foreign direct investment in order to increase innovation through business development. The government attracts business investment by providing incentives to international companies in export processing zones (UNCTAD 2011: 81). Within export processing zones, nearly 200 companies receive benefits such as tax exemptions for profits for a period of 10 years, exemptions on dividend taxes, and no import licensing requirements (2011: 81). While these policies have been successful in increasing foreign direct investment, they have been largely unsuccessful in promoting innovation. The government has failed to implement policies that encourage foreign and local collaboration, ultimately preventing technology transfer from foreign companies to local enterprises (Osabutey and Debrah 2012: 466). Additionally, most local enterprises are not granted tax incentives (Essegbey 2009: 82). As a result, local small- and medium-sized enterprises must compete with large firms that possess a greater manufacturing capacity due to better infrastructure, technology, and a greater range of knowledge and skills, while being taxed (Robson, et al. 2009: 334). The lack of government protection for local business has narrowed market oppor-



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tunities for small, local firms (Essegbey 2009: 82). While public policy has significantly increased foreign investment, a lack of linkages among foreign and local enterprises, as well as policies favoring large, international companies, has prevented local advancements in innovation.

Public policy that advances education is necessary for innovation. According to Robson, et al. (2009: 335), "the quality of the human resources controlled by the firm is determined by the skills levels of employees. The level of knowledge and skills has been found to be related to innovative activities." While the University of Ghana, KNUST, and UCC do provide training in agricultural sciences and food processing engineering, professors admit that outdated equipment prevents students from gaining practical experience, which inhibits innovative capacity (UNCTAD 2011: 80). The World Bank further reports that agribusinesses prefer to hire graduates of polytechnic institutes to complete technical work, decreasing incentives for students to study agriculture at the university level (Essegbey 2009: 76). Statistical trending additionally demonstrates decreasing interest in science and technology: 54 percent of students studying in polytechnics focused on science and technology courses in 1996, compared to only 32 percent in 2006 (Osabutey and Debrah 2012: 452). Lack of practical experience at the university level, a preference for hiring polytechnic graduates over college-educated students, as well as decreasing interest, indicate the need for stronger policy that promotes a high quality, university education which can cultivate innovation.

In addition to problematic policy for business and education development, funding has largely impacted innovative practices in agriculture. Public funding provided by the government is not sufficient to invest in R&D, with much of the money supporting the upkeep of ministry facilities (UNCTAD 2011: 82). The funds that are used for research largely favor innovation in crop production, rather than innovation in food processing (2011: 82)³. Funding for small and medium enterprises is often limited to national banks, where it is difficult to secure loans and meet the loan requirements (Essegbey 2009: 82). The FAO demonstrates this problem through the case of a cashew processing cooperative: "The processing company needs financial resources to expand capacity to enable it cope with the supplies; high interest rates charged by the banks; lack of storage facilities for both raw nuts and processed kernels" (Dansson 2004: 27).

The government has attempted to remedy financing restraints faced by small- and medium-sized enterprises by creating a National Venture Capital Trust Fund and the Science Technology and Research Endowment Fund. Both of these funds, however, have contributed minimally to innovation. The National Venture Capital Trust Fund established in 2005 tends to use its limited funds to invest in safe technology, rather than fund innovative endeavors (UNCTAD 2011: 82). Although the Science Technology and Research Endowment Fund (STREFund) was created in 2008 to fund project research and experimentation, the fund had only earned about 10 percent annually from the initial US\$500,000 capitalization, only providing about US\$50,000 for funding in research as of 2011 (2011: 83).

POLICY REFORM

Improvement in agricultural production and agro-processing are necessary for Ghana to maintain and strengthen its status as a middle-income country. The benefits of a productive agriculture sector are not limited to growth in GDP, but also include job security, poverty reduction, and food security. For these reasons, it is necessary to consider how Ghana can strengthen its agriculture innovation system to sustain agricultural growth. It is clear that policy must generate linkages among institutions and create an environment conducive for innovative exchanges, which include developing local capacity through supporting local enterprises and equipping universities with access to modern equipment, as well as reforming government funding for R&D. The following policy analysis suggests five recommendations as to how Ghana can address the aforementioned challenges while building domestic innovation capacity in agriculture. It is important to note that this analysis does not examine the impact of agricultural innovation on subsistence farming. A further study of this particular impact likely would provide insight on the effects of innovation on subsistence farmers at local levels.

POLICY SUGGESTION ONE:

Ghana must improve the value chain of the agriculture and agro-processing sectors to promote domestic innovation. According to Pietrobelli and Rabelotti (2010: 216), the value chain encompasses a "full range of activities that firms do to bring a product from its conception to its end use and beyond." Improvements in value chains create opportunities for innovation, whether it is through adding monetary value to production by increasing quantity or quality, or developing market niches following harvests through enhancing processing, storage, packaging and marketing (Rajalahti, et al. 2008: 13). Value can be added to agriculture and agro-processing through technological, organizational, and market innovation.

Improvement in agricultural value chains encompasses three distinct areas: technological innovation, organizational innovation, and marketing innovation. Technological innovation at the production level may include improved agronomic practices, such as the use of fertilizers and spraying against pests, as well as pruning trees to increase yields; it may also consist of improvements in equipment and the mastery of technological hardware and processing techniques (Essegbey 2009: 72). Organizational innovations are characterized by implementing technical norms and standards, introducing more effective models of management, and building managerial capacities to better utilize innovative technological hardware, whereas marketing innovation includes commodity research and strategic planning for the sale of commodities (UNCTAD 2011: 90). An examination of the pineapple industry in Ghana serves as one example of how increasing the value chain can contribute to successful innovation in agriculture.

