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# VERITAS

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of Work and Leisure**

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Towards Standardisation**

**University Education  
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\**Veritas* is Latin for truth, reality.

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*Work in Society: The Daily Grind that Produces Food*

*Photo JSP*

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# Aesthetics and the Problems of Work and Leisure

Dr K R Bolton\*

## ABSTRACT

‘Work’ has been regarded as a problem and a ‘curse’ since the time of Adam. The curse of Adam is that where there is an abundance of resources over the earth one is required to expend a great amount of effort to gain benefit from them. The curse of mankind has been that ‘by the sweat in thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground...’ (Genesis: 4: 19). This paper questions a dominant paradigm of the Western economy, which has existed for several hundred years: that work is an end in itself; it disputes the commonly held utilitarian notion that effort other than that directed toward the production-and-consumption cycle is parasitic or should be no more than a past-time. It argues that the Arts and other creative callings, beyond consumptionism, are the very essence of our humanity, and the relegation of culture to a status lower than utilitarian pursuits is an inversion of our humanity.

## THE ECONOMIC TREADMILL

What is interesting is that man is indeed ‘cursed’ to labour for his sustenance increasingly nearer to the time until he ‘return to the ground’. That is to say, the work time required for the individual is being increasingly extended in both hours and years. Because the economic system does not provide for a universal income – that is to say, a guaranteed level of purchasing power by which production can be consumed - other than via social welfare, with work as the means by which taxes and debt are maintained, a primary solution of government is to attempt to make the prospect of retirement ever more distant, and regard ‘full employment’ as a universal panacea.

A ‘Mercer global research report’ on raising the retirement age examined forty-seven countries, showing that many ‘developed’ countries intend raising the retirement age, with the UK at a maximum of 68 years (Mercer Wealth Solutions). Citing Australian statistics Hamilton and Dennis state that, ‘only 28 percent of employees work a standard week of between 35 and 40 hours’, with a high of 15 percent working more than 60 hours. ‘The proportion of men working these hours has grown substantially in then past twenty years,’ but the trend is also increasing among women. (Hamilton and Dennis, 2005, p. 86). A similar trend has been taking place in New Zealand, a conclusion being that: ‘The research indicates that a significant proportion of the total workforce is working 50 hours or more per week....’ (Fursman, 2008).

Enjoying one’s retirement for a significant number of years prior to ‘returning unto the ground’ is becoming increasingly elusive. What operate are two extremes in conjunction: unemployment and over-employment. Unemployment and under-employment are not equivalent to the leisure on which creativity is historically predicated. Unemployment relates instead to insufficiently satisfying the ‘basic needs’ of existence (see below). Neither is conducive to what has been called ‘self-actualisation’, some of the concepts of which provide a useful method of analysing the impact of economic detriments to one’s well-being. Maslow’s ‘hierarchy of basic needs’, illustrated as a pyramid, places at the base the primary biological drives of food, shelter and sex, which must be satisfied before higher aims can be pursued. ‘Creativity’ is at the apex of the pyramid. (Atkinson, Atkinson and Hilgard, 1981, p. 451).

Yet the *zeitgeist* or spirit of the present historical age or cycle keeps the developed states at the basest levels of existence, despite the façade of ‘civilisation’, the technology and the over-abundance of consumer goods; while the ‘developing world’ is exploited for its sweat-shop labour and resources and encumbered with increasing debt behind the faced of ‘development aid’. All of humanity is enslaved to the economic treadmill. Two recent analysts of the matter write:

‘Despite the barrage of advertising that tries to tell us otherwise, the more materialistic we are the less free we are. Why? Because we must commit more of our lives to working to pay for our material desires. And the more acquisitive we are the more desires and the means of satisfying them are determined by others. Acquisitive people derive their identity and their imagined place in society from the things they own, yet the symbols that confer self-worth and status are at the whim of external forces... Materialism thus robs us of autonomy.’ (Hamilton and Dennis, 2005, p. 15).

## THE LEGACY OF PURITANISM

The Arts are not in this present economic system defined as ‘productive’, and are therefore looked upon as a dalliance or an entertainment, rather than a ‘calling’. Yet, like all other occupations in the pre-industrial ‘West’, and in those cultures in the ‘developing word’ that have retained a vestige of their traditions in the face of globalisation, one’s craft was considered to be divinely sanctioned. One’s occupation was an art *per se*, whether it was baking bread, painting, brewing beer, writing and reciting prose, or forging horseshoes. For the West, the guild ensured that the highest standards were maintained. In a co-operative economy, ‘competition’, or what later became known as ‘free trade’, would have been regarded not only as ‘the subverter of freedom [but] above all, the destroyer of quality’. (Bliss, 1908, pp. 545-546).

Juliet Schor, Professor of Economics at Harvard University, has shown that Medieval Europe accorded much more leisure than the present system of free trade:

‘One of capitalism’s most durable myths is that it has reduced human toil. This myth is typically defended by a comparison of the modern forty-hour week with its seventy- or eighty-hour counterpart in the nineteenth century. The implicit - but rarely articulated - assumption is that the eighty-hour standard has prevailed for centuries. ... Before capitalism, most people did not work very long hours at all. The tempo of life was slow, even leisurely; the pace of work relaxed. Our ancestors may not have been rich, but they had an abundance of leisure. When capitalism raised their incomes, it also took away their time... All told, holiday leisure time in medieval England took up probably about one-third of the year. And the English were apparently working harder than their neighbors.... (Schor, 1992, ‘Introduction’).

If one accepts that a cultural milieu is best provided for by sufficient leisure hours to expend on the arts rather than at the base level of providing for one’s physiological needs, the economic system of the ‘developed world’ has placed the individual in a culturally regressive state. Psychologically and morally, there is a work obsession. Such puritanical attitudes towards work were recently manifested in New Zealand with the contempt and outrage directed towards an artist, Tao Wells, who had been provided with a grant from Wellington City Council to set up a ‘beneficiaries’ office’ as a ‘performance art installation’. Wells was reported as stating that people need to ‘abandon jobs they don’t like rather than suffering eight hours of “slavery”... If you’re forced to take a job it’s a punishment. If a job’s a punishment then society must be a prison’. As a consequence, Wells’ unemployment benefit was cut. (*The Dominion Post*, October 16, 2010).

The animosity directed towards Wells is an example of the survival of the Puritan ethic that regards ‘idleness’ as a sin and in which aesthetics is regarded as a waste of time. In the American Colonies, and the subsequent development of the USA under the same impress of Puritanism, albeit as secularised capitalism, leisure was sin, and economic activity a godly pursuit. (Bremer, 1976). In the Puritan colonies, the influence of music was minimal, and was excluded as a profession. (Crawford, 2005). Puritan functionalism worked against the development of a significant visual art. (Bremer, 1976). Weber comments on this Puritan ethos:

‘The real moral objection is to relaxation in the security of possession, the enjoyment of wealth with the consequence of idleness and the temptations of the flesh, above all of distraction from the pursuit of a righteous life. In fact, it is only because possession involves this danger of relaxation that it is

objectionable at all. For the saints’ everlasting rest is in the next world; on earth man must, to be certain of his state of grace, ‘do the works of him who sent him, as long as it is yet day’. (Weber, 1930, Chapter 5).

This ethos was antithetical to the old regime of Europe when she was emanated by a spiritual ethos:

‘Here the difference from the medieval view-point becomes quite evident. Thomas Aquinas also gave an interpretation of that statement of St. Paul. But for him labour is only necessary *naturali ratione* for the maintenance of individual and community. Where this end is achieved, the precept ceases to have any meaning. Moreover, it holds only for the race, not for every individual. It does not apply to anyone who can live without ‘labour on his possessions, and of course contemplation, as a spiritual form of action in the Kingdom of God, takes precedence over the commandment in its literal sense.’ (Weber, 1930, *ibid.*).

Weber continues that artistic pursuits were anathema to the utilitarian outlook of the Puritans; writing of the new order that Cromwell brought to England he says:

‘The theatre was obnoxious to the Puritans, and with the strict exclusion of the erotic and of nudity from the realm of toleration, a radical view of either literature or art could not exist. The conceptions of idle talk, of superfluities, and of vain ostentation, all designations of an irrational attitude without objective purpose, thus not ascetic, and especially not serving the glory of God, but of man, were always at hand to serve in deciding in favour of sober utility as against any artistic tendencies.’ (Weber, 1930, *ibid.*).

During the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries there was a reaction within the cultural milieu that was increasingly concerned with the impact of industrialisation and *de facto* Puritanism on the arts. D H Lawrence sought a return to cultural atavisms, W B Yeats in Medievalism, and John Ruskin, William Morris and Oscar Wilde gave support to both the craft movement and a form of aesthetic ‘socialism’ designed to halt the economic treadmill.

## AESTHETIC ‘SOCIALISM’

Like Marxists and other radicals of his time, Wilde considered the primary problem to be that of private property, but as an aesthete his concern was not merely that of economic functionalism but of how a society could be created to grant fulfilment to the very characteristic that literally defines *being human*: culture. Wilde’s socialism eschewed the collectivism of other forms of socialism in favour of individualism within the context of co-operative economics, which Wilde believed would emancipate the creative spirit. Hence the title of his essay refers to *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, (Wilde, 1891).

The essay remains valid not so much in Wilde's unoriginal call for the abolition of private property, but in the very fact of asking the questions about work, leisure and culture. As an aesthete, it is not surprising that Wilde regarded preoccupation with money or business as a 'bore', an intrusion upon his creativity. The socialism of the aesthetes, Wilde, Morris, *et al* was therefore a rejection of the *zeitgeist* of puritanical-capitalism in a much more profound sense than Marxism and other forms of socialism which did not eschew that *zeitgeist*, but merely sought to appropriate capitalism for the proletariat. Wilde sought to *eliminate* the *economic dialectic* in human relations; not to merely 'proletarianise' it.

Wilde's socialism was 'libertarian' insofar as, rather than aiming to crush individuality as in Marxism and other forms of socialism and construct a centralised state, the individual would be free to pursue his creative potential in whatever endeavour that might lay, but nevertheless within the context of a 'community'.

The socialism of Wilde, the guild-socialists, and the associated aesthetes of the Arts and Crafts Movement were in Marx's analysis agents of 'reaction', thwarts of the historical dialectic, 'for they try to roll back the wheel of history'. (Marx, 1975, p.57). Wilde, *et al* were enunciating a 'socialism' that was anathema to Marx, and one might contend a socialism that was genuinely anti-capitalist insofar as it rejects the *zeitgeist* from which both Marxism and capitalism arose (Spengler, 1971, Vol. 2, p. 402). Wilde *contra* Marx regarded socialism as the means of freeing the individual from the production process, rather than delivering the production process into the hands of another class, economics being a means and not an end:

'Upon the other hand, Socialism itself will be of value simply because it will lead to Individualism. Socialism, Communism, or whatever one chooses to call it, by converting private property into public wealth, and substituting co-operation for competition, will restore society to its proper condition of a thoroughly healthy organism, and insure the material well-being of each member of the community. It will, in fact, give Life its proper basis and its proper environment. But for the full development of Life to its highest mode of perfection, something more is needed.' (Wilde, 1891).

What is notable is that Wilde was seeking a universal level of individual well-being that would dispose of the preoccupation of what in our own time humanistic psychology has defined as the 'basic needs', in order to liberate the individual to pursue what again in humanistic psychology is called 'self-actualisation'. (Maslow, *passim*). Unlike other forms of socialism, the satisfaction of the 'basic needs' is a means to an end; not *the end*. Wilde as an aesthete, like Ruskin and William Morris, was better placed to explain the higher potentials for humanity that could be unleashed

by socialism, or perhaps better said, 'co-operativism', than the political manifestos of the agitators. John Ruskin, expressed this ideal:

'Alas! it is not meat of which the refusal is cruellest, or to which the claim is validest. The life is more than the meat. The rich not only refuse food to the poor; they refuse wisdom; they refuse virtue; they refuse salvation.' (Ruskin, 1862, pp. 106-107).

Under the type of economic co-operation sought by Wilde, Ruskin and Morris *et al*, involvement in the processes of economy becomes again one of creativity and personal attachment, as in the West's Medieval era to which Ruskin and Morris for example looked; contrary to the *impersonalism* of the productive process under both capitalism and Marxism, which is nothing more than a mechanistic process. The promise held out by the machine age for freedom from economic drudgery did not eventuate, and now humanity is more than ever tied to this drudgery and has indeed become accustomed to finding in this economic obsession the meaning of life. A higher purpose pervaded life during the Medieval era, for example, when work was regarded as *craft*. Marx described this when writing:

'Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and consequently all charm for the workmen. He becomes an appendage of the machine.' (Marx, 1975, p.51).

Through the post-colonial process of globalisation, economic and concomitant cultural uniformity has become universal, as Marx predicted (Marx, *op cit*, pp.46-48). However, where Marx saw this process as a necessary and desirable phase in the historical dialectic (Marx *op cit*, pp.40-60), socialist aesthetes such as Wilde, Morris, Ruskin, and later the guild-socialist A R Orage, sought to thwart the historical dialectic with a return to a pre-industrial ethos and method of socio-economic organisation. Marx devoted an entire chapter to repudiating this type of socialism, among others, condemning it as 'reactionary socialism', and as 'feudal socialism'. (Marx *op cit*, pp.77-80).

For his part, anticipating the crippling mass conformity demanded by Marxism in the name of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', Wilde abhorred the prospect of a pervasive State in the name of socialism. The *raison d'être* of Wilde's socialism was rather to create sufficient leisure for culture to flourish without the worry of bankruptcy and creditors, and one that would not merely substitute 'industrial tyranny' for industrial *laissez faire*. Again *contra* Marx, Wilde's ideal was for a society in which 'the people' would not be an amorphous *proletarianised* mass, but would become creative individuals, surrounded by a higher order of culture than that generated by production and consumption.

‘What is needed is Individualism. If the Socialism is Authoritarian; if there are Governments armed with economic power as they are now with political power; if, in a word, we are to have Industrial Tyrannies, then the last state of man will be worse than the first. At present, in consequence of the existence of private property, a great many people are enabled to develop a certain very limited amount of Individualism. They are either under no necessity to work for their living, or are enabled to choose the sphere of activity that is really congenial to them, and gives them pleasure. These are the poets, the philosophers, the men of science, the men of culture - in a word, the real men, the men who have realised themselves, and in whom all Humanity gains a partial realisation.

Upon the other hand, there are a great many people who, having no private property of their own, and being always on the brink of sheer starvation, are compelled to do the work of beasts of burden, to do work that is quite uncongenial to them, and to which they are forced by the peremptory, unreasonable, degrading Tyranny of want. These are the poor, and amongst them there is no grace of manner, or charm of speech, or civilisation, or culture, or refinement in pleasures, or joy of life. From their collective force Humanity gains much in material prosperity. But it is only the material result that it gains, and the man who is poor is in himself absolutely of no importance. He is merely the infinitesimal atom of a force that, so far from regarding him, crushes him: indeed, prefers him crushed, as in that case he is far more obedient (Wilde, 1891).

Wilde contended that property ownership is a burden that fetters rather than frees, and is no solution to the human predicament, describing ownership as:

‘...very often extremely demoralising... really a nuisance... It involves endless claims upon one, endless attention to business, endless bother... Property not merely has duties, but has so many duties that its possession to any large extent is a bore... its duties make it unbearable (Wilde, 1891).

Although Wilde stated that wealth allowed such individuals as ‘Byron, Shelley, Browning, Victor Hugo, Baudelaire, and others... to realise their personality more or less completely’ (Wilde, 1891), he insisted that in general the elimination of private property would have a more beneficial result on the elevation of culture and of humanity, making life ‘freer, far finer, and far more intensified than it is now’. For the bulk of humanity, the importance placed on private property has meant that the value of an individual is based upon the possessions acquired, ‘by confusing a man with what he possesses’. ‘The true perfection of man lies, not in what man has, but in what man is’ (Wilde, 1891). To Wilde enforced labour, which was for him implied in ‘Authoritarian Socialism’, just as much by economic necessity under

free trade, and the very nature of the money-making process, is dehumanising:

‘...The industry necessary for the making of money is also very demoralising. In a community like ours, where property confers immense distinction, social position, honour, respect, titles, and other pleasant things of the kind, man, being naturally ambitious, makes it his aim to accumulate this property, and goes on wearily and tediously accumulating it long after he has got far more than he wants, or can use, or enjoy, or perhaps even know of. Man will kill himself by overwork in order to secure property, and really, considering the enormous advantages that property brings, one is hardly surprised. One’s regret is that society should be constructed on such a basis that man has been forced into a groove in which he cannot freely develop what is wonderful, and fascinating, and delightful in him -in which, in fact, he misses the true pleasure and joy of living’ (Wilde, 1891).