Analysis of BOMARTS Farms Ltd. demonstrates the success of market innovation in agriculture through the pineapple industry. BOMARTS was a traditional exporter of Cayenne pineapples until 2002 when the international demand for pineapples





shifted to the sweeter variety of MD2 pineapples (Adekunle, et al. 2012: 68). Faced with the termination of their pineapple exporting contracts, BOMARTS founded a commercial tissue culture lab with assistance from the Department of Botany at the University of Ghana (Röilings 2009: 91). The culture lab successfully developed a Ghanaian variety of MD2 pineapple and produced millions of the plantlets (Röilings 2009: 91). The Ghanaian government used a World Bank loan to fund the additional production of 4.8 million plantlets over a two-year period. With the support of the private sector through the Sea-Freight Pineapple Exporter of Ghana (SPEG) and the continued support of the public sector through the Horticulture Association of Ghana (HAG), 44,000 plantlets were collected twice weekly and distributed to small-scale farmers for one tenth of the standard price (Röilings 2009: 91). Ghana made its first commercial export of MD2 pineapples during that period and had reclaimed its place in the market as the third-largest exporter of pineapples to Europe by 2006 (Adekunle, et al. 2012: 69). Due to careful observation of the market and additional technological innovation, this example demonstrates how increasing the value chain of agriculture through innovation can successfully promote agriculture while generating linkages among the private sector, university research, and the government.

It is important to note that challenges remain within the pineapple industry and that there exists a continued need for improvement in the value chain. The improvements required are largely technological innovations pertaining to small-scale producers of pineapples, which account for approximately 50 percent of the market (Adekunle, et al. 2012: 69). Increased quality control, aimed at measuring the water and sugar content of pineapples, makes it progressively more challenging for small-scale producers to sell their pineapples internationally, and as a result, they must sell their products domestically and below the international market price (Röilings 2009: 91). The growing dominance of large-scale pineapple producers within Ghana also creates a more competitive market for small-scale producers, indicating the essential need for technological innovation among the latter (Adekunle, et al. 2012: 69).

This analysis of the pineapple industry demonstrates that additions to the value chain can lead to local innovation and create linkages among a variety of sectors. Successes similar to that of the pineapple industry have also been duplicated in the production of cassava and cocoa. The government should therefore prioritize improving value chains in other subsectors of the agriculture and agro-processing industries, which will require partnerships with a variety of actors in the private sector and industry, as well as the support of universities and research institutes. The government must additionally prioritize the development opportunities of small-scale farmers, which will be further discussed in the next policy suggestion.

POLICY SUGGESTION TWO

The Ghanaian government must create an environment supportive of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through increased financing and market reform. SMEs play an important

role in Ghana's economy, comprising approximately 92 percent of the agriculture and food processing industry (UNCTAD 2011: 72). SMEs have been credited with adding value to agricultural products and introducing innovation into the market that promotes societal development (Tetteh and Frempong 2008: 3). The varied geographical distribution of SMEs also contributes to balanced growth throughout the country. Despite the prevalence and importance of these enterprises, most do not perform the process and product research necessary for innovation (UNCTAD 2011: 89). This can be attributed to a lack of financing which is exacerbated by unfavorable market conditions, as observed in the poultry industry.

Small and medium farmers dominate domestic poultry production in Ghana (Essegbey 2009: 71). The poultry market is unusual because local small and medium farmers possess the ability to produce enough poultry and poultry products to meet the demand of the entire Ghanaian market (Essegbey 2009: 71). Increased domestic production of poultry could also contribute to development efforts through increased employment in rural areas, as well as increasing national food security and nutrition (2009: 71). A lack of financing to small and medium farmers, however, limits the potential impact of the poultry sector. As an example, a small poultry business, Marinoff Farm Ltd., was unable to obtain a loan from a national bank (2009: 74). The business was fortunate to instead receive a loan through the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), which was established in 1973 to provide farmers and agro-processors financing (2009: 75). Although the loan provided by ADB at 15 percent has one of the lowest rates available in Ghana, Marinoff stated that a 15 percent interest rate was difficult to repay in a depressed economy (2009: 75).

In addition to limited financing options, SMEs also have difficulty competing with international imports. Local industries do not receive the previously-discussed tax holiday or the benefits of export-free processing zones that international companies receive, making it difficult for infant industries to start (Essegbey 2009: 75). Additional inflows of inexpensive poultry products from foreign businesses prevent greater success of Ghanaian poultry farmers.

The challenges of small and medium farmers in the poultry market are representative of the challenges that Ghanaian SMEs face in a variety of agricultural sectors. Poor financing options prevent SMEs from investing in product and process research, limiting their opportunities for innovation. This is exacerbated by increased competition from international markets that receive tax advantages unavailable to local producers. The government must therefore increase the financing available to SMEs and provide loans with affordable interest rates, as well as standardize taxes for domestic and international businesses, in order to create an environment supportive for the development of these enterprises.

POLICY SUGGESTION THREE

Domestic innovation in agriculture requires public funding for R&D. As noted, the funding expenditure for R&D in Ghana





is low, and very little funding is used to actually support innovative research; more is spent on the salaries and upkeep associated with public research institutes. It is therefore important to restructure available funding and direct it toward research directly connected with innovation in agriculture and agro-processing. Two linked policy-specific suggestions that will promote R&D in agriculture are innovation grants for SMEs and investment credits for local and international companies (UNCTAD 2011: 90).

As discussed in the second policy suggestion, the SMEs that are critical to building domestic capacity are unable to perform R&D due to limited resources. Using the annual interest earned from the STREFund, the government could support innovation by providing grants to SMEs pursuing R&D (UNCTAD 2011: 90). In order to strengthen links between farmers and both regional and international markets, matching grants could be provided to technical service providers, as well as local universities and laboratories, that work with SMEs (2011: 90). These linkages would not only offer support to SMEs, but also increase the overall investment in R&D across different sectors.

A second option for the government to promote R&D is to create fiscal incentives for domestic and international firms to invest in research through innovation investment credits (UNCTAD 2011: 90). Private expenditure on innovation in Ghana is very low despite increasing levels of FDI (2011: 90). Therefore, the government could offer innovation credits to large companies, both domestic and international, that provide SMEs with production-level instruction and market training, as well as access to technologically advanced equipment (2011: 90). Innovation credits offered to both domestic and international firms would encourage R&D, while innovation credits provided to international firms also could create the collaboration among domestic and international firms that FDI has failed to facilitate.

POLICY SUGGESTION FOUR

The fourth policy suggestion for Ghana to increase domestic innovation is through creating a network of Agriculture Innovation Centers (AICs). AICs are characterized by a central space, usually managed by universities that work in close cooperation with business incubators (programs that support the development of entrepreneurial companies through business support resources and services) (UNCTAD 2011: 88). The centers should be located in regions with a predominant agriculture or agro-processing sector to develop technology for specific crops and build partnerships between institutions in the agriculture sector and universities that specialize in science, technology, engineering and agriculture (2011: 88). AICs must be equipped with the latest technology and equipment to provide research opportunities for university staff and practical experience to students (Knudson, et al. 2004: 1335). An AIC must additionally support SMEs with technical and marketing assistance, which will contribute to agricultural value chains and promote innovation (UNCTAD 2011: 87).

The establishment of AICs was recommended at a stakeholders meeting for food and agricultural processing in Accra,

Ghana, in 2008 (UNCTAD 2011: 85-86). Participants in the meeting included the Ghanaian government, academia, research institutes, and the private sector. The stakeholders recommended the creation of three innovation centers, with specified partnerships between universities and research institutes, to be geographically dispersed throughout the country. They recommended the creation of AICs in the southern, central, and northern regions with the following partnerships: a partnership between the Food Research Institute (FRI) and the University of Ghana (UOG) in the south to focus on the production and processing of fish, fruits, vegetables, horticultural products, cereals roots, and tubers; a partnership in the central region between Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and the Crop Research Institute (CRI) with an emphasis on roots, tubers, fats and oils, cereals, peanuts, cocoa, and poultry; and a partnership in the north between the University of Development Studies (UDS) and Savannah Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) to specialize in cereals, shea butter, legumes, and livestock (UNCTAD 2011: 86).

The proposed innovation centers would increase domestic innovation in Ghana through emphasizing a linkage between the agriculture industry and university systems, with a strong emphasis on technology and engineering. This system would provide the practical training that university students currently lack, and allow universities access to advanced technology and machinery for increased R&D. University students equipped with the knowledge and experience gained through working at innovation centers could become entrepreneurs and influential in creating jobs for themselves and others (UNCTAD 2011: 85). Additional benefits of AICs include increasing support for SMEs and providing them with technical and marketing skills to further aid innovation.

POLICY SUGGESTION FIVE

The last policy suggestion for building domestic innovative capacity in Ghana is to create an Industry Advisory Group that would provide institutionalized coordination and direction in the development of the food and agro-processing industry (UNCTAD 2011: 92). As previously noted, there exists an abundance of organizations from the public sector and private sector supporting agriculture and agro-processing, including the government, universities, private firms, non-governmental organizations, and bilateral and multilateral organizations (Dannson 2004: 25). Studies demonstrate that a lack of coordinated efforts among these groups have created a limited impact in innovation (2004: 25). An advisory board would create a well-needed organizational framework for the efforts of these institutions and according to UNCTAD (2011) it would create "a climate hospitable to the private enterprises that would stimulate change from a subsistence economy to an integrated, market-oriented, agriculture-based economy" (2011: 92).

In addition to recommending the establishment of AICs, participants at the food and agricultural processing stakeholders meeting designed a mandate for the future creation of such an





Industry Advisory Group. They recommended that the advisory group define a national strategy for building the innovative capacity of agriculture and agro-business in Ghana, define the specific roles of government, universities and research institutes, and industry within the strategic plan, and provide support to universities and research institutes to ensure the success of AICs (UNCTAD 2011: 92). Thus the AIS would be complemented by the AICs. The stakeholders meeting concluded that the group's board should be representative of the aforementioned sectors (2011: 92). Based on the important role that the group would have in coordinating short- and long-term agricultural innovation initiatives, its board should be directly located in the office of the president (2011: 92).

Coordination through an Industry Advisory Group is necessary to increasing agricultural innovation in Ghana. It not only would outline an agriculture innovation strategy, but – through its board – would be responsible for the successful development of agriculture and agro-processing. It would strengthen links between currently uncoordinated actors, and through this coordination these actors could more successfully build domestic capacity in innovation.

CONCLUSION

The Ghanaian government recognizes the importance of agriculture in the sustained growth of the country. A relatively recent Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy, covering 2006-2009, stressed that in order to increase wealth and reduce poverty, agricultural growth should be accompanied by favorable policies in industry and trade (Essegbey 2009: 66). This premise has not changed. As demonstrated throughout this analysis, the Ghanaian government must create an institutional environment that promotes innovation in agriculture and agro-processing. This can be accomplished by creating linkages among the government, public sector organizations, universities, and research institutes, as well as the private sector. There must also be support for developing domestic capacity in local SMEs. National universities require access to research facilities with modern equipment to conduct research and train local university students. Expenditures on R&D should also be restructured to more effectively promote innovation. The five policy suggestions discussed in this article support the importance of innovation in Ghana through increasing the value chain of agriculture, creating an environment supportive of SMEs through finance and market reforms, and restructuring spending on R&D. The creation of Agriculture Innovation Centers will strengthen partnerships among the government, universities, research firms and the private sector, while providing universities with the advanced equipment they lack, thus further supporting innovation in SMEs. The aforementioned linkages will be solidified through the creation of an Industry Advisory Group that coordinates innovation efforts within the agriculture and agro-processing sector. Implementation of these policies could significantly improve agriculture innovation in Ghana and successfully contribute to the continued sustainable growth of the country.