Freedom from the burden of economics would, stated Wilde, result in the flowering of the personality, and from there a fundamental change in social relations, where there can grow or flower ‘the true personality of man’, and the value of wisdom is not measured by material things. The Wildean ideal, far from dialectical materialism and economic manifestos is, like that of William Morris and John Ruskin, more metaphysical than physical, more a dialectical synthesis of spiritual paradoxes, more a *Tao* of socialism, and itself in a dialectical sense, the antithesis of the socialism of Marx et al, where,

‘...It will know everything. And yet it will not busy itself about knowledge. It will have wisdom. Its value will not be measured by material things. It will have nothing. And yet it will have everything, and whatever one takes from it, it will still have, so rich will it be’ (Wilde, 1891).

## THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

While this metaphysical - as distinct from materialistic - dialectic, perhaps more in line with the original Hegelian dialectic than the materialistic interpretation of Hegel by Marx, might seem overly utopian, the aesthetic socialists such as Morris, Ruskin and Wilde did seek a practical and historical alternative social organisation in the form of neo-Medievalism, which was then being avidly promoted by the Arts and Crafts Movement. Ken Lonsinger, a present-day proponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement, describes this milieu at the time of Wilde, arising at the time of an embryonic Industrial Revolution with an obsession with the manufacture of many but shoddy goods for the expanding bourgeois market (Lonsinger).

Lonsinger refers to the decline of the Arts and Crafts Movement after a vigorous life of several decades as coinciding with the death of both Ruskin and Wilde in 1900, Wilde having enthusiastically promoted the

movement in both England and the USA. The aims and work of the movement can therefore be regarded as a practical expression of the Wildean ideal. Wilde advocated in the spirit of guild-socialism, decentralisation, where under Wilde's vision, 'The State is to be a voluntary association that will organise labour, and be the manufacturer and distributor of necessary commodities'. Wilde is suggesting *voluntarism* where the social order comprises voluntarist federations of producers' associations, responsible for the production and distribution of goods and the sharing of the returns among the producers. This is suggestive of both guild-socialism which formed in England shortly after Wilde's death, and of syndicalism in Europe.

Wilde did indeed specify the role of guilds and acknowledged the creative role of the guilds, as distinct from the Marxian ideal of an amorphous mass called 'the people', as being the upholder of artistic excellence and individual expression, stating in a lecture to students: 'Good handicrafts are due to guilds, not to the people. The moment the guilds lost their power and the people rushed in, beauty and honesty of work died' (Wilde, 1883). The aesthetic role of the State is 'not to govern, [but] to make what is useful. The individual is to make what is beautiful' (Wilde, 1891). Therefore there is a separate identity between the utilitarian and the aesthetic. Wilde, like other socialists, was optimistic about the use of the Machine to free man from drudgery, repudiating the Marxian cult of *proletarianization*, and stating:

'I cannot help saying that a great deal of nonsense is being written and talked nowadays about the dignity of manual labour. There is nothing necessarily dignified about manual labour at all, and most of it is absolutely degrading. It is mentally and morally injurious to man to do anything in which he does not find pleasure, and many forms of labour are quite pleasureless activities, and should be regarded as such. ... Man is made for something better than disturbing dirt. All work of that kind should be done by a machine' (Wilde, 1891).

Wilde's cynical attitude towards the expression, 'the dignity of manual labour' and his view that it is mostly in fact degrading, should not be construed to mean a snobbish derision of 'the lower classes'. From Wilde's championing of the Arts and Crafts Movement it is evident that what he was opposing was the mass *proletarianisation* that the industrial revolution and capitalism were moulding out of the craftsman, artisan and tiller. In one of his over one hundred lectures on the Arts and Crafts Movement that he gave on a tour of the USA in 1882 Wilde explained the pre-industrial ethos of craft:

'If you have poor and worthless designs in any craft or trade you will get poor and worthless workmen only, but the minute you have noble and beautiful designs, then you get men of power and intellect and feeling to work for you. By having good designs you

have workmen who work not merely with their hands but with their hearts and heads too; otherwise you will get merely the fool or the loafer to work for you' (Wilde, 1908).

Hence it is clear enough that it was not 'workmen' that Wilde derided like some *nouveau riche* merchant. To the contrary, what appalled Wilde was the degradation that had resulted from capitalism and that had placed the workman in the position of factory fodder. At this time Wilde referred to the potential of the machine to free humanity rather than to keep it bound to the economic treadmill, in order that craft could be again pursued:

'Do you think, for instance, that we object to machinery? I tell you we reverence it; we reverence it when it does its proper work, when it relieves man from ignoble and soulless labour, not when it seeks to do that which is valuable only when wrought by the hands and hearts of men. Let us have no machine-made ornament at all; it is all bad and worthless and ugly. And let us not mistake the means of civilisation for the end of civilisation; steam-engine, telephone and the like, are all wonderful, but remember that their value depends entirely on the noble uses we make of them, on the noble spirit in which we employ them, not on the things themselves' (Wilde, 1908).

The machine-based economic system was to be subordinated to the primacy of culture. The degradation resulting from the processes of mass production and consumption was responsible for the degradation of culture; but under aesthetic socialism or what we might call 'co-operativism', the satisfaction of the physiological necessities of life was to be the prelude to cultural self-actualisation:

'For the noblest art one requires a clear healthy atmosphere, not polluted as the air of our English cities is by the smoke and grime and horridness which comes from open furnace and from factory chimney. You must have strong, sane, healthy physique among your men and women. Sickly or idle or melancholy people do not do much in art...' (Wilde, 1908).

Under the Wildean ideal mechanisation would free the individual to pursue higher aims, which would be enabled due to increased leisure. The irony is that working hours in the industrial world have progressively increased, and for many the forty-hour week is vanishing. But the potentiality was – and is – there for a liberating affect where,

'Under proper conditions machinery will serve man, creating a society where the individual will be 'enjoying cultivated leisure - which, and not labour, is the aim of man - or making beautiful things, or reading beautiful things, or simply contemplating the world with admiration and delight, machinery will

be doing all the necessary and unpleasant work' (Wilde, 1908).

### 'AFFLUENZA'

What is required is an attitudinal shift; a matter often overlooked by economic theorists and perhaps better said by aesthetes and philosophers. The question to be asked concomitant to the ethical questions posed by Wilde *et al* is whether the accumulation of 'things' is an end in itself. Hamilton and Dennis (2005, ii) have in our time posed the question and coined the word 'affluenza':

- The bloated, sluggish and unfilled feeling that results from efforts to keep up with the Joneses.
- An epidemic of stress, overwork, waste and indebtedness caused by dogged pursuit of the Australian dream.
- An unsustainable addiction to economic growth.

The practical problem that remains is how to eliminate the domineering presence of the economic treadmill, while ensuring that sufficient purchasing power exists to consume production. It was a question considered primarily by the theorists of social credit who, like Wilde, believed that the primary aim of economics is to free up culture through an abundance of leisure. One of their proposals has been a 'National Dividend' whereby each individual is automatically regarded as a 'shareholder' by virtue of birth into a community, regardless of whether they work or the amount of time worked. Again, because working for money is regarded with what amounts to Puritanical insistence, any such proposal is met with contempt.

### UNIVERSAL INCOME AS A CULTURAL LEGACY

One of the premises of the 'new economics' (now generally known in the English-speaking world as 'social credit', the doctrine of C H Douglas and guild-socialist A R Orage) is that the machine is a cultural legacy, an inheritance that belongs to *Homo sapiens per se*, the product of accumulated work and thought, and any benefits accruing there-from should be given as a 'National Dividend' of that cultural legacy to all. The *ethos* behind this was described by one of its proponents, writing that,

'...the Machine is no sudden miracle descended on man out of the blue, but that it is on the contrary an inheritance, definite, logical and ours. It is not a gift... it is the result of effort, man's effort, and the result of work, man's work; the corporate wealth inherent in the Machine' (is the) legacy of all. Therefore, full employment is not an economic question but an ethical question. Full employment is not a panacea. What is an economic necessity is the sufficiency of purchasing power to consume production, regardless of the amount of time and

years expended on work. Once this is understood, the "dole", so derided by many, is what the "new economics" referred to as a "social dividend", (Colbourne, 1934, pp. 72-73).

C H Douglas's 'social credit' theory questioned whether "full employment" should be the primary concern of economics, contending that the "dole", despite its stigma as "charity" is nothing but 'a claim on goods ... of which the persons from whom it is collected in taxation already have enough for their needs...'; and that the wage is not the only means for which to distribute purchasing power. Douglas held that there is no justification 'for suggesting that even a large number of commercially unemployed necessarily threatens the material welfare of the community' (Douglas, 1937, p. 114). As for leisure, including the 'forced leisure of unemployment', Douglas countered the belief, as common today as then, that it is in some manner detrimental.

Is there any empirical, rather than anecdotal and theoretical, evidence for the contention that the work-life ratio adversely impacts upon the arts? A recent report commissioned by the Arts Councils of Eire and Northern Ireland examined the work and income of artists in both states. Among the conclusions is that:

'The cumulative study findings show that, for many ROI artists, working as a professional artist constitutes a difficult and uncertain way to make a living. Despite relatively high levels of education, work patterns are volatile and many artists report leading stressful lives in which they find it hard to obtain or maintain a good work-life balance, and may experience periods of unemployment. Income levels are low relatively to other workers, especially workers with similar educational backgrounds, and artists appear to have slipped backwards in terms of income compared to other workers over the past thirty years. Furthermore, some two in five ROI artists expected their incomes to fall significantly in 2009. Artists score poorly on other measures of standard of living, including the proportion in arrears in the past year in relation to payment of a utility bill, and as regards pension provision. The fact that both work and income can be volatile creates uncertainty and makes planning difficult. (McAndrew and McKimm, 2010, p. 15.).

The report alludes to international studies, and a considerable body of literature that has developed on the economic position of artists, stating that: 'European Union artists' work patterns are variable, fragmented and unpredictable, and (artists) often have to "moonlight" to gain a basic income. There is also evidence that artists as a group of workers are particularly vulnerable to economic recession'.

'Artist incomes tend to be lower than the incomes of other similarly qualified workers with a gap of around 30% or more found in several studies and, in some cases, artist incomes are lower than the

average incomes for all workers in the labour force.... Many artists work past the normal retirement age and artists also tend to have relatively poor pension provision compared to other workers. (McAndrew and Cathie McKimm, 2010, *ibid.*).

Hence, empirically, it has been concluded that matters for artists have not improved since Wilde's time, despite the technological and other advances. Rather the pervasive nature of this technology, in our computer age, has increased. The mercantile attitude that money is the measure of all things is the dominant spirit (*zeitgeist*) of this Age or cycle, already having existed in the West for several hundred years, and permeates all levels of society. Orthodox socialism of the materialistic variety, as Spengler pointed out nearly a century ago, merely aims to proletarianise capitalism rather than replace it. Mainstream economists, whether Left or Right, cannot realize that the problem is fundamentally one of spirit and ethos from which economic factors emanate, because these economists are themselves products of the current *zeitgeist* and lack the necessary detachment for clear thinking.

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# To Delegate<sup>1</sup> – the *bête noire* of Entrepreneurs<sup>2</sup>

Dr Bruce Duncan\*

## MEET THE ENTREPRENEURS – GENERALISATIONS

We entrepreneurs come in many shapes, sizes, degrees of effectiveness and spheres of influence. We are amongst those who help comprise the cutting edge of private and public enterprise. We are found in every nation, amongst any age group and know no gender restrictions. Some label us as mavericks.

Endowed with a mindset that seldom accepts “No” for an answer, we usually challenge *de facto* situations and, when necessary *de jure* structures, refusing to succumb to a blind acceptance of “it must be done this way”. We resent bureaucracy (except our own).

We regularly ask questions like, “why, how, when, where, who and what?” We are not conditioned to conform to a third party patterned approach to life or embrace customs and traditions that have moulded around the edges. We do not readily accept the maxim, “If it is not broken, do not fix it”, because that attitude perpetuates a lifestyle that (for us) is unexciting, grey and void of achievement.

We, like many others, believe in the richness of constructive change and development. We use our freedom to grow, clear space to advance, seek to contribute and extend the perimeters of the Eden’s Garden to investigate further the unexplored mysteries of space, travel to the uttermost parts of the universe, design, decorate, dive to the seabed and enrich society.

We are pacesetters, leaders and can be agents of progress. We make many mistakes and reap the bitter harvest of our gullibility, impulsiveness and stupidity but then, after licking our wounds, rise up and start afresh. We believe that there is no shame in, or degrees of, failure. To stumble is a very human learning experience, subjectively measured by the social norms of the era. Our frequent tumbling is painful to others as well but we will not easily surrender to defeat. Our genes direct us to believe that there is always a better way forward – and we will endeavour to find it.

We are not angelic but fallible and prone to the same temptations that entrap our neighbours. However, there are times when our displays of arrogance, pride and petulance mar our effectiveness, hurt others and cripple that which we have created.

Sadly, we often tend to confuse stubbornness with determination. This puerile defensiveness and illogical preference often loses us friends, damages our work and alienates supporters.

In general, we do not suffer fools gladly and rationalise criticisms about our behaviour and modus operandi, rather than change for the better. The “that is me” statement is one of our counterproductive excuses that engender further destructive behaviour.

Our choleric and sanguine impulses cause some to become our enemies, enlist critics and make us targets for much calumny (some of which is unjust) but, conversely, when we form friendships (and real friends are rare) they are usually lifelong.

Sadly, sandwiched between our many failings is our neglect to always show appreciation and, in pursuit of our goals, we often see others (consciously or unconsciously) as expendable pawns in our game of chess.

We are in constant danger of self-centred voyeurism at the expense of being caring and compassionate and “once bitten, twice shy” is another of our most used defence mechanisms.

Our shocking Gallery of Infamy includes tyrants, the charlatans of business, egotistical politicians and covetous individuals who enrich their own successes at the expense of others. Sadly, in some instances, we might exhibit some of the less desirable attributes of the rogues and despots of history.

Then again, many entrepreneurs live in perpetual fear of a coup d’état. To protect a fragile ego he/ she will paradoxically close the drawbridge against reform and change. In so doing, progress is stymied but the Kingdom of Self<sup>3</sup> is secure (and the emperor has no clothes). The entrepreneurial input of others is perceived as threatening and thus unwelcome. Contrary to the entrepreneurial exercise of constructive entrepreneurship, we often balk at inward change.

In common with most of the human race, we learn lessons late in life! We entrepreneurs have the potential to cause more damage than create “good”. Therefore, we must work on becoming more self-aware and respond to the need to change within ourselves early on, rather than later in life. The wisdom of the Greek sages who coined the phrase “Know Thyself<sup>4</sup>” is another key to personal growth.

Unless awakened to the need for inner growth we remain oblivious of the thin line between constructive entrepreneurship and destructive kingdom building<sup>5</sup>.

However, there are those amongst us who, in the attempt to carry our many Crosses and manage the thorns in our flesh<sup>6</sup>, ensure that we are accountable to someone who is on a higher notch. We realise our need of objective, respected mentors – empathic individuals who can keep our confidences, chide, discipline and monitor us without being judgemental. Our biggest obstacle to enjoy the full bloom of creative entrepreneurship is our inability,

unwillingness and stubborn refusal to delegate to others. Delegating responsibilities and empowering others remains the *bête noire* that causes untold management problems and personal stresses. Is it not time that we put away such childish insecurity?

### ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH

We entrepreneurs are creative and know that “Innovation is the specific tool of entrepreneurs, the means by which [we] exploit change as an opportunity for a different business or a different service. [Innovation] is capable of being presented as a discipline, capable of being learned, capable of being practiced. [We] entrepreneurs need to search purposefully for the sources of innovation, the changes and their symptoms that indicate opportunities for successful innovation.”<sup>7</sup>

However, the question arises, “why do we not innovate by using the abilities of others by delegating responsibilities?” We know how essential teamwork is. Our nature demands growth and progress, but ...

Let us engender a fresh transfusion of blood into our entrepreneurial heart. Can we improve our irregular status by lending our eyes and ears to the wisdom of a senior and highly respected management mentor, the late Peter Drucker who, when referring also to the near collapse of the Ford family Empire, emphasised the importance of delegation<sup>8</sup> (Drucker, *The Practice of Management*, pages 111 – 143).

### HENRY FORD – RENOWNED ENTREPRENEUR<sup>9</sup>

On 30 July 1863, the anti-Semitic<sup>10</sup> entrepreneur, Henry Ford was born as the first son of a prosperous farming family. (Baldwin, N, 2001)

“In 1879, sixteen-year-old Ford left home for the nearby city of Detroit to work as an apprentice machinist, although he did occasionally return to help on the farm<sup>11</sup>”.