Economic growth in Ghana will significantly impact social structures, relations and institutions in the country. François Bourguignon (2005) describes how economic growth directly contributes to changes in social structure. He states the following:

It is not only the economic structures—i.e., the relative importance of sectors, labor skills, remuneration of factors, and the size of the public factor—that may be modified by growth. It is the whole social structure—that is, the relative weight of socio-economic groups or the way in which individuals define themselves with respect to the rest of the society—that is affected (2005: 1703).

Understanding the economic transformation of the Ghanaian economy through agricultural innovation will provide perspective on the growth that Ghana has experienced, policy decisions contributing to growth, and policy recommendations to promote domestic capacity, which are significant factors in examining social structures, social relations and social institutions.

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NOTES

1. Agriculture production has been noted as particularly important with Ghana's increasing production in oil, as many economies tend not to diversify and agriculture diminishes, exacerbating food security (The World Bank, "Ghana Looks to Retool Its Economy as it Reaches Middle-Income Status").
2. Two of the initiatives defined by the Ghanaian government are the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (the most recent from 2006-2009), which emphasizes the importance of agriculture and agribusiness for economic growth and poverty reduction, as well as the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy, which generally outlines a broad framework for the development of agro-processing. See Essegbey (2009: 66) for more details.
3. The Agriculture Services Subsector Investment Project, completed by Ministry of Food and Agriculture, with support from a World Bank loan, serves as an example of a project that although it provided some support access to technology, the majority of funding focused on agricultural production. See UNCTAD (2011: 82).

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A DROPPED CALL: HOW IMPORT POLICIES FAIL TO CURB THE CONGOLESE COLTAN CONFLICT

Laura Lloyd-Braff

ABSTRACT

Nearly every modern mobile phone relies on the metal columbite-tantalite (coltan), which, due to its unique properties, is critical to regulating electricity in miniature circuit boards. Eighty percent of the world's coltan resides in the resource-rich but war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where it is being pillaged by rebels through slave labor, and sold on the world market. The money goes back into the hands of warlords, helping to prolong Africa's bloodiest conflict to date. Due to years of international inaction and ineffectual trade policies, little has been done to stem the flow of coltan from the DRC, making it almost certain that most cell phones around the world contain this conflict-linked mineral. This article explores drivers of the coltan plunder, as well as factors that have enabled coltan to freely flow from the DRC into the international market. It examines the merits and shortcomings of recent policies and legislation that attempt to regulate the coltan market. Finally, it offers some alternative suggestions for quelling the scourge of "blood coltan" and the crisis in the DRC.

KEY WORDS: DRC, coltan, cellphones, trade

INTRODUCTION

Only three days after the launch of its new product, the iPhone6, the multinational corporation Apple sold over 10 million phones, blazing past its own sales records (Rogowsky 2014). Undeniably Apple's most popular version yet, the momentum of iPhone6 sales has not let up; *Wall Street Journal* suggests that by the end of the year, the company expects to sell between 70 and 80 million units (ibid.). Indeed, Apple's website boasts that the iPhone6 is unique in that it is bigger, faster, and more powerful-- yet "extraordinarily light" (ibid.). However, French human rights activist Marc Olivier Herman asserts that there is a component in all cell phones making them quite a bit heavier than their manufacturers would like customers to believe. Herman urges consumers to open their cell phone and see for themselves the "blood" fueling their electronics (Forestier, 2008).

According to the United States Congressional Record of June 26, 2008, virtually all modern-day electronics rely on a metal conductor called coltan, which, due to its unique, highly conductive properties, is critical to regulating electricity in miniature circuit boards (United States Congress, 2008). Eighty percent of the world's coltan resides in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where it is being plundered by Rwandan rebels through slave labor, and sold on the world market. The other 20 percent comes from Australia, Russia, Canada, Thailand, and the U.S.A, but fair labor laws make it more expensive by comparison (Montague 2002). In his 2001 report, Secretary General of the United Nations at the time, Kofi Annan, confirmed that major electronic corporations such as Intel, Motorola, and IBM all obtain coltan from the Congo. Alarming, after over 10 years of inaction by the United Nations, a lack of accountability, and ineffectual trade

policies, little has been done to curb the flow of coltan from the DRC, making it almost certain that thousands of cell phones, laptops, and PlayStations found in the United States contain this conflict-linked mineral.

In an effort to control the source of coltan, industrial actors, the Congolese government, and outside donors have established "fingerprinting" schemes to trace minerals such as coltan back to their mines of origin. For the first time, the international community has a way to hold multinational corporations accountable and enforce coltan import laws. Yet, the enforcement of external policies blocking the flow of illegally mined coltan does little to curb the problem itself. Indeed, it is the presence of violent rebel forces that is the problem, not their various means of fundraising. Thus, policies for the Democratic Republic of Congo should be focused on first, demilitarizing its mines, second, developing its role as an effective state, and third, empowering its citizens. Only then can coltan coming from the Congo truly be considered "conflict-free."

How can anthropology be applied to this situation? One role of applied anthropology is to work with citizens groups to learn to affect policy. Whether or not this is possible at the present time in the DRC is questionable.

BACKGROUND

The plundering of minerals in the DRC is only part of a larger, multidimensional conflict between Rwandan Hutu militia forces, semi-nomadic Tutsi tribes, neighboring African countries, and the Congolese government. When Rwanda's genocidal Hutu regime was overthrown in 1994, over two million Hutus fled into what was then Zaire, fearing persecution by the new, Tutsi-dominated government. Among them were many of the militiamen responsible for the genocide. They

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soon allied themselves with the current regime, led by the tyrannical and rapacious Joseph Mobutu, who had been pilfering the country's resources for his own personal gain. Led by Mobutu, the force began to attack Zaire's large population of ethnic Tutsis. In response, Rwanda's Tutsi government began to support rival rebel groups, marching into Kinshasa on May 17, 1997, and overthrowing Mobutu's government. Laurent Kabila was appointed as president; Zaire was renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo. When Rwandan Hutu militia sought to oust Kabila in 1998, he called in help from Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, bringing the country into what has been called "Africa's first World War," a multifaceted conflict over land, citizenship, control of resources, and local power (State Department 2011).

The five-year war in the DRC came to a close in 2003 when Joseph Kabila (son of Laurent Kabila, assassinated in 2001) issued a decree to form a transitional government. However, as ethnic fighting and pillaging of resources resumed, so did the violence; crimes against humanity and war crimes against civilian populations continued relentlessly, including murder, rape and sexual slavery, recruitment and use of child soldiers, and forced displacement. According to a 2008 report by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), by then the conflict had led to more than 5.4 million deaths, making it the bloodiest conflict since World War II and the most deadly conflict in Africa to date. This averages out to several thousand people dying every two days, on a par with the loss of life in the September 11, 2001, World Trade Center attacks in New York, in a country whose population was one-sixth that of the U.S. (IRC 2008).

While it would be impossible to identify a sole cause of the conflict, control over the country's minerals continues as a driving force. When the war began in 1996, the Western technology race was well underway, propelling a massive need for coltan, particularly for high performance, compact devices such as cell phones. Eager to fill this need, rebel forces immediately began pillaging the land of its minerals, providing a further impetus for massive warfare.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SLAVERY

Particularly, the coltan scourge created a climate amenable to large-scale sexual violence, and rebel forces began using rape as a "weapon of war" (OHCHR 2011). As pockets of free Congolese fought to take back what they considered rightfully theirs, rebel forces resorted to mass rape and molestation to squash the efforts and maintain control of coltan-rich regions, creating an epidemic of sexual terrorism. Conflict resolution scholars have analyzed conditions under which sexual terrorism emerges and is sustained, as well as the purposes it might serve (e.g., Maedl 2011). Jeremy Weinstein (2007) argues that indiscriminate violence such as mass rape often is used in opportunistic rebellions to gain access to a region's easily lootable natural resources such as copper, diamonds, timber, or coltan. In these rebellions, the combatants do not seek to win the sympathy or support of the population and do not usually have an

ideological agenda, but simply want to assert their control and power.

The mass sexual violence occurring in the Democratic Republic of Congo has exceeded historical precedent. According to statistics from the Panzi Hospital in South Kivu and the DOCS hospital (Doctors on Call for Service/Heal Africa), "a *minimum* of tens of thousands" men and women were raped or sexually assaulted between 1996 and 2003 (quoted in Maedl 2011). As of February 2012, that number had been updated to over two million (Genocide Watch 2012). The United Nations Population Fund earlier had reported that 65 percent of the victims were adolescent girls, with 10 percent between the ages of three and ten (Cross 2005). John Holmes, the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs for the United Nations, echoes the views of the observing international community when he laments that the sexual violence in the DRC is the "worst in the world. The sheer numbers, the whole scale brutality, the culture of impunity—it's appalling" (quoted in Brown 2012). Indeed, even for a conflict setting, the large-scale sexual violence is unique and exceptional, creating a frightening reality for the civilians who happen to live in coltan-mining zones.

Rebel forces occupying the mines also enslave locals to extract the coltan. The U.S. Department of State (2010) revealed that armed groups in the eastern DRC use "debt, coercion, and physical violence to force villagers to extract these minerals from local mines." Slaves are exposed to harsh conditions while forced to work in unstable tunnels to extract the highly toxic metal. Heritiers de la Justice, a Congolese human rights organization, issued a warning of serious health risks for women and babies involved in the exploitation of coltan in the South Kivu Province. According to Heritiers, increasing numbers of women involved in the laborious work of extracting coltan reported chest pain and respiratory problems. Additionally, the organization reported that the majority of the babies on the backs of women mining coltan had started to develop "similar signs of disease and pain to those of their mothers" (OCHA 2002). More recently, there are approximately six thousand slaves who are children under the age of ten who have been particularly exploited. Although the ore sells for \$275 a pound, these young slaves risk death to make just 75 cents a week (Josep and Taka 2012; cf. Josep and Devuyt 2011). The rest of the profits go into the hands of warlords, enabling them to purchase weapons, further fund their rebellion, and perpetuate the "cycle of physical and sexual violence and human rights abuses" (U.S. Department of State 2010).

LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION

In its aforementioned 2001 report, the United Nations accused 85 multinational companies of buying coltan from rebels, denouncing any further purchasing of the mineral from war zones. Yet, the UN took no definitive action against the companies. In fact, soon after the report went public, they exonerated all involved groups. Congolese victim Kambale Musavuli, in a personal interview conducted on January 9, 2009, blames a



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complete lack of awareness of the severity of the Congo's plight, as international attention was turned more toward the crisis in Darfur. Conversely, an earlier report by the London-based organization, Rights and Accountability in Development (2004), suggested that diplomatic pressure from the US, whose economy relies on the exchange of foreign metals, made the UN cave. Not surprisingly, many of the accused companies have pled innocent. In an interview in the 2008 documentary *Blood Coltan*, a representative from the Belgian-American company Traxys denies any possibility that its coltan came from a war zone, asserting that investigators check on areas where the coltan is mined. Yet, Mudekereza Namegabe, who is Traxys's own supplier, explains how coltan is impossible to trace because the industry is simply not regulated (Forestier, 2008).