He spent the following years, until his marriage to Clara Bryant in 1888, working as a labourer. After his marriage, to support himself and his wife, he ran a sawmill.

In 1891, he launched into industrial pursuits that led ultimately to the 1896 invention of his self-propelled vehicle - the Quadricycle. Ford then became one amongst several entrepreneurs who introduced the world to motor vehicles.

In 1903, Henry Ford became vice president and chief engineer of the Ford Motor Company. The rest is history – but is there more to the story? Revisionist records open an interesting set of windows on the individual who reportedly gave birth to the famed Model T.

### HENRY FORD – THE ALTER EGO

Ford’s initial successes were in large measure due to the contributions made by James Couzens who, for example eventually managed to get Ford to agree to the \$5 a day wage.

However, in the end, the jealous Ford could not brook the entrepreneurial influence of Couzens and in 1917, vindictively fired Couzens. The entrepreneur had dug his heels in and in a dictatorial spat closed the door on the genius of another. (Drucker, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, page 185).

Drucker reveals yet another aspect of the dark side of the entrepreneur, Henry Ford, citing how he had engaged in a “systematic, deliberate and conscious attempt to run the billion-dollar business without managers [and] when executives ... seemed to acquire managerial authority or responsibility of their own ... [they] were fired” (Drucker, *The Practice of Management*, pages 99 – 100).

Ford used to demote executives on a regular basis “less they become uppity” (Drucker, pages 97 – 101).

Fortunately, sending talented individuals to Coventry if they become “too uppity” in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain now faces the legal constraints of “constructive/unfair dismissal” - a necessary protection in the maelstrom of the entrepreneurial rat race of business.

Furthermore, Henry Ford failed to publish any financial figures, and just after World War II, the United States government had to step in to save the company from ruin. The family empire was mired in the financial doldrums because of Ford’s pathological secrecy and the lack of delegating responsibilities to others. He had succumbed to the Sirens who captivated his selfish, greedy and bigoted needs.

Drucker points out that Henry Ford II, the grandson, rescued the family business empire from bankruptcy.

Henry Ford’s entrepreneurial creativity was the spearhead but he had failed to realise that he was not the whole spear – he had needed to delegate the strengthening of the shaft to others. In addition he was not accountable to “objective others” and eschewed transparency. The history of the near demise of the Ford family empire provides a salient warning to every entrepreneur. We need to appreciate that whilst we may begin a great work, we do not necessarily have the strengths and abilities of the spear shaft to ensure its continuity. That is the task of others.

To ensure the life cycle of a great work, delegation must play an integral part of the process. If this is not allowed, then the only viable alternative is abdication! (Delegate or abdicate).

Ford’s avaricious ego had devoured fame and fortune<sup>12</sup> but the shadow he left behind was eclipsed

by his unwillingness to delegate, be accountable to objective others, be transparent and accept that he needed to change his management style. Sadly, these indulgences and the lack of delegation replicates in many businesses today – will the results of this neglect be any different from the historical evidences to hand?

Is it true to state, “the one thing we learn from history is that we never learn”? How many entrepreneurs will continue to reinvent the wheel that grinds greatness into disaster? Stubbornness and a pathological need to control, dominate, manipulate and use others must succumb to servant/transformational leadership (*Veritas E-Journal Volume 1 and Bibliography*).

### **POST HENRY FORD – LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Let us identify some of the evidences of non-delegation. Can we hold the mirror to see ourselves as others do? Can we carefully analyse the possible causes of this “clinging and suffocating” practice?

Non-delegation creates the “Entrepreneurial Reservoir Syndrome” where all planning, knowledge, macro and micro control and the future of the organisation fills one huge dam. As noted in Henry Ford’s legendary business practices, there is minimal information outflow. The habitually swamped dam owner thus displays an unconscious love of absolute power by flaunting his/her omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. Such grandiose and self-indulgent appropriation of the unattainable attributes then affects the lesser minions in the institution. They, in turn, cower and scurry around ensuring that they keep filling the organisational dam – without being sure why but slowly becoming less motivated. They ensure that the boss’s dam stays full but get little job satisfaction in return. Is this not a resurrection of the arrogantly structured Feudal System?

Entrepreneurs must not fall prey to business astigmatism, navel gazing and self-adulation that ignore the delegation of power and authority to others. A short sighted and ego-centric approach to business is counter-productive and creates the tombstone heralding an early organisational death in the wake of immeasurable collateral damage.

### **OTHER EXAMPLES OF ‘DELEGATE’**

Unchecked, despotic, dictatorial and exclusivist control inhibits and stifles growth, as is illustrated also in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

Moses, according to the Bible, was Jehovah’s appointed leader. He had become swamped by the demands of the Hebrew evacuees escaping from Egypt during his Cook’s tour to the Promised Land. His tight control of leadership caused a backlog of problems to fester - and the people of God suffered as a result. Moses, not the problems or the people, the economic or situational situations, was the fly in the

ointment – the buck stopped with him and he was unable to handle the responsibilities. He was a “one man band” and not in tune with his calling to lead. However, to ensure that matters did not go completely awry, he eventually engaged the help of his pagan father-in-law<sup>13</sup> (Exodus 18:13–16). Moses kept his seat and the Hebrew people moved forward with less angst gnawing within the camp’s entrails. Viva delegation!

Similarly, the early apostles realised that they could not continue to be the chief cooks and bottle washers in caring for the increase in converts requiring attention. They were developing the new divine business inaugurated by the Christ (who had delegated authority and power to his followers). According to the writer of Acts, those delegates then sensibly realised that whilst they believed they were heralds of the Gospel, they were not nearly as omnipotent, omnipresent or omniscient as the God they served. They needed to delegate to others (Acts 6:1–7). Their delegated authority initially resulted in the line management ability to contribute to the work of the fledgling church – and it grew<sup>14</sup>. People did not have to wait for hours for food to fill their stomachs.

The Bible, in 1 and 2 Corinthians and the Pastoral Epistle<sup>15</sup>, emphasises the importance and relevance of delegation within the early church. It was the keystone to the body ministry of the church.

Finally yet importantly, it would appear from the apocryphal stories in Genesis that God set an example by delegating certain duties to Adam (Genesis 2). It would appear that Eve did not have any specific tasks other than to be a “suitable helper” for Adam. Legislation around Equal Opportunities, feminism and the influence of the Suffragettes had not yet dawned. The fact that Adam and Eve’s irresponsibility caused them to be evicted from their home (the angel served as the bailiff); Adam was temporarily unemployed (he was fired without due notice - gross misconduct?) does not obviate the principle of delegation. The lesson is that when farming out responsibilities the proactive consideration of risks needs attention. Happily, that imperfect process is now part of most successful businesses.

### **A BETTER WAY**

One of the United Kingdom’s successful business enterprises modelling the practice of delegation is the John Lewis Stores<sup>16</sup>.

The following facts relate to some of the many positives inherent in their management style – what this article terms ‘a better way’.

1. Managers deal with staff (partners) who also own a stake in the business. (Each member of staff is a stakeholder in the business along with delegated authority).

2. Each employee has the inalienable right to ask direct and searching questions and expect an answer. (There is no hiding behind protocol and stakes).
  3. The interpersonal skills of managers plus their financial expertise are part of their job description. (Interpersonal skills are not always evident in all leaders and are a cause of many spaghetti-like management tangles).
  4. Understandably, John Lewis decision making takes a little longer but according to Carole Leslie (a partner at Baxedale) the process makes it possible for mistakes to be corrected quickly<sup>17</sup>. (Transparency and information flow is in evidence – no dictatorial, “*I* will think about it ...”)
  5. Employee ownership is a new concept and United Kingdom politicians hold up John Lewis “as a possible model for delivering public services - as viewed in the recent BBC documentary on the John Lewis Partnership”<sup>18</sup>. (Involved shareholding is another capitalist coin minted outside the volatile Stock Exchange).
  6. Employees have a feel for the business that external shareholders do not possess. (Ownership by involvement is a perk).
  7. Entrepreneurs often vote for democracy, but seldom allow its principles to surface in their work place. (A paradox illustrated also in the phrase, “Champagne Socialism”).
  8. Importantly, “Academic research shows that employee ownership makes for better productivity but ... is particularly good for engineering businesses, where short termism is the short cut to death,<sup>19</sup>”. Of relevance is the fact that “Employees as shareholders understand the business and know it won’t give them an instant return on their money.<sup>20</sup>” (This will blunt boardroom knives, remove paranoia from agendas and mould the team).
  9. Professor Joseph Lampel, Dr Ajay Bhalla and Dr Pushkar Jha<sup>21</sup> have researched a number of United Kingdom enterprises and concluded that delegated authority and power within an organisation has not only created a healthier shop floor but considerably increased profit margins. (Delegation does not dethrone but enrich because the seat of power extends to include others).
  10. To delegate is not to lose power, control and leadership. The attributes of the entrepreneur contribute to the greatness of the team rather than working in isolation from others. (True entrepreneurship harnesses the might of others to create the best outcomes and in so doing curbs some from trying to compete with God Almighty).
  11. Delegation empowers others to “go”. It lays up credit for the knowledgeable continuity of the organisation amongst participants who contribute to its success and growth. (Teamwork is personified in motivated delegates).
  12. To delegate enables the entrepreneur to discover further avenues of challenge and to grow the organisation from within and without. Job satisfaction is not sacrificed on the altar of delegation. (The challenge of the hunt remains vibrantly alive and the quiver is filled with arrows – rather than holding just rapidly wilting shaft).
  13. Delegation opens up invigorating tributaries leading to new horizons of possible diversification, mergers and takeovers. The stronger the team the greater is the potential for expansion. (A six-cylinder vehicle is more powerful than a Ford Quadricycle).
  14. To delegate introduces the entrepreneur to the world of his/her staff. It is another means of learning humility by facing peer criticisms and not passing them off with snide comments, off-the-cuff rationalisations and puerile behind-the-scenes denials, gossip and character assassination. (The team becomes family).
  15. Delegation helps develop the excellent concept of “servant leadership”<sup>22</sup>. (*Veritas* carried an article on this *better way* – did it strike home?)
  16. Delegation introduces the practical discipline of accountability to others, develops empathy and enriches a service commitment that seeks to understand others rather than bullying, dominating and manipulating them. (The “*I*” becomes “*We*” – and this does not equate with the Royal “*We*”).
  17. Delegation respects time. Others are not kept waiting for decisions because the insensitivities of a badly organised, insecure, self deluded “boss” wanting to do everything.
- It is doubtful if readers of this article are not aware of the importance of delegation. But do we delegate? Is it not time to change and use those same entrepreneurial skills that have created so much by introducing delegation into the warp and woof of experience?
- Delegation will revolutionise lives and, above all lift the frustration of many who have to wait in the wings whilst one person does everything and, more often than not, does a second rate job! The implementation of delegation into the veins of any enterprise will certainly bring change for the better.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *verb* (CHOOSE PERSON)

/ˌtʃuːz.ɪˈgeɪt/ to choose or elect someone to speak, vote, for a group, especially at a meeting. *A group of four teachers were delegated to represent the school at the union conference* (Cambridge Dictionary Online). See also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entrepreneurship> (Accessed 30 April 2011)

<sup>2</sup> *Entrepreneur noun* /ˌɒː n.trə.prəʊnɜː / [C] someone who starts their own business, especially when this involves seeing a new opportunity. *He was one of the entrepreneurs of the eighties who made their money in property.* (Ibid).

<sup>3</sup> See Bibliography

<sup>4</sup> At least eleven sages are cited. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Know\\_thyself#Attribution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Know_thyself#Attribution) (Accessed 30 April 2011)

<sup>5</sup> Jabay, Earl. *The God Players*. Zondervan 1970.

<sup>6</sup> The Bible. 2 Corinthians 12. 7 – 10

<sup>7</sup> Drucker, PF (November 19, 1909 – November 11, 2005), *The Father of Modern Management*

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> The Life of Henry Ford <http://www.hfmgv.org/exhibits/hf/> (Accessed 29 April 2011)

<sup>10</sup> [http://history.hanover.edu/hhr/99/hhr99\\_2.html](http://history.hanover.edu/hhr/99/hhr99_2.html) (Accessed 30 April 2011)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> The Bible. Exodus 18.

<sup>14</sup> The Bible. Acts 6. 1 – 7.

<sup>15</sup> Usually considered as 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. Some commentators include Philemon.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.johnlewispartnership.co.uk/Display.aspx?MasterId=d39053e9-7178-44d5-ae0-249a2d1cb49e&NavigationId=588> (Accessed 26 April 2011).

<sup>17</sup> [http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/career\\_and-jobs/appointments/article7100374.ece](http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/career_and-jobs/appointments/article7100374.ece) (Accessed 26 April 2011).

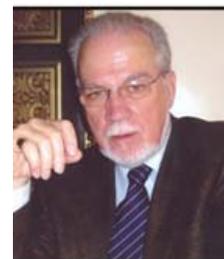
<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Model Growth: do employee-owned businesses deliver sustainable performance?

<sup>22</sup> See Bibliography



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## Spoken English: Towards Standardisation

Dr Ravinder Kumar\*

Something of a civilization can be understood by perusing the literature of the time, providing, of course, we are able to correctly interpret the language of the literature. Expository correctness is mandatory to understanding.

“[It] enables one person to make a reaction (R) when another person has the stimulus (S). [It] consists of a great many activities whose union into a single far-reaching complex of habits results from repeated stimulations during the individual’s early life.” (Bloomfield, 1983).

The spoken form of a language exists before it is formalised into symbols - its alphabet. The natural order in learning a language is: first the ears, then the tongue and then the hands. When learning English as a second language (L2) we “...listen (to people talking, to songs, to news, programs, to talk shows and sports commentaries > we begin to understand what we listen to and watch) > we begin to think in English in relation to various real life situations, experiences, observations, etc. > we begin to speak English slowly but steadily > we begin to read English newspapers, journals, magazines, etc.”, (Goraya, 2008).

It is difficult to get a scale of correct pronunciation in the case of a non-native language. People who started doing research, at the beginning used their own scale of correct pronunciation. But some languages are still in the dark age of their history, so to make a criterion to judge someone’s pronunciation on some other’s scale is a little unjustified. Grammarians found techniques of general application as to how a person should write and speak but early in language acquisition mistakes may be made. For example: “...the way in which analogy can lead to change is seen in learning words like man and mouse, and the assumption that the analogical plurals are *mans* and *mouses*. Such childish errors are quickly corrected, but analogical formations of this kind also take place in adult speech, and often become accepted in old English. There are many different ways of putting a noun into the plural: for example: *stān* ‘stone’, *stānas* ‘stones’.” (Barber, 2009) But to ensure universal understanding in communication, standardisation is mandatory. Correct pronunciation is an art to make things more understandable of the conversation.

Problems of pronunciation arise when we cross boundaries. For example, a person from the Punjab (Indian State) says *gudd* instead of good. Humans strive for excellence but the native speaker considers language an ancestral property. A baby picks up its first language easily and naturally without knowing

the alphabet and the grammar of the first language. In fact, baby is not aware that there exist many sounds, symbols, rules and grammar of the language h/she is learning. Learners of second languages (L2) are more conscious of using and speaking words correctly in spoken as well as in written expression of language. In a modern educated world, it would be helpful to have a ‘Standard Pronunciation and Grammar’. “The principal design of a Grammar of any Language is to teach us to express ourselves with propriety in that Language; and to enable us to judge of every phrase and form of construction, whether it be right or not.” (Lowth, 1762). Unfortunately, young people tend to be attracted to wrong and ‘eaten-words-language’, the gift of the electronic media!

### ACCENT

As we go from one place to another we hear different types of accent in the same languages. If we aim to communicate well then standard accent is desirable. There are two things to note about the term accent as used technically by linguists: (1) it involves only pronunciation, and (2) it is universal - everybody speaks with an accent. Ellis phrases this, in a note in The Oxford English Dictionary: “an accent may include mispronunciation of vowels or consonants, misplacing of stress” (Bauer 2007). The use of the prefix mis- indicates that Ellis sees an accent as undesirable.

Some people are said to ‘speak without an accent’ or ‘not have an accent’. Laurie Bauer (Bauer 2001) sees that this can mean one of three things:

- The person X may say that another person Y does not have an accent if they judge that Y’s accent is, in relevant respects, the same as their own.
- A person may be said not to have an accent if they speak with a standard accent.
- A person who is known not to use English as their first language but who nevertheless sounds like a native English speaker may be said not to have an accent.

For correct pronunciation in English, the formulation of a standard accent is essential to reduce the effect of the speaker’s background. “Each of us shares with the community in which we live a store of words and meanings as well as agreed conventions as to the way in which these words should be arranged to convey a particular message.” (Gimson, 1967). Catford probes the purpose of this statement: “... (the) primary function of language is the co-ordination of human activity in society. We speak or write primarily in order to influence the actions of our fellows.” (Catford, 1967)

## COMMUNICATION

Communication means getting the message across. This is something we all fail to do from time to time; either because we lack information, have inaccurate facts or figures, use incorrect vocabulary or grammatical structures, or are unable to analyse the problem and present ideas systemically and convincingly. Any or all of this may render the message ineffective, so much so that it does not achieve the desired result.