Indeed, an inability to trace coltan back to its origins created a complete inability to hold suppliers and multinational corporations accountable. As one anonymous company head accused of importing three and a half tons of coltan from the Congo put it, "So what?" There was no way of proving that his coltan came from a war zone, and therefore no penalty—the matter was dropped. Nzojuzo Belembo, then head of the Congo's largest coltan processing center, reported that a then-recent export had been 15 tons of coltan to China, which, as he put it, "couldn't care less where the coltan came from." In fact, in 2007, China loaned the Congo five billion dollars to develop infrastructure, in exchange receiving rights to the coltan that allowed it to produce half of the one billion cell phones sold on the world market in 2008 (Forestier, 2008).

As for the makers of the iPhone itself, Apple (2012) also pleads innocent when accused of funding massive warfare, saying that it requires its suppliers to "certify that the materials they use have been produced in a socially and environmentally responsible process." It articulates how the supply chain is extended and complex, and that the company supports efforts to map and regulate that chain. In 2010, an Apple fan considering a cell phone upgrade sent an email to Steve Jobs, expressing his concerns about the ethics of using coltan and asking how Apple ensures that its materials are conflict-free. The following reply (Jobs 2010) appeared in his inbox:

Yes. We require all of our suppliers to certify in writing that they use conflict free [sic] materials. But honestly there is no way for them to be sure. Until someone invents a way to chemically trace minerals from the source mine, it's a very difficult problem. - Sent from my iPhone

MAKING TRACEABILITY A REALITY

Indeed, Steve Jobs' cursory text message about the necessity of traceability is a valid one, and one echoed by conflict scholars. As Ruben de Koning (2012) argues in his article "Controlling Conflict Resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo," the effective implementation of a ban on conflict minerals relies on the ability to track minerals back to the mine of origin. And whether Jobs was aware of it or not, a traceability scheme was well underway at the time of his text. Frank Melcher (2010), a scientist at Germany's Federal Institute for

Geosciences, along with a team of Austrian geologists, was devising a way to identify the ore's exact origins. He illustrates in his study that because every coltan mine has its own geological history and composition, the scientists have been able to catalog 600 unique coltan "fingerprints." With backing from the German government, Melcher and his team began working to set up a system in which legitimate mines would register their coltan fingerprints. An independent organization would spot-check ore and reject any that is not in the approved database (Savu-Krohn, et al. 2011).

LEGISLATION

It was the Melcher study that was used as the basis for the development of formal legislation requiring a certification process for coltan. Upon learning about the beginnings of nascent study in 2008, Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas, a strong advocate for curbing the conflict in the DRC, introduced the Conflict Coltan and Casserite Act. According to his legislation, the United Nations Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo would create a "map," identifying which coltan mines were occupied by rebel forces. He asserted that by using Melcher's coltan fingerprinting scheme, manufacturers would have the ability to trace the origins of their coltan, and could therefore ensure that it was not mined in an exploitive way (Crook, 2010).

This bill, introduced on May 22, 2008, was not enacted. However, it served as a precedent for the implementation of further legislation to require traceability to track and block illegally-mined coltan. In July 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the "Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act," colloquially known as "Dodd-Frank," legislation intended to improve the regulation of U.S. economic markets. Part of this legislation included disclosure requirements for companies that manufacture or trade products containing certain "conflict minerals" from the DRC (Crook, 2010). Section 1502 of Dodd-Frank asserts that under the jurisdiction of the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC), companies must report annually on whether they are using minerals from war-torn areas of the DRC. If so, they must cite that they have undertaken measures to trace the supply chain of their minerals and certify the origins of their coltan (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission 2010).

PERSISTING CHALLENGES

A formalized method of tracing minerals back to their mines of origin and a law requiring suppliers to do so has created the accountability that was lacking for 10 years after the UN released its 2001 accusation. Indeed, the implementation of such legislation has stemmed the flow of illegal coltan into the Western world. Recently, multinational companies—concerned for their reputations—have joined a boycott, refusing to buy coltan from conflict zones. One of the first companies to adjust its import policies, Nokia issued a statement in 2011, explaining that its key suppliers now are required to "map their supply chains for the metals in their components back down to smelter and then to source where possible" to ensure that their coltan does





not come from conflict zones (2011). Electronic giant Samsung flatly refuses to buy any coltan from the DRC at all, asserting on its website that it purchases from Russia and Thailand. Furthermore, it declares that it uses the fingerprinting scheme to trace its coltan and regularly ensures that its vendors are compliant (Samsung 2012).

Yet, externally managing any import ban is challenging at best. Even before the traceability scheme was enacted, UN spokesperson Sylvie van den Wildenburg lamented how suppliers would do all they could “off-screen” to avoid association with illegal coltan mines, going so far as to paint the UN logo on their planes transporting the coltan (Forestier, 2008). Post-legislation, there is still plenty of room for manipulation. Indeed, far from being limited to western regions, so-called mineral testing and tracing centers to certify coltan’s origins are surfacing all over the world, including in Rwanda, the most prominent dealer of illegal DRC coltan. Christopher Ayres (2012) explains that Rwanda has everything to gain for claiming that the coltan it certifies is conflict-free, declaring that “the impetus for doubtful certifications could not be higher anywhere else.” He goes on to remind us of “the old adage about sending the fox to investigate the murder in the hen house,” an example of how manipulated certifications could emerge and therefore fail at stemming the flow of blood coltan.

Clearly, the resource war in the DRC is multifaceted and multi-causal, and simply denouncing mines occupied by rebel armies not only minimizes the true nature of the conflict, but also only addresses one source of the problem. While the U.S. legislation clearly outlines its policies forbidding the purchasing of coltan from rebel- or militia-controlled mines, it fails to provide any guidance about buying from mines controlled by the FARDC, the military arm of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Although less publicized, the controllers of these mines have been accused of similar levels of abusive rent-gouging and human rights violations to those of rebels controlling mines in the east (De Koning 2012).

Furthermore, the import policies will do far less than bring peace and prosperity to the DRC. In fact, as seen in the implementation of import policies to block the flow of blood diamonds from Sierra Leone, full-fledged embargos often hurt those at the bottom of the supply chain. As Sigismund Wilson (2009) points out in his article “Sierra Leone’s Illicit Diamonds,” the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme, which reduced the flow of conflict diamonds to less than one percent, has significantly hindered revenue generation necessary for economic growth in Sierra Leone. Banning the importation of all Congolese coltan has already had similar effects on the DRC. Laura Seay (2012) stresses that “Obama’s Law,” as the Congolese have nicknamed it, has put up to two million miners out of work, even those who were working for independent companies having little to do with the rebels. While miners work under brutal conditions for minimal pay, it is often the only employment available, aside from joining a militia (U.S. Department of State 2011). The spike in the unemployment rate in the DRC has left

many Congolese hungry and unable to afford even basic medical treatment. Many have shifted their work to the gold industry, which is less regulated than the coltan sector, and also dominated by rebel forces (Seay 2012).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The problems in the DRC are internal, and ones which external foreign policies will do little to solve. Solutions meant to have lasting effects should address the cause, rather than a symptom, of the problem. In the case of the Congo, the problem is a weak state; the symptom, among many others, is the exploitation of the nation’s resources and the consequential suffering of local Congolese (Talla 2012). Thus, international foreign policy must shift its focus from implementing an import ban blocking the flow of Congolese coltan to supporting the demilitarization of the mines themselves, building a stronger state, and empowering local miners.

First, the control of mines by warlords is one of the key factors contributing to the perpetuation of the conflict plaguing the eastern DRC. Arguably, the success of the Kimberly Process in stemming the flow of blood diamonds can be attributed to the fact that the central provinces, where most of the country’s diamonds are found, were liberated from rebel control before the certification plan was even implemented (De Koning 2012). Equally, the DRC’s mines must be liberated from both rebel and government occupation. Because there is little political will on the part of the Congolese state to demilitarize the mines, Ruben De Koning (2012) suggests that the UN provide an incentive to the government by establishing three coltan trading centers in North Kivu, with security provided by the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC). The UN and other donors would fund these centers, while local mining authorities would be employed to tax and register consignments of traded minerals. This plan would provide new jobs and stimulate the Congolese economy, raise revenue for the government, and facilitate traceability.

Second, because militarized mineral trade is much more an indicator of the Congolese state’s weakness rather than a cause, UN agencies should work to strengthen the country’s government. Providing a good example in 2008, the World Bank (2012) launched a program to strengthen government capacity in the DRC. The \$50 million project focused on providing government officials with office equipment and computer training, supporting the creation of provincial revenue collection structures, and introducing transparency in the areas of justice, administration, mining, land use, agriculture, and health. Future government-strengthening programs could continue to invest in the country’s infrastructure. A particular emphasis could be placed on strengthening the DRC’s judicial system and giving the government a role in holding mineral-exchange companies, militia, rapists, and other perpetrators responsible for their acts. Indeed, when asked which persons or institutions should hold people accountable, 80 percent of Congolese respondents asserted that this was the “role of the government to enforce accountability” (Vinck and Pham 2008). Stabilizing the central



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government and minimizing its corruption is the first step to quelling the 15 years of ethnic conflict responsible for the mineral exploitation.

Third, foreign policy must focus on empowering locals. James H. Smith suggests that, in fact, conflict minerals such as coltan can bring great benefits to the DRC, describing the "bottom-up social collaboration," actions that applied anthropologists could participate in, when the Congolese manage to take control of their natural resources (Smith 2011). Seay (2012) proposes, for example, to turn the traceability scheme into a jobs program, suggesting that the plan would be most useful if it employed the very miners it had driven out of work. Certainly, considering the miners are the experts in the field, Seay declares that there is "no reason [why] former miners should not hold positions as taggers or hold other positions to ensure that the minerals are certified as conflict-free." Indeed, there is room for anthropologists, economists, and development specialists to explore how improving the Congolese association with coltan can actually bring stability to the region and help the DRC progress.

CONCLUSION

African writer and scholar Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) perhaps says it best in his book *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, when he declares that "Africa's natural and human resources continue to develop Europe and America: but Africa is made to feel grateful for aid." Truly, as Westerners, we constantly preach that Africa needs us, but on the contrary, we need Africa. And blinded by the blinking lights of the Digital Age, the international community took over 10 years to see and address the very real human loss occurring at the expense of its cell phone frenzy. Moreover, as foreign policy began to tackle the crisis in the DRC, it addressed the symptoms, rather than the root cause—a weak and failing state, overrun by groups hindering that nation's development. Thus, international policies over this costly cell phone component must focus on removing those groups from control over the mines, promoting better governance in the country, and empowering the miners themselves, in order to truly answer the Democratic Republic of Congo's call.

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COMMENTARY

THE ROUTING SLIP

HOWARD F. STEIN

I begin with a poem.

How Things Work Around Here HF Stein

Dear Mr. Stein:
This is the Department of
How Things Work Around Here.
Although your poem was accepted
for publication by our journal,
and you signed the contract,
you still must fill out
our routing form, then
walk it through the many offices
of people who must
also sign it in order for it
to be institutionally validated.
You will note on the routing slip
all the places you must trudge
in sequence, and have
all the officers sign it
by tomorrow. This will not
be an easy task, but
think of it as following
William Stafford's "golden thread"
to an outcome that can never
be known at the outset
of the journey. Still,
you must try if you want
to have your poem published
in our fine journal.
Good luck!

Why did I write this poem? The events described in the poem happened – plus some poetic license. The poem above is about my encounter with a bureaucracy about an earlier poem that had just been accepted for publication in a journal at a large publisher. By the end of my phone conversation with a very polite woman officer, I was at once frustrated, amazed, astounded, alienated, and incredulous that this conversation even took place. Given the phantasmagoric machinations of bureaucracies that Franz Kafka and Max Weber made famous, I should not have been surprised. Although I am pleased with my earlier poem, I do not think that it bears the same social freight as major business decisions.