But even if all the inadequacies enumerated above are absent, one factor which will continue to mar the effectiveness of the message is mispronunciation - the domain of the spoken mode of the language. It needs to be appreciated that "language is a system of communication through speech; and written language is [merely] an attempt to represent the spoken language by visual symbols" (Bansal and Harrison, 1983).

Language is a set of instructions that consist of both verbal and non-verbal communications. In non-verbal communication the complete body movement is required in socially accepted gestures. But communication is basically spoken and language is primarily speech. In the history of any language the written form is a much latterly development — indicative of the mental uplift of the linguistic community, requiring it to record what is significant for the posterity so that it may not be lost.

## TOWARDS STANDARDISATION

Many languages of this world are not fully developed grammatically and the local dialect is always variable in day to day activities and interactions. As noted above, in the development of human, we hear words first then start listening and finally speak. So speaking is a repetitive process where a learner imitates the speaker. "By the time we are grown up, the habits of our own language are so strong that they are very difficult to break" (O'Connor, 1967). This is why adults have trouble in mastering the characteristic sounds or sound-system(s) in a foreign language. There is a brain function that is invoked to acquire new words and language.

"Information about brain activity can be built up by varying the tasks set. Brain activity can be compared across a number of individuals (and the results aggregated) and comparisons can be made between different groups of subjects. For example, readers of different languages can be compared to see if the processing systems for the different scripts are similar (e.g. ideographic versus alphabetic scripts). Dyslexic readers can be compared with normal readers and bilingual subjects can be compared working in their different". (Randall, 2007)

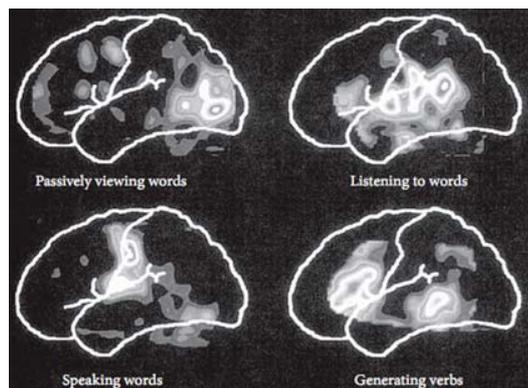


Figure 1. Examples of PET scans of the left side of the brain during different tasks (from Posner & Rachel, 1994)

Speech is organised by sounds (phonemes) and taken in by the ear while writing is representation of those speech sounds in marks (graphemes) on paper which make no noise and are taken in by the eye (O'Connor, 1967). The concept of the phoneme is central to all linguistic analyses of spoken language. Each language has a limited set of phonemes which are sounds which have contrastive significance; which make a significant difference to the word if changed. Thus, the two sounds [p] and [b] represent a phonemic contrast in English because the substitution of one for the other in words means that the meaning of the word changes (e.g. 'pad' and 'bad' are different words). Both sounds are made by the lips and are thus called 'bilabial' consonants.

Standard English has twelve (12) pure vowels or *monophthongs* and eight (8) vowel-glides or *diphthongs* making a total number of twenty (20) vowel sounds (there are five (5) triphthongs as well) and twenty four (24) consonants. For all these forty nine (49) sounds there are only twenty six (26) orthographic symbols or *graphemes*. That is why "the current orthography of English is notoriously deficient in its capacity for showing clearly the pronunciation that a word or a sequence of words should have....." (McCarthy, 1947).

Spoken English has different variations within the words. English is a borrowed language from different languages, so sometimes, it is confusing when the rules of pronunciation fails in different contexts of the same language. For example,

"In the words city /sɪtɪ/, busy /bɪzɪ/, women /wɪmɪn/, pretty /prɪtɪ/, village /vɪlɪdʒ/ the letters i, y, u, o, e, and a, all stand for the same phoneme /ɪ/. On the other hand, in banana /bənɑ:nə/, bather /beɪðə/, man /mæn/, many /menɪ/ the letter a stands for five different vowel sounds. The same word read (present) /ri:d/ and read (past) /red/ are pronounced in two different

ways, whereas rain, rein and reign are all pronounced /reɪn/.

The cluster “ough” gives six different pronunciations in bough /aʊ/, though /əʊ/, sought /ɔː/, through /uː/, cough /ʊf/, and tough /ʌf/.” (Rathore, 2009).

Enumeration of the peculiarities of English speech will inevitably highlight the pitfalls in speaking English. First, English has borrowed words readily and freely from various languages retaining their original spellings and original pronunciations, e.g. “bourgeois” /bɔːʒwɑː/ and “restaurant” /restərɑːn/ from French, “kimono” /kɪmɒnəʊ/ from Japanese, “rajah” /rɑːdʒə/ from Hindi, “Nazi” /nɑːtsɪ/ from German, etc. The spellings of these loan words with their spellings and pronunciations from the foreign languages confuse us.

Secondly, in English orthography many letters are neutral or silent, e.g. “h” in “what, where, vehicle, annihilation”; “l” in “walk, stalk”; or last “r” or “re” in “father, future”. In almost all the Indian languages there is one-to-one correspondence between the grapheme and the phoneme. Therefore, our habit of reading letter by letter causes mispronunciation in English.

Thirdly, there are weak forms of some 50 English words. “The weak forms are weakened pronunciation of certain frequently occurring words whose function in the sentence is structural rather than semantic. As it is normal for such words to be unstressed, they are particularly subject to weakening influences.”

(Kingdon, 117) For instance, “can” becomes /kən/, “do” becomes /də/, “he” becomes /ɪ/, etc. in informal speech. In such a situation their full strong pronunciation appears unnatural and artificial.

Fourthly, English is a stress-timed language (unlike French or Indian languages which are syllable-timed languages, implying that any word with two or more than two syllables has a stress or accent on one syllable). However, the system of stressing is erratic and has no consistency. It is on the first syllable in “differ”, on the second in “pre'fer” and on the third in “ciga'rette”. In a sentence these syllables take the stresses and the timing between stressed syllables remains almost the same, e.g. in the following two sentences :

“The 'chair ar'rived.”  
“The 'chairman ar'rived.”

the pronunciations of “chair” are different since the time gap between “chair” and “—'rived” in both the sentences will be the same. This syllable is spoken fairly faster in the second sentence than in the first one.

Fifthly, the shift in the stress affects the pronunciation of other syllables, e.g. all the three syllables “pho”, “to” and “graph” of “photograph” /fəʊtəgrɑːf/ change radically while pronouncing “photographer” /fəʊtəgrəfə/ or “photography” /fəʊtəgrəfi/.

## REMEDIAL ACTION

Ignorance of pronunciation in spoken English is remediable, unless the person is a total dunce and lazy. Reading and listening are the two effective means of remediation. Reading imparts information but does nothing with regard to informing the reader as to the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words. Fortunately there is a lot of English spoken around the world these days, and most people get the opportunity of listening to English in some way or the other, and can remedy their mispronunciation.

Mispronunciation not only hampers intelligibility, it creates a poor impression of the speaker indicating lack of proper linguistic training. “Rightly or wrongly, most people consider language as an index of culture, breeding, upbringing, personality, sometimes even the intelligence, decency and integrity. Under the circumstances, it is unwise, not to say harmful, to pay no heed to your language.” (Pei, 1958)

Teachers of English are models as far as the use of the language is concerned. If we make errors, we are not likely to be pardoned so we need to pay attention to our pronunciation as well as remain sensitise to helping our students learn.

What we need to do is to cull out those sounds which are not there in our language(s) and hear them carefully in order to train our ears. Then, by imitating we have to acquire the unfamiliar sounds of the target language and train our students accordingly, e.g. /f/, /w/, /z/, /ʒ/ etc.

We also need to understand the phonetic system of English stress-patterns and weak forms. Also, we should refrain from guessing the pronunciation of unfamiliar words and go to a dictionary in order to check its correct pronunciation.

## Acknowledgement

With an open heart, I express my deep gratitude to the teachers of my school days - the foundation laid by them is alive and strong like a rock in me. My supervisor and friend, Professor G.S. Rathore was full of passion and his criticisms and discussions with me proved invaluable. Above all I thank the Lord God Almighty for granting me imagination, strength and determination to present this paper.

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# University Education in Uganda: Systematic Problems, Challenges and the Way Forward

Dr Oyat Christopher \*

## ABSTRACT

This article addresses issues related to a systemic organizational and institutional problem associated with higher education in Uganda. In identifying the problem and challenges, the researcher sought to understand more about the educational system in the western industrialized countries such as United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Italy and Germany. The study was comparative, cross-sectional, longitudinal, and relied on qualitative research. Secondary sources of data were found to be useful in strengthening primary sources of information.

It became evident that the system of education in Uganda requires much improvement if it is to stand in tandem with the modern day approach to learning. There are several irregularities in the system that needs correction. The study noted that cross fertilization of knowledge will play a crucial role in revamping and bringing about change in the education system at higher levels; and that it is important that different stakeholders from within and without the country should join hands to openly and critically address the inadequacies in the system. In particular the central government should not abdicate its constitutional responsibility; this is a time to invest much more in higher education. Harnessing human capital is more critical in the history of this country at this time than ever before, especially in respect to the promotion of science, research and technology related disciplines.

**Key words: Accreditation, education, evaluation, human resources and programs.**

It is axiomatic that education is fundamental to enhancing the quality of human life and ensuring social and economic progress. It is the key to creating, adapting and spreading knowledge. But in the less developed countries the gains in access to education have been unevenly distributed; the poor seldom get their fair share (World Bank, World Development Report, 1998/1999).

In addressing the notion of higher education in Uganda, this paper provides a brief background to education in Uganda, highlights a systemic problem in the higher education system, presents some challenges and proposes a way forward.

## BACKGROUND

The country of Uganda is a creation of British colonial government. It became a British protectorate in 1894. Its system of education prior to the country becoming independent in 1962 was skewed and structured to ensure that the country population became predominantly job seekers rather than job creators - in the main. The colonial government invested a lot of resources in training and promoting the discipline of humanities and behavioral sciences rather than placing emphasis on the disciplines linked to sciences and technology. This orientation continued even after the independence of Uganda, which is disappointing because a country can not be expected to be self-reliant, integrated and self-sustaining with this kind of education model. But it suited colonial interests, and the agenda of those who inherited power after the colonial administrators left.

At the time of independence, Uganda had only one university; it was called Makerere and it was established in 1922. The question that comes to mind is: why did the colonial government establish only one university? Most educators and economists argue that it is the human resources of a nation, not its physical capital or its natural resources that ultimately determine the character and pace of its socio-economic and political development. Frederick Harbison of Princeton University put it this way:

“Human resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations, and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop any thing else” (Harbison 1973).

Harbison emphasizes further that the principal institutional mechanism for developing human skills and knowledge is the formal educational system. Most third world governments, including the Ugandan authorities, believe that the rapid quantitative expansion of higher educational opportunities is the key to national development. But, while this is a correct line of thinking, in practice the quest has become politically costly, and in many respects defective in terms of implementation. Higher education in Uganda has been marred with a lot of irregularities, and this is viewed as basically a systemic problem.

Today, Uganda has a total of twenty eight (28) universities, of which five (5) are government owned and twenty three (23) privately established with the

approval of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE).

The NCHE's main responsibility is to regulate higher education in Uganda. It was established and started its operation in January 2003. Before that it was the Ministry of Education of Uganda that was responsible for accreditation and evaluation of credentials of higher education institutions. Today, the NCHE has the national mandate to evaluate and accredit university courses and programs.

The NCHE applies a list of criteria to educational institutions in respect to measuring the quality of the college or university, in combination with its educational curriculum. The institution assesses the suitability of a university or institution for a given course or program (see Joyce Nyakato in *New Vision*, March 17, 2011 p.4). In a bid to ensure quality, the NCHE has set up a minimum standard for courses and professional qualifications in higher institution of learning. Every new course or program introduced needs to be approved by the Council in order to be recognized as a valid qualification in the country.

According to a Higher Education Officer at NCHE (Patrick George Okao, *New Vision*, March, 17, 2011, p.2), there are eight (8) areas evaluated in the institutional audits:

- Institutional governance;
- The quality of teaching and learning;
- The quality of academic staff and their qualifications;
- The sufficiency of the educational facilities;
- The research and publication abilities of the staff;
- The quality of outputs (graduates, quality of research and publication and performance of alumni in the job market);
- Discipline in financial management; and
- The relationship between the university and community.

These fundamental cornerstones and general mandates of the National Council for higher Education (NCHE) in Uganda have not been explicitly explored and concretely navigated hitherto, mainly on account of limited yearly funding to the institution by Government, as well as inadequate institutional manpower since 2003. In developing countries like Uganda, there is a tendency of having good policies and frame works in place, but when it comes to the arrangements for delivery, such institutions rarely live up to the established benchmarks. Therefore, it is prudent to start doing many things differently if Uganda's higher education system should be more buttressed, and is to be more internationally recognized and respected.

## THE PROBLEM

The writer's personal experience, available statistics from reliable sources and interactions with fellow academicians and education managers in Uganda, combine to suggest that Uganda's formal educational and organizational system is riddled with irregularities and defects when it comes to prioritization. The problem is both institutional and organizational in character. There is a strong case that the central Government does not deliberately provide adequate funding for university research activities and publication (see e.g. the closing speech by Professor Mondo Kagonyera, Chancellor of Makerere University in Uganda, at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference on health sciences conference, October 2009). More funds are made available for military defense than education. Only a few individuals benefit from state political scholarship in universities and yet the engine of sustainable development is rooted in an inclusive accessibility of university education, especially when one looks at the low human development indicators in developing nations. More money is spent on primary and secondary education than on colleges and universities (Uganda's budget 2010/2011). In an economy that is grappling to grow and develop, it is vital that human capital should be harnessed by an adequate higher education sponsorship program.

The monopoly role by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is equally a matter of concern. This body is overwhelmed with so many universities, colleges and other institutions to assess, evaluate and approve for licensure. This suggests that accreditation should be liberalized, broken down to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the management of higher education.

## METHODS

In gathering data for this article the writer has used a multi-faceted approach to data generation. Findings have been based on interviews with key academic informants/stakeholders and critical observation of the trend in higher education pursuit in Uganda over the past eight years. Secondary sources from credible reports helped to enrich the findings.

## LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The data generated were of a qualitative rather than quantitative kind. Academicians and well placed authorities from three state/government universities were contacted but the other two public universities were not contacted due to logistical constraints. Officials from the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) could not be physically reached, but documented information was made available, including an important communication from the Executive Director of NCHE in 2010.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI) ranking for the financial year 2007/2008, Uganda ranked number 154 out of 177 countries that were subjected to economic, social, political, environmental, educational and technological analysis. The report indicated that public expenditure on education in Uganda had not been significant since 1991. In 1991, government expenditure on education was 1.5% of GDP while from 2002-2005, it was 5.2% of GDP. In terms of total government expenditure, education expenditure was 11.5% in 1991 and 18.3% from 2002-2005. Of this amount, in the years 2002-2005, tertiary institutions, including universities, received only 12% on average (HDR for 2007/2008, p.267). This level of budgetary allocation has not changed much to date; the education sector has receive less than 15% of public expenditure in the financial year 2010/2011 (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2010/2011 budget statement).

It could well be argued that Uganda as a country will not realize fundamental socio-economic and political transformation and progress as long as the budgetary allocation for higher education sector remains dismally low. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore (whose levels of development (HDI) were close to that of Uganda between the years 1964-1971) have greatly invested in higher education (see Thirlwall, 1999). Their respective rankings in terms of the UN human development index have all been improving: Hong Kong stands at No. 21, the Democratic Republic of Korea is No. 26, and Malaysia is No. 63 out of 177 countries assessed. The UN report affirms that countries ranked from 1-70 are those that are doing well in terms of human development by international standards. Political instability, greed, corruption and abuse of office, and limited political will have all contributed to the Ugandan failure to build human development from 1971 to the present.

As noted above, the Government of Uganda spends disproportionately more money on primary and secondary education than in higher education. There is free primary and secondary education, but heavy cost sharing in higher institutions of learning. Yet parents in Uganda can generally afford to pay tuition fees and other charges in primary and secondary education. So why does the government of Uganda prefer to help parents at primary and secondary level but fail to assist them at the more expensive tertiary level? The inevitable result has been that many students have failed to pursue or continue with university education, even when they are qualified to do so, on account of the fees being too expensive. This seems to be a case of poor prioritization in terms of allocation of public expenditure. It is a systemic problem that requires revamping.

Michael Todaro's (2003) insight with regard to the tertiary education systems of less developed countries system is worth noting. His work suggests that university education in most developing countries is focused on training students to be job seekers rather than job creators. In the case of Uganda, 60% of the courses offered by the licensed universities are in the discipline of humanities and behavioral sciences. That is, less than 40% of students study science and technology related disciplines. In this writer's view the Ugandan Central Government should invest more in sciences and research activities at higher levels as a matter of priority.

It is evident that the National Council for Higher Education in Uganda has continued to enjoy a monopoly on credential evaluation and accreditation of courses and programs in higher institutions, not only in respect to university education, but also in other tertiary institutions offering Diplomas and Certificates. This seems to be an overload for a single institution, thereby breeding inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the proper management of higher education.

Open, online and distance learning education systems are always treated with contempt in Uganda to a point that individuals who graduate from such studies, whether from within or without the country, always find it challenging and difficult to find the same employment opportunities as those who have graduated from the physical and traditional classroom environment. Employers have been made to believe that those who hail from the traditional real/physical classroom environment are better graduates. However, in the modern world of globalization and Information Technology, this dogmatic and stereotype attitude and belief should have no place. Institutions and individuals who peddle such narrow lines of thinking should be helped to abandon such unnecessary orthodoxy in higher education systems of learning.

In Uganda, there is no approved, licensed and non-governmental Credential Evaluation and Accreditation institution apart from the NCHE; and the reality on the ground is that the NCHE has failed in many respects to effectively and efficiently manage the eight duties and responsibilities or mandates mentioned above. This raises the question: why doesn't the government liberalize and open space for proven institutions to be licensed and answerable to the NCHE so that NCHE could play more of a regulatory and supervisory role, rather than being required to execute all the attendant duties and responsibilities. This practice should be stopped and the "Pandora's" box opened for the mutual good and effective and efficient management of higher education system in Uganda.

According to its mandate, the NCHE expects courses and programs to be reviewed once in four years predominantly by the staff of the institution. But at Gulu University, the Faculty of Business and Development Studies, programs and courses were

reviewed only once (in 2010) since the university was established in 2002! Sister universities under Government control report that they have experienced the same irregular program and course reviews. This is mainly because there are no adequate funds made available to spearhead the exercise, and the fact that the NCHE is overloaded in busy executing other duties and responsibilities. It is true that academic staff members on the ground also appear not to have the time to execute the duties of program reviews. But, this aside, it is clear that the NCHE has failed in its regulatory and supervisory role.

When courses and programs are not regularly reviewed as necessary, then the relevance of such courses and programs suffer especially in terms of not being commensurately in touch with the realities on the ground. External employers and agencies need to be involved in the review exercise; their inputs are very important. Rarely do we find them being full engaged in the reviews process in all the disciplines in the case of Government owned universities in Uganda. Part of the problem stems from the elitist attitudes of some academics in higher education institutions. Such complacent individuals consider that involving employers and agencies is a waste of time and other resources, believing that the latter know little in theoretical and empirical terms by comparison with their academic counterparts. In one review in 2010, the staff members of the Department of Development Studies in Gulu University relied on only one civil servant to help in the exercise; the Community Services Manager of Gulu District was called upon to review all course units delivered by this Department. The department should have engaged technocrats from different backgrounds to enable the exercise to succeed.

## **COURSE INNOVATION**

Industrial training for undergraduate students in public universities is not compulsory. The result is that many students are not adequately prepared, in terms of the required practical industrial skills and experience, to effectively and properly be true professionals when they graduate. Students who graduate in this kind of arrangement tend to be more theoretical than practical since they possess insufficient practical skills and hands on the job.

Regular feedback from employers and agencies in respect to the institution's graduates is important. This feedback should be in terms of the quality of graduate performance at work place. Such feedback would provide a fertile avenue of exchange of ideas, and enable both parties to mutually chart the way forward.

## **CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Higher education in developing countries and in Uganda in particular requires greater liberalization in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of knowledge and the imparting of skills and

work experience. There is a need for regular reviews of programs and courses via consultation with all relevant stakeholders to inform the quality of the education curriculum, delivery mechanisms and teaching practices. The National Council for Higher Education should be proactive in regularly and prudently addressing its obligations and mandates with the commitment and resources the office deserves, if the institution is to be relevant and useful in promoting the values and ethos of a credible higher education system.

The Central Government through the Ministry of Education needs to allocate more funds to the NCHE if the institution is to execute its duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. The Central Government should equally encourage and promote the establishment of non- governmental credential evaluation and accreditation institutions so that the workload of the NCHE is reduced to manageable proportions.

There should also be more funding for universities especially in respect to research and publication. After all, there are still only five state universities to fund. The commitment and political will should be there to enable this constitutional obligation to be executed given the problems and challenges abounding in terms of human development in Uganda.

Promoting science and technological education should constitute a priority on the government's agenda if social, economic, cultural and political transformation is to be realized. And this should begin in primary education for the good of the nation. There should be clear incentives in favor of those who pursue science and technology related disciplines. The facilitators/teachers of science and technology related disciplines should be given additional benefits over and above others so that they can encourage and promote the drive towards scientific and technological innovation and creativity.

Universities in Uganda should encourage their staff and students to participate in more regularly and with greater commitment in inter-university staff and students exchange programs. This should be across countries (via international exchange arrangements) as well as within Uganda. Cross-fertilization of knowledge, skills and experience across borders helps breed and spur social-economic, cultural, technological and political learning and development of society as a whole. There is a saying in my local Acholi language in northern Uganda:

*"A child who keeps on eating his or her mother's food always thinks that the mother is the best cook."*

The expression highlights the importance of generating knowledge and skills using the experience of a wider cross section of academicians and professionals if we are to realize concrete results in human development.

Industrial training and work experience placement of undergraduate students should not only be compulsory but should be audited and marks awarded based on the submission of either individual or group reports of students attached to an organization. Marks should also be awarded by the employer or agency based on a well designed marking guide developed in consultation with the institution. In this regard, prospective employers should first be mobilized and sensitized about the importance of allowing and facilitating the process of students' placement for training. If this is done, it is evident that students will stand a better chance of being equipped with the pre-requisite practical knowledge, skills and experience to execute associated duties and responsibilities when they eventually graduate.

Regular reviews of programs or courses in higher education should be encouraged with the support of relevant experts from within but also including academicians and professionals from outside the institution so that quality in higher education can be enhanced and measure up to reputable international standards.

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# Critical Factors Impeding Airlines Entering the Low Cost Market in Africa

Francis Mkoloma\*

This article is taken from an MBA Research Report. The full text may be accessed by contacting St Clements University at [admin@stclements.edu](mailto:admin@stclements.edu).

Air travel has taken a low profile in Africa despite the fact that the continent, with its vastness and poor surface transport infrastructures, offers fertile ground for airline business initiatives. Flying between two African countries is as difficult and expensive as it is to travel first into a European country and then to the African destination.

Low Cost Carriers (LCCs) have proved successful in various parts of the world. This article looks at the origins and philosophy of LCCs and attempts to: (1) isolate the factors that restrain the entry of LCCs into African markets; (2) highlight the probable benefits of LCCs entering African markets; and (3) suggest workable start-up mechanisms for LCCs to enter African markets that are presently dominated by legacy carriers.

## LOW COST CARRIERS (LCCs)

The principle aim of the low cost carrier airline is to compete with cars, buses and trains as a means of easy and cheap travel. This is affirmed by Conger (Conger 1994): "Southwest's vision centers around being a direct competitor with automobiles and buses, not other carriers.

The Electronic Ticket Network defines an LCC as one offering "discounted fares with no drinks, no food, no headphones for on board entertainment, no newspapers, no movies, no mileage programs, no VIP lounges, no children fares, no paper tickets, no connecting flights (and) no denied boarding compensation, the aim being to achieve a pricing strategy on par or below what it would cost to drive (in a road vehicle) to the destinations" (ETN 2006).

Subsequent to their introduction into North American and European markets, LCCs spread quickly to Far-East Asia and much of the rest of the world. Some African countries tried to operate LCCs but with limited success. Kenya saw the introduction of Flamingo Airlines but it floundered. South Africa's Kulula.com and Morocco's Atlas Blue are the only two LCC airlines registered in Africa since 2001.

Most African airlines remain legacy carriers with colonial origins. Airlines established and run by British Airways, Trans-World Airlines and Air France, to mention a few, were taken over following

independence by national governments. In many cases progress has been stymied by bureaucratic mismanagement and the fact that the legacy carrier model is not competitive in African conditions.

## CREATING THE LCC MARKET

In North America in the 1970s, some entrepreneurs saw a latent market for LCCs in the travel needs of people using surface transport. The LCCs promoters identified what and who the potential passenger were, i.e. people wishing to visit friends or just get away for a leisure holiday over a weekend, or people heading to a short term business meeting or appointment. What these people had in common was the need for an affordable fare (Foster 1982). The LCC saw an opportunity to shift from traditional carrier long-haul flights dominated by business travellers by creating a new short-haul flight market. The idea was to compete with surface transport, cut journey times, and provide cheap airfares to tourist destinations whilst earning steady profits (Karp 2003). While all of this was going on, the African market remained dormant - dominated by long-haul national carriers. The market was business travellers, very often foreigners (Karp 2003); short business trips, leisure travel or visiting friends was non-existent amongst the African population.

The market shift in the USA and other places saw the LCCs gain such a big market share that many legacy carriers created their own low cost carriers in order to compete. For example, United Airlines created Ted and British Airways created British Airways Go. In Africa, South African Airways created Mango and BA created British Comair as brands. The launch of low-fare brands by the legacy carriers was a classic segmentation philosophy (Pilling 2004), the sole aim being to push the new LCCs out of business. However, many of these low fare brands were unsuccessful; many of them went bankrupt due to fierce LCC market competition (Pilling 2004).

## POLICY LIBERALISATION

It was the US Airline Deregulation Act of 1978 that opened the door to drastic changes in the US domestic airline industry. The competition that it brought to the air travel market and the opening of doors for more people to fly due to cheaper fares suited the North American domestic market. The USA population is huge, income earnings are high and the USA is a vast open country. The same applies to Canada. Predictably the domestic passenger traffic increased as fares dropped.

Inspired by this success, the USA government engaged the European governments for negotiated liberal market agreements in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Morrell 1998). Noting the success of these agreements, the European member states gradually liberalized their intra-community air services between 1983 and 1989, and thereafter started to negotiate open market agreements on a bilateral basis. The

success of this has been overwhelming, with the entry of the new markets from Eastern Europe into the European Union (see World Bank, 2007).

Africa governments saw that the liberalization of air transport has been a catalyst for increased economic growth and employment around the world but the process faced resistance from government sponsored airlines. South Africa, Morocco, and Nigeria have liberalised their skies and have benefited from LCCs as drivers of growth, but the rest of Africa has not, even in the face of the Yamoussoukro Decision, i.e. the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Treaties for an African Open Skies policies (Malawi DCA Document 2006). The African market remains restricted by bilateral restrictions imposed by one state on another. However, the airline industry is slowly beginning to benefit through loosening up on the Bilateral Air Service Agreements (BASA) and through partnerships with inter-airline African and international network carriers. The merging of Kenya Airways with Royal Dutch Airlines to form SkyTeam and the joining of South African Airways with Star Alliance are cases in point. In time some commentators believe that the open sky agreement between the United States of America and the European Union (EU) will be the fore runner of other similar agreements, even in Africa (see Morrison 2008).

#### **e-COMMERCE**

The LCC operating philosophy was built on a low-fare/no frills principle that offered discounted fares in exchange for the elimination of many of the traditional passenger services provided by legacy carriers. Important in this has been the globalization of the aviation industry through e-commerce and e-business Information Technology. This has been used as a tool to achieve operational objectives for profitability (see Wagonlit, 2003), providing opportunities for greater competition in promoting products and fares and more dynamic pricing tactics for increased yields in revenues, via the internet and travel distribution chains such as SITA, Worldspan, Amadeus, Galeleo. Without an efficient IT the low cost carrier philosophy fails, so for Africa to achieve complete liberalization, it needs to have an effective information technology that is well supported and able to run and connect to the rest of the world. International Air Transport Association (IATA) has championed many changes in the use of IT for the aviation industry to meet its strategic goals. According to Petrozzo (1998), LCCs used technology effectively to gain competitive advantage in the market place.

To operate effectively, airlines need high passenger traffic, therefore LCCs are more suited to densely populated, high income areas such as those found in North American, European and Asia. In these environments airlines are able to operate short flights with fast turn-rounds and maximise aircraft utilization According to Morrell (1998), "competition is best

captured by the number of effective competitors, rather than just the number of carriers serving the route." LCCs are about competition and evolve around small markets in dense and high income earning areas that creates competitive networks, due their point-to-point and no interlining operating principles. African market showing similarities with successful LCC markets in other place are found in South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt; these are spacious countries with high population densities and comparatively high earning income per capita.

#### **AIRPORTS**

The aviation industry is a business that is highly amortised and capital dependent for the operator to have a positive return on investment in order to finance aircraft. It also requires an airport infrastructure that allows safe and secure operation of the aircraft and its passengers. Most African airport infrastructures are government controlled, out dated and require rehabilitation if they are to meet reasonable standards of safety and security for aircraft and passengers. Unfortunately, African governments have not been open to ensuring that efficient management is in place in their airports. Passenger service fees collected are placed in general revenue; they do not come back for airport infrastructure improvement. Countries where the airports infrastructure has been liberalised, e.g. South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria have shown that management liberalisation is a catalyst for regional airport growth if worked in tandem with market liberalisation (Baker 2004).

Productivity has been a key word for cutting cost in a shake-up in labour economics and LCCs have been identified as key drivers of change (Pilling 2003). Unions have realised that the industry is at a critical point, but attitudes to change are considerably harder than they were during the early 1990s downturn. Technology competitiveness has brought about big changes in the labour productivity markets by reducing staff overheads. The African markets slowness to embrace the LCCs operating approach has affected its skilled labour turnover, due to the competitive demands in the emerging low cost carrier markets; Air Malawi has lost several pilots and engineers to emerging low cost markets in South East Asia.

LCCs have been a catalyst for boosting tourism through the provision of accessible interlining booking systems worldwide using the internet. In Asia, for example, Thai Airways, and others in the region, were charged with stimulating domestic tourism commerce and the result is well documented (Harbison 2003). Tourism and aviation have come to be interdependent and where this has flourished, tourism has become stronger with tourism receipts growing faster (Lyle 2005). The source of tourist dollars is countries with high disposable incomes, therefore for African countries to benefit from tourism

inflow, they need to improve their tourism infrastructure like accommodation, roads, game reserves but, most importantly, airport infrastructure and bringing airlines to international operating standards.

## SUMMARY

The following factors seem to be relevant to the current failure of LCCs in Africa:

- African City airports have low population densities.
- Africa has fewer airports to international standards and only average two per country. The average flight time between domestic airports is one hour and the flight time between major country cities is almost two hours (this could be over flying two or three other countries).
- Charter flights are always concentrated in highly populated airports.
- African regulation of its aviation industry is disadvantageous.
- 53% of Africa shows poor disposable income while 30% indicate poor passenger traffic as the main reason for failure of low cost operators respectively.
- In Africa up to 60% of traffic is from international tourists while local traffic generates only 10% and 30% is business travelers.
- In Africa the air transport use averages 8% while in Europe is at 20%, Asia at 15% of the population; compared to disposable incomes where in Africa is low while in Europe and Asia is high and comparatively airfare is very high in Africa and it is very low in Europe and Asia.
- In Africa poor passenger traffic is rated as reason for having no direct flights between neighbouring countries worsened with poor and restrictive bilateral agreements.
- 85% of African countries were not in favour of open skies representing government and its sponsored airline views, and also against global open skies liberalization.

From the above we may deduce that:

- High Population Density: This is crucial to providing a passenger traffic pool. The greater the population density the greater the population ratio that travels by air.
- Disposable Income: Per capita disposable income plays a big role in people's choices on

consumption and leisure expenditure, and air travel as a mode of transport.

- Liberalisation: Restrictive bilateral agreements stifle air travel movement between countries. Where open skies have operated the economies have also flourished to the benefit of the population in many sectors of the industries.
- Tourism: African countries have the opportunity to attract tourists from high earning income areas if good tourism infrastructure, including regional airports meeting international standards, is in place. This would boost the local industries and the earning power of the local population.

For LCCs to be viable, the following operational needs need to be addressed:

Passenger needs:

- Cheap fares
- Frequent flights
- In-flight connectivity
- Good in-flight service – although passengers are aware that cheap fares means 'no frills'.