Yet, it seems that nothing is too small for a bureaucracy to oppress its members with in the quest for absolute control. The accepted poem is precisely 131 words long. Not exactly a

shipment of steel or pipe. "Bureaucratic overkill" is a phrase that applies here. Nothing, apparently, is beyond its reach. The red tape has a strangle-hold on getting things done. It is as if the bureaucracy lives for its own red tape – which, like a machine out of control, takes on a life of its own.

"You could not make this up" is a thought that comes to mind. It would be ludicrous if it were not dead serious. I was afraid to ask the obvious question, "Why?", for fear of being given the standard reply: "That's the way we do things around here," or "We've always done it that way," or "We don't ask that question." When a thirsty Primo Levi, newly an inmate of the Auschwitz concentration camp, pulled off an icicle from above a window, a guard snatched it from his hand. When Levi asked him the question, "Warum?" ("Why?"), the guard replied, "Hier ist kein Warum" ("Here there is no 'Why?').

In organizations, perhaps the answer to "Why?" is buried in some unremembered historical trauma, such as Pearl Harbor, or a costly law suit, a disastrous executive decision, or a terrible downturn in profit. No one knows, or even seems to care. The rule simply must be enforced, and unquestionably so. Obsessive-compulsive routine or ritual is equal to or surpasses actual work in urgency. It takes on mythic, totemic, even sacred proportions. No one dare question it. The consequences – from being reprimanded, to being considered crazy, even to being fired – are too unthinkable. The "social defense" is made of tungsten steel.

Still, there are a few noble exceptions: courageous contrarians who call the whole matter into question and live to tell the story, and maybe even change "the way we do things around here." At the same time, however, they pay a terrible price for their audacity, madness being chief among them.

Let me offer you a brief story about a contrarian where there is a reasonably upbeat ending. Decades ago I worked with a family medicine resident (trainee) in a large city's training program. I was his behavioral science faculty member. We both loved classical music and poetry, and we enjoyed visiting about them; he often consulted with me about patients with whom he was having difficulties. One day he approached me with the story of an entire category of patients: indigent patients for whom he had tried in vain to link with services at the local Department of Human Services (DHS).

I sensed that he wanted to tell me his story, his experiences, and his frustrations, and then see if I had any ideas of doing it a different way. He said that he was exasperated that most of the time when he phoned DHS, or when one of his patients did so, they ended up being shunted from one office

The Applied Anthropologist



STEIN



The Routing Slip...

to another, or put on terminal hold. Ultimately, they got nowhere, and were rarely connected with the service the doctor was trying in vain to get for them.

What could I do? How could I help? I offered him my free associations. My point of departure was that nothing was working, that he was clueless how to make things work in order to help his patients. He (or his patient) was at one end of the telephone line, and someone(s) at DHS was at the other end, and he was most times frustrated. I said that perhaps if he went to DHS and spent, say, a week with them, he would learn more about the organization, and would be a person to other persons, and not only a voice at the end of a phone line.

I reminded him that I was an applied anthropologist (which he knew), and suggested that, if the residency program and DHS approved, he might spend a week of his community medicine rotation doing *fieldwork* at DHS. Fortunately, both the residency director and head of the local office of DHS agreed. During his week there, he spoke with many people, some of whom referred him to speak with yet other people. He asked questions about how things worked there, what it was like to work at DHS, how one went about getting information about how to get services for patients.

He was finally told about “the little man who had the Blue Book,” who was the absolute person of last resort, and who knew the rules-behind-the-rules, and who knew how to make things work. The trouble is, virtually no one on the outside knew of his existence, and among the functions of the many DHS people between him and the outside world were to protect him by serving as a barrier, and keep most people from getting to him. The doctor was able to visit with “the little man with the Blue Book” in the officer’s small office. He learned that the famous blue book referred to a policies and procedures manual which the officer knew a lot about, and also how to use or get around the policies and procedures. It was the ultimate mysterious source of “how to get things done around here.”

The doctor explained that he was a family medicine trainee in a program in town, and was there to learn how DHS worked, and perhaps together to figure a way that he could better help his patients get the services they needed. Could the official help him? Most specifically, the question was how people on the Outside could talk with “the little man with the Blue Book.” Surprisingly to the doctor, everyone was friendly and brainstormed with him a way to solve this problem. They actually were willing to help, and acknowledged that theirs was a cumbersome system which they just didn’t know how to fix and in which they felt stuck – until the physician showed up for his fieldwork and got people to talk with one another who rarely spoke with each other.

As a result of his fieldwork, he left with an agreed-upon plan for patients who called: for the patients to say that they were patients at the family medicine clinic and that they wished to speak with Mr. X, who had the Blue Book that specified how things were supposed to work. Not only was there a better outcome for the doctor and his patients, but there was also an unintended positive outcome for communication and morale

among the DHS employees. Unwittingly, my medical colleague became an agent of culture change. In the process he learned more about organizations than either of us had bargained for: first, it was impossible to get things to work because it had been impossible to get to the person who knew how things worked and was the guardian of that information. A second lesson: through getting to know organizations by studying them from the inside, such as by fieldwork, one can occasionally help change the organization.

Although my vignette has a “happy ending” (the achievement of greater organizational functionality and patient care), most of the time such success is elusive, and bureaucracies remain bogged down with their sacred rituals of “red tape.” As for my own story that led to the poem above, it is still uncertain whether accepted my poem will be published, because I don’t know whether I’ll be able to obtain all the necessary signatures for the routing slip in time. I haven’t found “the little man with the Blue Book.” Perhaps this may lead to yet another poem.