Carriers needs:

- High passenger traffic potential
- Accessible airports
- Liberalized skies
- Tourism potential
- A vibrant economy
- Better aircraft financing
- Lower operating costs

## CONCLUSION

There are fundamental differences between African low cost markets and the rest of the world. The fundamentals which have allowed the LCCs to flourish in the west and Asia are not normally found in Africa. To be attractive to investors and to participate in the low cost market economic boom, African countries need to reposition themselves to providing a low cost operational environment that blends well both the carriers and the passenger's needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Open sky policy under the Yamoussoukro Decision should be implemented in phases to allow weaker airlines to assimilate into the markets and or die a natural death starting at regional economic blocks like SADC, ECOWAS, and COMESA etc.

Governments should let go their controls on the management of airlines and airports, and should put in appropriate systems to oversee safety and security of running the aviation policy that would allow economic growth of their respective countries.

Africa should not re-invent the wheel in developing manageable working aviation policies as those that have been tried in Europe and USA could be easily be adapted to the African situation.

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# Directing the Purchasing Behaviour of Customers

Dr Alexander Ayogyam\*

## ABSTRACT

Customers buy products and services to satisfy the needs they have identified. They are stimulated by external impulses such as television advertisements, radio, friends and many others. Apart from this first stage, customers go through two other stages known as the Black box stage and the purchasing stage. The second stage is usually difficult for managers to monitor but it is the crucial stage for the customer as he gathers information concerning the product or the service. Some customers widen the scope of information search because they want to eliminate greater percentage of risk associated with the purchase. After this stage, the customer is then expected to move to the last stage, i.e. to purchase the product. In between the information searching stage and the last stage, customers can change their minds and even purchase the same product from another company who did not create the stimulus. The research indicated that about 62% of 300 customers observed were not likely to return to purchase. It also revealed that 69% of that sample did not give any assurance of returning for further transactions and 66% made it clear that they were still searching for more information before they could purchase. Since the entrepreneurs had already invested in stimulating them, some strategies have been proposed to assist them in directing the focus of their customers. This paper identifies database formation and customer association formation as strategies to overcome this problem.

## INTRODUCTION

In the world of business, the customer and the consumer are not necessarily the same person, although it is true that, in some instances the two do coincide. The attention of this paper is more particularly on the person who both buys the product and uses it.

From the behavioral science perspective, the behavior of individuals along with the behaviors of societies and groups is seen to impact on the buying pattern of consumers. This is different from a social science view which deals with the study of structural systems and cultures. The behavioral sciences look at the reactions within and between organizations and how these reactions dictate behavioral trends. A human agency view sees every individual behaving somewhat uniquely, but individual behavior is commonly classified as common rather than unusual; some is regarded as acceptable and some outside of acceptable limits. This complexity makes it important that we

critically monitor how human beings behave in order to achieve success.

Lewin's proposition on behavior states that consumer behavior (B) is a function (f) of the interactions of interpersonal influences (I), such as culture, friends and relatives, and personal factors (P), such as attitude, learning and perception. This translates mathematically as  $B = f(I, P)$ , and from this we see that I and P affect the behavior of a consumer directly. And this suggests that the behavior of a consumer can be reshaped by the friends he keeps, the family into which the person was born and other cultural factors.

This paper looks at how business supervisors can devise strategies that will reduce the risk of companies losing customers between the periods they make up their minds to buy and when they actually buy.

## A MODEL FOR CONSUMER ACTION

There are three stages through which a consumer goes in order to make a purchase of the desired product (Kotler et al, 2002).

Stage 1: The Response to Stimuli Stage

Stage 2: The Buyer Black Box Stage

Stage 3: The Purchase Decision Stage

Kotler et al reiterated that customers do not make decisions in a vacuum; they see them stimulated by external influences; friends, family members and current users of a particular product. In Ghana, most customers are stimulated by the advertisement they see on television and radio which are run on a daily basis. When a customer is stimulated, he/she matches this effect with the pressing need to see whether there is a link. If there is, then the customer recognizes the existence of a gap that needs to be filled.

Managers of commercial enterprises need to recognize that the factors which create the gap are both micro and macro and that some of them can be influenced by the manager and some cannot. When the need for the product is recognized, the customer moves from stage 1 to 2.

## THE BLACK BOX

The second stage is known as the Buyer's Black Box because no-one apart from the customer/consumer can know what happens in there. This information is available to the buyer alone but presumably the consumer buying process is one of collecting, collating and using information to make a decision to purchase or not to purchase a particular item. The generic problem solving model described this process:

Step 1: A problem is identified (or stimulated)

Step 2: Information is collected and an intention is developed.

The buyer takes time to look for information about the product. It is also at this stage that information about other alternatives becomes important to the buyer (Bettman, 1979; Dibb et al; 2001; Jobber, 2001). In some cases, consumers need more stimulation, they return to Stage 1. On the other hand, if they are satisfied with their investigations, they will move on to Stage 3: the acquisition of the product.

## ACQUISITION

At this stage, all activities are geared towards the purchase of the product. Since there is some degree of risk associated with this exercise, the information collected by the consumer would reduce the intensity of the risk. The level of risk perceived during this buying stage would determine the degree of involvement of the consumer in the purchase. According to Boyd et al; (2002) the degree of involvement of the buyer depends on his experience. Entrepreneurs need to understand what actually informs the choices customers make and how they respond to changes in the offering displayed. They also need to be able to predict the actions and inactions of consumers (Ajzen, 1991; Legris et al., 2003).

Although there are some macro factors that impact on the manager's success, over which he has no control, he has to develop some marketing techniques and tools that can predict or reduce the risk factor that he would face if the consumer's decision tends to go against him. It is a fact that demographic, social, economic, cultural, psychological and other factors cannot be controlled, and they impact on the consumer's buying behavior greatly (Czinkota and Kotabe, 2001; Harrel and Frazier, 1991; Solomon and Sturart, 2003).

There are many customers who pass through stage 1 and 2 but fail to complete their journey by undertaken the purchase in stage 3. As mentioned earlier on, a number of micro and macro factor can cause the customer/consumer to neglect the final stage. When this occurs, the company would incur a number of costs apart from the sales volume which would not be increasing. For instance the cost incurred in stimulating the customer (either through a television or radio advert or through some sales promotion), the anticipation or anxiety that the customer would show up would all be in vain.

A test case in Ghana has shown that entrepreneurs need to study carefully the techniques and tools described in the methodology below in order to reduce or eliminate the number of times that customers approach them for a transaction but change their mind and go for alternatives just as they are about to make the purchase.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative research approach by making use of observation and casual interviews to determine the interest of buyers and their tendency to make a purchase or repeated enquires. An enterprise in the Kumasi Metropolis in Ghana was used to determine what effort sellers make to get the customer back to make purchases especially when they visit to make enquires for the first time. Supervisors of this enterprise were asked to describe the customers' mood/ excitement, assurance to return for a transaction and readiness to get more information on products when they visit for the first time. For a period of three months, three hundred (300) customers were observed and interviewed with the help of the enterprise's supervisors. A hypothesis was tested on the eagerness to seek more information before making a purchase. The reason was that, customer's mood and assurance to return for further business did not merit any quantitative analysis since it was based on the perception of the personality gathering the information. The null hypothesis was stated as follows;

*H<sub>0</sub>: Searching for more information from the market cannot increase the chance of rejection.*

Using the Chi square distribution at 5% error level and at 1 degree of freedom, the Null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) would be rejected if the calculated Chi square value is greater than the table value.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results are summarized in Tables 1, 2 and 3 (below). They showed that customers who had an intention to buy from the company were influenced by certain variables which were identified prior to the research. As a result of this influence, many customers did not proceed to make the final purchase.

Out of 300 customers who were observed and interviewed, 103 were in a good mood when they

**Table 1: Percentage rating on customers' mood**

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Nos.</u>	<u>%</u>
<i>Very happy with products</i>	103	34
<i>Happy but want to compare with other products</i>	186	62
<i>Not impressed with offering</i>	<u>11</u>	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	

**Source: From field data**

**Table 2: Percentage rating on customers' assurance to return for business**

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Nos.</u>	<u>%</u>
<i>Eagerness to return to make purchase</i>	93	31
<i>Less chance of returning for purchases</i>	<u>207</u>	69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	

**Source: From field data**

**Table 3: Percentage rating on customers desire to seek more information**

Issues	Nos.	%
Seeking more information	197	66
Less willingness to seek Information	103	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	

**Source: From field data**

Chi square analysis on **Table 3** is used to test the null hypothesis (above).

Issues	O	E	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Yes	197	150	47	2209	14.7
No	103	150	-47	2209	14.7
					29.4

‘Yes’ (Event  $E_1$ ) represents those who indicated that they need more information and ‘No’ (Event  $E_2$ ) represents those who indicated less interest in searching for more information. The ‘O’ and ‘E’ are the observed values from the research and expected values respectively.

$$\text{Probability of Yes} = E_1/S = 0.5$$

$$\text{Probability of No} = E_2/S = 0.5$$

$$\text{Therefore: } E_1 = 0.5S \text{ and } E_2 = 0.5S$$

S is the sample of 300 on table 3. This shows that

$$E_1 = 0.5 \times 300 = 150 \text{ and } E_2 = 0.5 \times 300 = 150$$

From the table, the calculated value is 29.4 while the table value at 1 degree of freedom at 5% level is 3.84.  $H_0$  is therefore rejected.

saw the offerings of the company while 186 of them were happy to see the offerings but still wanted to compare what they saw with competitors’ products (from table 1). During the interview session, most customers claimed they needed some time to make a final decision. Only 11 customers thought that the products they saw could not satisfy their pressing needs. The probability that customers were likely not to appear again for actual transaction was high among those who wanted comparison; the probability was 62% which was above the average of 50%. In such cases, they had the intention but still may not make the final purchase. Those who were happy were likely to proceed beyond the intension making stage.

Some 69% of the sample customers were not eager to do business with the company based on the comments they made and the level of enthusiasm observed during the exercise (see Table 2).

Most of the customers had not decided on whether the products they saw were the solution to their problems (Table 3); 66% of the total 300 customers needed more information before they could decide to buy or not.

It was possible that many of those customers who did not show total acceptance for the products could

disappoint the company because they were likely to change their minds since many factors could work against their interest. Entrepreneurs are therefore advised to consider ways of exciting customers and also tracking any attitude that needs urgent attention.

From the Chi square analysis, the Null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis accepted. The actual meaning of the analysis is that, the more people show interest in seeking more information, the chances of them rejecting the product is high. The reason is that, they would have the opportunity of making comparison among the numerous competitors.

## CONCLUSION

Most Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Ghana find it difficult to monitor consumer behavior during the period between when they make the intention to buy and when they actually purchase. It was established that many people take a long time at the decision making stage simply because they always want to reduce risk. Again, the research showed that over a week, supervisors were only able to do business with about 30%-40% of the customers who visited to make enquiries. Where products on the shelves were new to the Ghanaian market, customers needed to acquire knowledge on the properties and value of the items offered. This was one of the reasons why many customers wanted extra information. The extent to which a customer gathered information depended largely on their risk tolerance level. Those who were risk averters searched for more information to satisfy their curiosity while the risk takers spent less time to make a purchase.

It was established that most customers believed that they had insufficient information to persuade them to purchase products. Managers were advised to institute practicable strategies described in the recommendation in order to curtail that attitude of customers; the reason being that any defection would cost the company financially and psychologically. Among the various strategies that can be used to check on customers opinions and attitudes, the prominent ones include the creation of relationship and developing a database to enhance effective linkages with customers. Though, there are other strategies, these two can guarantee considerable success when implemented well

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Though there are many strategies available, based on the observations in this study, the appropriate ones for an SME seemed to be:

### Creating a Database for Customers

The use of computers to identify and target specific groups of potential customers is considered as database. The database system enables the manager to be well equipped with tools for building relationships

because it allows sellers to sort through huge quantities of buyer information to fine tune marketing efforts (Boone and Kurtz, 1999). A survey in some specific regions in Ghana showed that many company owners were not benefiting from database practice. In 2009, eight hundred and twenty businesses were interviewed and a question on database records was asked. Less than 18 businesses (2%) gave a favorable answer.

To reduce the possibility of losing customers after they have visited for preliminary discussions on certain products, manager must build a database of these customers, so that they have a means of linking up with them at specific intervals to encourage them to return. This will help create long-term relationship over time and consequently improve sales. It is out of these benefits and the strategic importance of building database that motivated Meredith Corporation in IOWA called Des Moines (publishers of Better Homes and Gardens, Ladies Home Journal and other magazines) developed a database containing 63 million names. According to Alan Grant, founder of the Boston based Exchange Partners consulting firm: "Today, by using information and technology tools currently available, companies can link their investment in customer relationship directly to the returns those customers generates". The indication here is that marketing based on studying consumer behavior must be one-on-one so that sellers can actually tailor each product offer and sales presentation to the specific needs of the individual. In Great Britain, Tesco (grocery store) used database to focus on individual customers and that has increased the loyalty of these customers. This shows clearly that potential customers can be made to return if there is a database to identify them regularly. In the research, the huge number of customers who were likely not to return could have been approached if data on them were available (as shown on table2). A similar case holds for those who needed more information before they could decide.

### **Formation of Customer Associations**

It has been tested and proven that this technique can pull customers (current and potential) together. It is a technique which was first used in Germany by the Volkswagen Company. Butscher (1998) stated that customer interaction is a prerequisite for customer knowledge. According to Butscher, right from the formation of a club, information such as personal experience and other information are recorded for strategic assignments. By this a database is gathered and this serves as a learning ground. He further stressed that, customers would only be willing to give out information if they stand to benefit in a way.

From these observations, it seems that clubs might be useful tools for Ghanaian SMEs. An important aspect is that clubs must be formed with the aim of offering bundles of exclusive benefits which are attractive for the target groups. The formation of clubs would

arouse the interest of customers who visit for the first time and render them more willing to do business in subsequent times. Membership of a club would also ensure regular linkage with the new entrants to ensure that, they imbibe the spirit of belongingness. When this happens, the manager would get the chance to monitor the buying behaviors. Customers in such clubs must be given an opportunity to tell their impressions about the trend of events. This may be a source of an idea.

### **Informative advertising**

Since the research revealed that most customers wanted to look for more information before they could trust the product, it seems advisable that managers rely heavily on adverts to inform. From adverts of this nature customers would have the benefits of knowing everything about the product before they enter the shop. With this, the primary objective for companies introducing new products should be to inform their customers.

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# Decentralization and Good Governance for Effective Service Delivery in Uganda: Are Local Government Authorities up to the Task?

Dr Oyat Christopher\*

## ABSTRACT

Decentralization, the process of transferring power and authority from the Central Government to Local Government Authorities, has been riddled with problems and challenges in Uganda. This paper identifies some key issues that have been responsible for the failure of decentralization policy and programs in the context of Local Government administration in Uganda. The study suggests that good governance as well as effective service delivery cannot be realized in the current setting of decentralization policy management. Some feasible and strategic solutions to the problems and challenges are presented. In particular, it is argued that the Central and Local Government Authorities need strategic, open and frank dialogue to unpack the challenges of the times.

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

According to Delius and Musisi (2008), decentralization is the transfer of planning decision making and/or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations: local administrative units, semi-autonomous organizations or local government structures. It is the transfer of power and authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from a higher level of governance to a lower one. According to Okidi and Goloba (2004), decentralization has become the latest fashion in development administration. Indeed, it will be difficult to find any contemporary developing state today without the experience of decentralization in one form or another. It is a fact that decentralization can increase the number of public goods and services, and the efficiency with which they are delivered. Decentralization is associated with the principles of local self reliance, effective participation and accountability.

A number of countries have adopted decentralization policy as a way of improving service delivery. A United Nations Development report (UNDP, 2000) gave examples of countries like Jordan that adopted decentralization policy to increase economic growth by reducing public sector role and increasing private sector participation. Through this, a number of functions were delegated to the Governors in the Districts and Urban Councils to enable them to participate in effective planning, budgeting and in turn empower local community and local decision makers to become more and more responsive to their

constituents through participatory budgetary practice. In the case of Nepal, the government initiated decentralization policy and program to accommodate its heavily diverse population, and in an attempt to ameliorate and strengthen service provision and consequently reduce poverty.

Decentralization in Uganda was introduced in 1993 when the Local Government Statute (1993) was passed by the National Resistance Council (Parliament). Over the years, the principles were progressively refined, consolidated and finally incorporated in the Uganda's Constitution (1995), and the Local Government Act (1997). In Uganda, decentralization policy and program is designed to achieve the following strategic objectives:

- To transfer real power to the districts and thus reduce the workload on remote and under resourced central government officials;
- To bring political and administrative control over services to the point where they are actually delivered thereby improving accountability and effectiveness, and promoting people's feeling of ownership of programs and projects executed in their districts;
- To free local managers from central constraints, dominance, and to allow them develop organizational structures tailored to local circumstances;
- To improve financial accountability and responsibility by establishing a clear link between the payment of taxes and the provision of services being financed; and
- To improve the capacity of Local Councils to plan, finance and manage the delivery of services to their constituents (De-centralization Secretariat, 2004).

In summary, decentralization policy and programs emphasize democratic reforms by seeking to transfer political, administrative, financial and planning authority from the Central Government to Local Government Councils. It seeks to promote popular participation, empower local people to make independent decisions, and enhance accountability and responsibility. It also aims at introducing efficiency and effectiveness in the generation and management of resources and in the delivery of services. In the end the local population is expected to be able to get value for money out of the taxes they pay; and through their elected representatives make the development process responsive to the needs of the general local population (Decentralization Secretariat, 2004).

The key thing in Uganda is that Local Government Councils have been given the responsibility of implementing certain provisions of the Constitution (1995) through the Local Government Act (1997). The

Act under Section 31 (1) subject to the Constitution (1995) asserts that a Local Government Council, within its area of Jurisdiction will:

- Exercise all political and executive powers and functions;
- Provide services as it deems fit with the exception of those functions, powers and services listed under Part I of the second schedule (functions and services for which central government is responsible);
- Protect the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and other Laws of the country; promote democratic governance; and
- Ensure the implementation and compliance with government policy and programs approved for implementation.

It is evident from these stated objectives and the areas of jurisdiction of Local Governments in Uganda that the principles of good governance are seen to be:

- Effective accountability,
- Transparency in terms of actions,
- Inclusive, effective and efficient management,
- Observation of the rule of law,
- Ensuring a participatory management style, and
- A strong focus on consensus-oriented management.

These are notable intentions but the question remains: are Central and Local Governments in Uganda up to the tasks of implementing effective and efficient management of decentralization policy and programs within the framework of good governance?

## **THE PROBLEM**

Preliminary reading of reports from Internal Auditors, the Auditor General, Local Government Public Accounts Committees and the Inspector General of Government all confirmed the existence of considerable bad local governance. In particular, the assessment reports by the staff of the Ministry of Local Government (MOLG) for 2004, 2005 and 2008 clearly indicate gaps in the capacity of local government authorities to effectively and efficiently self manage their respective entities, especially in the following areas: strategic development planning, financial management, local revenue management and enhancement, human resource management and effective accountability in respect to resources at their disposal, and transparency in respect to following right procedures in the procurement of goods, works and services for their respective Councils. This lack of performance points to the capacity building deficiencies that have bedevilled local government authorities since 1993, with the result that service

delivery remains poor (Ssekono, 2003; MOLG, 2008).

## **STUDY OBJECTIVES**

The study reported in this paper had the following objectives:

1. To determine the critical issues responsible for inadequate performance of Local Government Authorities since the inception of decentralization policy and programs in 1993.
2. To identify feasible recommendations that can be adopted to address the problems and challenges.

## **STUDY APPROACH**

The researcher used as a starting point his own experience gained during nine years of practical engagement as Chief Executive Officer of Urban Councils in Uganda (1993-2001). The next step was to examine relevant publications, viz: Reports from the Ministry of Local Government (MOLG) and the national Decentralization Secretariat (Kampala), Reports from Local Government authorities, published papers on decentralization, and systematic observation techniques employed overtime.

Finding a number of problems emerging from these reports, the next step was to conduct an in-depth study of 10 Districts. Ninety people were interviewed. The information sought included such issues like:

- The causes of political disputes;
- Factors affecting revenue raising;
- Qualifications and training for Councilors;
- Corruption; and
- Monitoring by the Central Government

## **RESULTS**

### **Political Disputes**

The deep seated fundamental problems that have reigned in Uganda since 1993 when decentralization policy and programs were launched in the country are evidenced in some major political and financial (budgetary) concerns that have surfaced in the 2011/2012 budgets of ten (10) Districts.

Recently, in Mukono District the Councillors were required to approve the appointment of a Speaker of the District Council<sup>1</sup>. One Councillor named Sekikubo was nominated for the position of District Speaker by a fellow Councillor. However, the nominee could not be approved for the office mainly because he had recently converted from being a Christian to a Muslim! In the absence of a Speaker, deliberations could not proceed, and this meant that the 2011/2012 budget could not be passed, for Section 12 of the

Local Government Act of 1997 proclaims that no Council budget can be passed without the presence of an approved Speaker being present in Council meetings.

In another case, in Iganga District, the current Chairperson of Local Council V<sup>2</sup> was in a bitter rivalry with the Speaker of the Council because the Speaker has gained the support of fellow Councillors who were in the opposition when it came to the time for nominations for new offices in the Council (see *The New Vision* newspaper of June 25, 2011).

Further, wide spread and serious post election political misunderstandings were found with regard to who should be nominated and approved for positions of Executive Secretaries and Chairpersons of Council Committees. As a result Council proceedings in the following District Local Governments had come to a stand still: Ntungamo, Bukomansimbi, Sironko, Kayunga, Kampala, Soroti, Mityana, Kamuli and Gulu. These power and authority struggles paralyzed the normal functions of the said districts in June 2011. Budgets were not passed on schedule as required by the provisions of the 1995 Ugandan Constitution and the relevant sections of the Local Government Act (1997). In Kampala City Council, the councillors had refused to discuss the details of the budget

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<sup>1</sup>*The Speaker of Council is responsible for chairing and technically guiding full Council sessions so that appropriate resolutions can be made.*

<sup>2</sup>*The Chairperson Local Council V is the political head of a District elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage.*

proposal until they were sure of how much each would be paid in form of allowances for the financial year 2011/2012!

In all ten Districts studied, it emerged that payment of salaries and allowances to staff members and Councillors were projected to constitute over 60% of the total budget, leaving the balance of less than 40% to be for the remaining recurrent and capital expenditures. Severe cases of conflict of interest have been documented in all the ten (10) District Councils studied; Councillors (policy makers) are clearly more concerned with their privileges, such as monthly emoluments and other benefits that would accrue to them, than deliberating over the strategic provision of goods and services to the people they represent.

Other political divisions and bickering, based on party, religious, regional and ethnic affiliations, have been evident over the four month period of the study (March 2011–June 2011). These have dominated discussions and deliberations to the exclusion of strategic issues in respect to service delivery for the greater population. It is evident that these problems are wide spread in the remaining 102 Districts of Uganda as documented in reports by John Semakula, Paddy Nsohya, Felix Osujju, Frank Mugabi, Tom

Gwebayanga, Fredrick Soma, Luke Kagiri, Charles Jjuuko, Rwambuko Mugisha and Joseph Wazusi ( see in *The New Vision newspaper of June 25, 2011*). Clearly, the personal interests of Councillors continue to over-ride the interests of the general population and the good intentions of decentralization policy and programs are not being realised.

### **Revenue Problems**

Enhanced revenue generation to finance recurrent and capital programs in a decentralized system of administration contributes significantly to the delivery of good governance. This was emphasized by the Local Government Finance Commission of Uganda in 2005. The Commissioners noted that revenue had been declining in most Local Government areas over the years and this has affected not only service delivery but also the quality of governance.

Part of the blame for the decline in Local Government income must be leveled against Ugandan Central Government. Firstly, under Ugandan decentralization policy, the Central Government retained the easy-to-collect and lucrative sources of revenue such as Income Tax and Value Added Tax (VAT), leaving Local Authorities to battle to collect their finance from such sources as market dues and trading license fees. The collection of such dues and fees has always been associated with force and fighting between revenue collectors and tax payers (see Refugee Law Project, June 2009). Secondly, the action of the Central Government to abolish the Graduated Tax Payment<sup>3</sup> also affected Local Government income with the result that most Local Government Authorities failed to realize their projected income budget in the five years under study (2002/2007), making it extremely difficult for them to deliver adequate services.

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<sup>3</sup>*Graduated Tax is a tax levied on each male adult from the age of 18 and above. The assessment for the amount of money payable by individual adults is based on the market value of the assets including the income level of a person. This means that an assessment will have to be made by an Assessment Committee regarding the assets and incomes of male adults, and a commensurate amount would be levied accordingly. The determined amount should be paid within the financial year.*

Table 1 (next page) gives reasons why ninety respondents in the Districts under study thought local revenue collected during the five (5) years 2002-2007 failed to reach the desired target.

### **Councillor's Qualifications**

The Local Government Act (1997) does not give the level of academic qualification of Local Councillors at Local Council I - IV with the exception of Chairperson Local Council V who should have the minimum academic qualification of 'Advanced' level Certificate of Education. Local Councils are committees established by law to manage disputes and

other concerns of the population at various levels of governance and areas of jurisdictions. At the village level cases can be taken to Local Council I for arbitration; at the parish level there is Local Council II; at the sub county level there is Local Council III; at county level, there is Local Council IV; and at the District level there is Local Council V. If for instance a civil dispute arose between two parties, the matter can be referred to Local Council I Committee of the area; if there is an appeal, this goes to Local Council II; and if one again is not satisfied with the ruling at that level, then he or she appeals to Local Council III to arbitrate over the matter. In a sense, Local Council I - V are bodies established under the Local Government Act (1997) to manage civil and development matters at the various levels of governance and areas of jurisdictions cited. The Act in question allows ordinary Council Members to be elected on 'merit' irrespective of academic qualifications. This has the disadvantage that a Council may be predominantly composed of individuals with very low academic and professional qualifications, and this have been the case in several Councils in Uganda. The limited level of education and/or professional qualifications amongst Councillors has impacted negatively on the quality of services.

### Training of Councillors

Capacity building in Local Government structures has always been anecdotal. No *sustained* training processes and program for Local Councillors have been provided. At most, Local Councillors have been given only one or two short courses during their 5 year tenure of office. Gulu District as a case in point: In this case the Councillors elected as people's representatives from the Sub-Counties in 2005 received only four days training during their term in office. It seems optimistic to expect such Councillors to be effective policy makers and to properly know their mandates in Local Government administration.

Inevitably, such Councillors will be raw, and ill-equipped to fully grasp and appreciate their roles. Clearly, the Central Government bears the greater share of the blame for this dilemma, on account of not being adequately prepared and critically supportive enough to address initially and thereafter the problems and challenges of implementing decentralization policy and its associated programs.

The Central Government's conduct can be equated to irresponsible parenthood. It is like a parent who abdicates his duty and responsibility of properly looking after the children from birth to adulthood. Such a parent who abrogates the duty and responsibility, and expects the child to quickly graduate into adulthood without adequate nurturing is to blame for the future short comings of the child. The

**Table 1: Reasons given by ninety Local Government Officers and local people as to why Local Revenue declined during the years 2002-2007**

Reasons for low revenue in local government authorities	Frequency	%
Corruption	1	1.1
Insufficient funds available for mobilizing local revenue to finance budgets	9	9.0
Limited resources for staff to execute their work of revenue collection	1	1.1
Poor motivation of staff	2	2.2
Irregular meetings by Councils to approve yearly budgets	1	1.1
Limited access to land	1	1.1
Irregular monthly release of grants from central government to finance Local Government activities	72	81.1
High level of poverty among the population	2	2.2
Wars	1	1.1
<b>Totals</b>	90	100.0

**Source:** Adopted with modification from Arach, 2008.

main question that can be posed to such a parent is: why did you consciously give birth or allow one to be born under your watch, if you knew you are ill prepared to fully take care of him or her? Such a parent should be prosecuted in the Courts for violating the rights of the child for proper growth and development. Similarly, the Central Government must bear the blame and responsibility for bad governance in local government authorities.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Poor and irregular monitoring and evaluation of the performance of local government authorities in Uganda has also contributed to bad governance. Internal Auditors and the Auditor General's reports tend to take a long time before they are presented for discussion, resolution and actions by Local Councils (Local Council III, IV and V). The same applies to the Inspector General of Government's (IGG) report. Because of under funding by the Central and Local Governments to these bodies, their effectiveness in exposing such vices like corruption and embezzlement of funds is limited, leading to bad governance and failure of Local Government Authorities to promptly, effectively and efficiently deliver services (MOLG, 2008; Refugee Law Project, 2009).

## **Influence Peddling**

Influence peddling and interference in the work of Procurement and Contract Committees and District Service Commissions (DSCs) of Local Governments in Uganda are common practice. Given the fact that each and every district is allowed, for example to procure its own goods, works and services, as well as to independently recruit and select its staff, it is inevitable that corruption has been on the increase. In some Districts, Local Councillors have been accused of meddling in the services of District Service Commissions (DSC) by using their authority to ensure that their relatives get good jobs in the Districts where they work as Councillors. In the case of procurement process, it is documented that Councillors and staff of Local Governments form companies and apply to be considered for procurement of goods, works and services in the Local Government where they work. Such individuals influence members of Contract and Procurement Committees to award them tenders to supply goods and services. This not only amounts to a conflict of interests but, in the end, effective and efficient service delivery is compromised (see the IGG Reports 1997, 2008).

## **Abolishing of the Graduated Tax**

Since Uganda gained independence from Britain in 1962, graduated tax had been the greatest and most reliable source of local revenue for Local Governments. This tax was payable by every adult citizen of Uganda, and its abolishment has grossly affected the operations of Local Governments since it has not been replaced by a viable alternative. The result has been that that Local Governments have had to rely more and more on Central Government transfers of funds, and, as we have seen above, this has affected the level of development and local service delivery.

## **Some Good News!**

Despite the problems and challenges associated

with decentralization policy and programs in Uganda, there have been some success stories in Local Government, e.g. the Ntungamo District Local Government Authority and the Entebbe Municipal Council (see MOLG, 2008). Decentralization policy and programs in Uganda have enhanced political involvement of ordinary people in matters of their governance; enabled local authorities to be at least involved in strategic planning process of their respective councils; has enhanced gender representation in local councils; and permitted Local Governments to be in charge of their own budgets and finance.

## **DISCUSSION**

At the time of the commissioning of decentralization policy in 1993, there existed 39 Districts. By June 2011 there were 112 Districts and it is expected that in the financial year 2012/ 2013 twenty one (21) more Districts will be created, making a total of 133. The creation of more Districts is being spearheaded under the pretext of transferring real power and authority from the Centre to as near to the local people as possible but it might be seen simply as a move to transfer responsibility away from the Central Government.

Whatever the reason, the Central Government should learn from the experiences of the ten Districts described above. It is evident that with more districts in Uganda, more political, economic and social problems and conflicts will surface. Researchers involved in the Refugee Law Project (2009) summed up the proliferation of districts in Uganda in the following way:

“Each new District results in another Member of Parliament (MP), another Resident District Commissioner, and another Chief Administrative Officer and so on. In the name of service provision, the ruling elites manage to expand the reward envelope. It is also done by dividing up the multi-ethnic districts and livelihood patterns as evidenced in Eastern Uganda, with the creation of Busia from Tororo, Kaberamaido from Soroti, and Abim from Kotido... The central government seems to use decentralization to effectively distance itself from failures and problems associated with unequal development or service provision. For instance, the central government allocates only one third of its overall sectoral budget to District expenditures, and yet when asked to explain why services are poor or not delivered, it explains that service provision is the mandate of Districts. In this fashion, the Central Government both cleans up its image and deflates interest in scrutinizing service provision... The Central Government avoids (responsibility for) the bad roads, unsafe water, bad schools, and poor health centres; local leaders carry the burden and blame for all such (delivery) failures.”

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this research, it is evident that effective and sustained capacity building in Local Government structures has been inadequately executed and managed from the outset. It might be argued that the Central Government Authority simply wanted to pass the burden of a centralized system of governance on to local people. In a sense, the hasty process of devolution of power and authority did little more than produce problems and challenges in the management systems of Ugandan Local Government Administrations. Hindsight provides the opportunity for mistakes to be avoided in the future. The critical specific areas that should be addressed are as follows:

- The authorities should ensure that there is a continuous process of capacity building especially amongst local Councillors at various levels (Sub-County, Division, Municipal, and District) so that each of the elected person is conversant with their roles and obligations. For instance, Councillors should be aware that they are policy makers and not civil servants.
- The Local Government Act (1997, 2001, 2007)), should be further amended to ensure that Councillors have some minimum academic qualifications at the Sub-County and District level. At the moment, there is no academic qualification required. It is recommended that for Local Council III, IV and V members, an 'Ordinary' Level Certificate of Education or an equivalent will be sufficient. The same level of qualification is recommended for the Chairperson for Local Council III of Local Governments or Divisions or Town Councils. The Chairperson of Local Council V should hold a degree certificate or its equivalent to qualify for election to that office.
- The Central Government should honour its commitment to transfer approved funds to Local Government Authorities. There is concern that the Central Government does not transfer these funds wholly by the end of the financial year and this leaves Local Authorities, who have already planned to use the earmarked funds, vulnerable, because revenue generation at the local level is low, certainly inadequate for supplying services to the local population.
- With regard to local revenue, three areas should be emphasized and action taken. Firstly, the central Government should allow local authorities to begin collecting income tax within their respective areas of jurisdictions. Secondly, the abolished graduated tax should be re-introduced so that local authorities can bolster their revenue base. Thirdly, the Local Authority needs to sensitize the local population to appreciate the value of tax payments by ensuring that they understand the relationship between tax payments and effective delivery.
- Vices such as corruption, embezzlement of funds, influence peddling and conflict of interest scenarios should be effectively and swiftly prosecuted to send a clear message to others. Stronger deterrent measures may have to be instituted.
- The Central and Local Government Authorities should adequately resource the office of Internal Auditors, Auditor General, Local Government Public Accounts Committees (LGPAC) and the Inspector General of Government so that they can swiftly, effectively and efficiently execute their duties and responsibilities as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995).

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## Are There Too Many People on the Planet?

Dr John Potter\*

It has been said before, but in the light of renewed public discussion with regard to the level of human population it bears saying again: the argument that there are too many people on the planet is simply not sustainable, especially for places like Australia.

### WHAT IS THE CURRENT POPULATION?

The population of the world on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2011 is 6.918 billion and climbing at the rate more than one per second ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). How much is 6.918 billion? To put some perspective on the matter, consider Kangaroo Island which lies immediately south of St Vincent's Gulf, i.e. just south of Adelaide in South Australia (see maps). It has an area of 4 405 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. 4.4 billion m<sup>2</sup> so the **total current world population** could hold a mass meeting on Australia's Kangaroo Island if we agree that 0.6m<sup>2</sup> (6.5 ft<sup>2</sup>) is sufficient to stand on. And, if we wanted more space, we could always move the venue to a larger island, e.g. Tasmania (bottom right of Map 1). 'Tassy' has an area of 68 332 km<sup>2</sup> so **the whole of the Earth's population** could be accommodated there; each person would have about 10m<sup>2</sup> to store their belongings and lay out their blow-up mattress.

Moving to the whole world land mass, we note that the total area of land on the planet is 148 429 000 km<sup>2</sup> so a population of 7 billion means that the population density is 1 person to every 0.021 km<sup>2</sup> or 2 hectares per person.

Of course, the density of population varies considerably from country to country. Table 1 gives a few key figures. The most populace states are mostly City and Island States (Monaco, Singapore etc.). Ignoring these, Bangladesh is the most densely populated with 11 people per hectare and next is South Korea with 5/hectare. Lebanon is the most populace country in the Middle East, closely followed by Israel; and the Netherlands and Belgium have the most people per hectare in Europe. Rwanda and Barundi are the most populace states in Africa. The UK and Germany support about 2.5 persons per hectare, i.e. one person per acre in the old scale. India has 3.6 people per hectare (if you can have 0.6 of a person) while Nigeria, the most populace African state supports 1.7/ha. China, the most populace state in the world, has a population density of 1.4. At the other end of the scale, the citizens of the USA and Brazil have about 3 hectares per person, while Canada and Australia are arguably under-populated.

So, what is an acceptable level of population? Ignoring the City and Island States (that are sufficiently innovative to sell services for food to their advantage) this will depend on the capacity of the land

within a nation's boundary to provide the basic food and shelter required for life, and this in turn will be determined by both *the amount* of arable land and *the technology* that exists to render the land productive.



Map 1: Kangaroo Island lies just under the name 'Adelaide' (centre bottom of map); Tasmania is the larger island, bottom right.



Map 2: Kangaroo Island is the small orange patch under the name 'Penneshaw'.

When the Rev Thomas Malthus (Malthus 1798) wrote his famous essay in 1798, he was concerned that the British population has risen to 7 million; today it is 62 million, and if the combined wealth of the British was distributed evenly we would hardly say that the UK has gone backwards since Malthus's time. Humans are not robots or passive behaviourists dictated to by natural laws, as Malthus and later Darwin would have it. On their best days humans are highly pro-active agents capable of remarkable innovation with regard to the task of improving the quality of life and, perhaps even more importantly, amazingly persistent with regard to survival. How the citizens of Bangladesh survive in their delta with its frequent floods and storms is something of a mystery to most of us, but they do survive. Of course, it might be argued that many of them could hardly be classified as living 'the good life'. But they are not without hope;

thanks to people like Nobel Prize winner Professor Muhammad Yunus (Yunus, 1998) who have cared enough to do something constructive to improve their lot. Be that as it may, eleven people per hectare might still be considered an unacceptable figure even for highly productive land like that in Bangladesh. If it were, a world population ceiling of 165 billion could be

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Country	Persons/hectare
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Monaco	165
Singapore	72
Malta	13
Bahrain	12
Bangladesh	11
Maldives	10
Vatican City	8
Mauritius	6
Barbados	6
South Korea	5
San Moreno	5
Nauru	5
Lebanon	4
The Netherlands	4
Rwanda	4
Israel	3.7
Haiti	3.7
India	3.6
Belgium	3.5
Japan	3.4
The Comoros	3.2
The Phillipines	3.1
Sri Lanka	3.1
Barundi	3.0
United Kingdom	2.5
Germany	2.2
Nigeria	1.7
China	1.4
Malawi	1.3
The USA	0.3
Brazil	0.2
Canada	0.03
Australia	0.03
New Zealand	0.016

Table 1: Population Density: Most Populace Countries & Selected Countries

hypothesized, certainly well above a mere 7 billion. But the reader will be quick to argue that there is a lot of desert and un-arable mountains in the world land mass. And so there is. A reasonable population density might have to be well below 11 persons per hectare.

### POPULATION DENSITY BY CONTINENTS

Table 2 lists the land areas and population density for the continents. We see from this that the mean population density is well below 11, in fact it is even below 1 person per hectare for the most densely populated continent (Asia) and well below 1 for all of the other continents apart from Europe.

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Continent	Area km <sup>2</sup> (millions)	Population Density Persons/hectare
Asia	43.8	0.8
Europe	10.2	0.7
Africa	30.4	0.3
North America	24.5	0.2
South America	17.8	0.2
Australia	3.6	0.03

Table 2: Areas and Population Density by Continents

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Europe grows most of its own staples – wheat, barley, sugar beet, etc, but it does import a lot of food, especially meat and fruit. Maybe a population density of 0.7 is a little high, But then again, the level of affluence in Europe is well above a survival level so 0.7 might be sustainable.

There are some food problems in Asia. China is an interesting case. China is currently finding it difficult to maintain its food supplies, especially with the rise of a new middle class. There are a million Chinese in Africa at the moment and their main interest there is growing food *for China* in places like the North West Province of Zambia. As the demand for a better life continues to rise in China we can expect this policy to continue. China has extended her borders as far as she is probably able; now it will be a matter of making offerings to African countries in order to get at their food production resources. Australia is not immune to this either; the Chinese have recently purchased numerous properties along the River Murray and are operating them with mostly illegal immigrant labour. The Chinese experience supports the view that that 1.4 people per hectare may not be sustainable, except at a low level of economic development with a lot of people living in poverty. It has been said recently that the new Chinese middle class all want a washing machine but there is not enough nickel in the world to make the steel. But this will only be a problem if we cannot look to someone to find another labour saving way of washing clothes effectively. The rise of technology over the past one hundred years suggests that the shortage of nickel may not be the end of the world, or the possibility of sustaining a world population above 1.4 persons per hectare.

### UNDEVELOPED RESOURCES

The steady rise of population will inevitably cause people and governments to look for undeveloped resources. The Chinese have not only pushed into Africa in recent times but are found on practically every island in the Pacific setting up shop. The Indian government has also begun developing links with African countries recently. The wide open spaces in the Americas and Australia must remain prime targets, although, in the case of Australia, land alone without water is not very useful.

Sub-Saharan Africa probably has the most immediate potential. Mozambique, with its excellent soil, climate and multiple permanent rivers located at regular intervals across the landscape could probably feed the whole of the current African population. The potential of the rift valley lakes also remains virtually untouched. Lake Malawi is a good example. Some 500km long, with a mean width of around 80km and a mean depth of 600m, this Lake contains around 8 million giga-litres of fresh water you can drink. The water is not run-off surface water from rainfall; it derives from 'the fountains of the great deep' (Genesis 7:11, Scholefield 1967). This was confirmed in 1979 when the Lake rose three metres virtually overnight. A German photographer flying over the African lakes at the time took pictures with an infra-red camera; the spirals of water rising out of the rift are evident (Readers Digest, July 1979).



Lake Malawi at Cape Maclear, Malawi

There are around 250 000 hectares of flat land adjacent to Lake Malawi that could be used to irrigate food crops and the Malawi Government has a Greenbelt program in place aimed at utilizing their immense water resource. The Malawi climate is suitable for growing just about any commercial crop; rice, maize, canola, ground nuts, cotton, all kinds of vegetables and sub-tropical tree crops, etc. And the land around Lakes Victoria and Tanzania has a similar potential. Undoubtedly, Africa has the opportunity to contribute greatly to the world food supply and it is not surprising that there are a million Chinese in Africa at the present time.

## WHAT ABOUT AUSTRALIA?

In May 2011, the Australian population is 22.6 million ([www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)) with a population density of 0.03. Much of the Australian land mass is desert; maybe it cannot support a high population. Australia might not be able to rise to 0.7 persons per hectare like Europe but this is a long way from 0.03.

To get an idea of just how low the Australian population is, consider the following case. If we can agree that an average household is four people, we could argue that Australians need 5.65 million houses to live in. And if we further agree that 600m<sup>2</sup> is a reasonable sized house allotment, we can argue that 3

300 km<sup>2</sup> is the area of land needed to accommodate the whole of the Australian populace. By this account we could build enough houses on Kangaroo Island to house **all Australians** and have 1 105km<sup>2</sup> available for roads and other infra-structure. Further, if we were prepared to live in blocks of high rise flats like Hong Kong residents we would have significant areas available for movement and recreation. Of course we would have to eat mostly seals and fish (of which there are abundant supplies around the Kangaroo Island coast) but that might not be so bad - the Eskimos in the Arctic live quite satisfactorily on seals and fish. And we should not forget that it could be rock lobster, mussels and marron for Sunday lunch. And there is always the Australian mainland, of 770 million hectares, nearby. Maybe we could send a few folk into the wilderness to time to collect or grow other food stuffs for us.

So why are people arguing that Australia has a population problem? Maybe we have one because we prefer to live in cities rather than in the open spaces. This has had numerous side effects, like people being unaware that food comes from crops and livestock, not from a magic box in the shed behind the local store or super-market. Another self inflicted problem is that we build houses on arable land. This not only reduces our potential for food production but, when the floods come, our houses get washed away (*a la* 2010/11). These are matters that could be easily addressed by sensible government policy makers. Australian has the potential to support many times its current population and the politicians and pontificators should stop wasting time arguing about it.

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## Is the American Economy Doomed or Just Maturing?

Christopher Merrifield\*

We have seen it happen and it was well predicted that the United States economy could not sustain its level of consumption without facing economic collapse (Wealth of Nations (Smith, 1776). World War Two left America with an abundance of untapped resources and almost all the gold reserves of the British Empire – an economic miracle. However, even these ‘perfect conditions’ could not sustain a frivolous economy. In just several decades the wealth would be squandered in ostentatious displays of avarice, on such a scale that a collapse was inevitable; it seems that the Wall Street financial wizards have merely been operating in delaying tactics.

Looking again at Wealth of Nations (op cit) it appears that United States excessive consumption is cultural. Once it became a super power, it followed with years of corruption and frivolous use of tax payers’ money to bail out failing companies, the most famous case being Enron (Enron, 2002). This was followed by now General Motors (Goldline, 2009) and the erosion of the United States manufacturing base. The Japanese success in manufacturing and technology dominance within the United States (see Hayes & Pisano. 1994) is a major source of chagrin given that these are areas previously seen as traditional American areas of dominance.

So what happened to the great Monetarist (Greg & Whitehouse, 2006) ideal that was to ensure United States financial dominance? In a word, as any Wall Street finance wizard can tell you, eventually you have to pay in real terms, not with paper or good will but with capital (Trade Reform, 2011). However once your manufacturing base has been eroded and you employ a Consumerist culture (Thronstein, 201) the output of these assets declines dramatically and appreciating assets become scarce. Ironically the United States philosophy of Globalization (Croucher, 2010) and retaining opulence and power via conglomerate dominance has backfired. The ‘*Made in the USA*’ label has almost totally disappeared while the ‘*Made in China*’ label, has become the global mainstay in all areas of production, China having advantages in terms of cheap labour due to its enormous population, its own mass of cheap resources and its cleverness in imposing protectionist legislation (Yu, 2011) where necessary to avoid the American error of allowing mass markets to be dominated by outsiders. A major cultural advantage for China is that it can ignore accusations of unfair trade. While not truly ‘communist’ in nature China is certainly ‘nationalist’ and does not pretend to be anything else. On their side, the United States Congress would find it hard to impose anything that seems a deviation from the Free Market to Socialism (Heyek, 1944) because of the American cultural identity; this has already

been a problem for Obama’s state medical plan (see the Washington Times, 2009).

So what about the European Union market? The United States has placed enough investment and has enough cultural similarity to expect support from the Europeans, given other areas may fail to uphold its economy. This however is not entirely true. Anti-Americanism in the business sense is high in Europe, especially due to its poor ethical grounds, which has seen many Anti-Trust privacy laws (e.g. Leibowitz & Margolis. 2003) and statutes regarding food production and labeling (FSA, 2011) firmly stacked against the United States. The question remains: why not against China or India or Russia? Simply because it is well accepted that these developing entities are not in league with the Group of Eight (G8) countries of which the United States is a part. And, given that the United States has propagated itself as a world leader in all areas, it cannot expect its own foolhardiness in deregulating its financial sector (Sherman, 2009) to be tolerated.

Such cynicism is not limited to external regions even in the United States ‘back yard’; South America is adamantly full of mistrust of United States corporate intentions and credibility (BBC, 2006). The key element in all cases is a loss of confidence in the American social attitude and things are unlikely to improve while the United States continues to blame China (Economist, 2010) or insist on suggesting globally devastating approaches like currency devaluation (Reuters, 2010) or defaulting (Politi, 2011). These actions merely continue to erode global confidence and express America’s desperation. Indeed, it may be said that the official economic data states clearly the United States has the highest Gross Domestic Produce (GDP), ranks highest in competitiveness and is home to the most billionaires. But, looking back on recent history, how can a self-inflated American business report be trusted?

### GOING FORWARD IN A MATURE ECONOMY

Although no American would not like to admit it, Europe has always been economically far ahead of it in terms of producing more than it consumes and being overly cautious about storing vast amounts of its resources to protect itself (Waterfield, 2009) and stimulate its economy. It also has many advantages, similar to China, that its own cultural preferences will remain dominant, not what the latest multinational can create. This in itself creates a perfect grounding for economic protection! No other continent could possibly hope to match the alcohol consumption of the European Union and in equal terms, hope to match its superior quality and several millennia of perfected know how. This is one area where the United States could protect itself from the turbulence of global economics and establish good dependable monetary cycles within its own region.

Another major suggestion would be for the United States to be realistic about its ability to afford its vast armed forces, but this is a more complex issue, involving political commitments beyond the scope of this article. Needless to say the wars are not paying off. Alliances like North Atlantic Treaty Organization will have to see the United States take a role as 'equal partner' rather than leader as it simply cannot afford it.

The United States older generation that make up the majority of the Senate need to realize that the 1950's era of working hard and long hours are long gone in favour of a better lifestyle, i.e. quality over quantity. The shift will depend a lot on the higher educated section of the populace which must turn to innovation and high complexity commodities to stay ahead. However regardless of how a nation may decide to change it is easier to accomplish the shift to European standards of maturity than a large nation. The reality is the majority of any populace, even Philosophy Doctorate graduate rich Taiwan, cannot possibly hope its general populace will be anything more than lay persons. Not such a large problem for the relatively small populaces found in Europe but for the United States and other economies that will follow suit once their economies mature, like China and India, it poses a nightmare situation.

The United States however does have a major advantage. Unlike China or India or even the populous rich countries like United Kingdom, Germany or Japan certain areas do have a relatively low populace, given its size. It may be time therefore for the United States, like other rich nations with large enough populations to realize it has reached an optimal size, to severely reprimand its immigration policy. In short, the United States is going to have to be fussy about what industries it prefers and who comes in. It is going to have to upgrade the standard on a national scale in all areas if it is to survive its own inevitable and impending economic maturity.

## CONCLUSION

The US needs to admit that its era is over and that it will have to its reform economic policies and social/work attitudes to those that reflect the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century America; a maturing America. It also needs to start stringently protecting its resources, by returning to a regime of strict government regulation of financial institutions. It is also going to have to view its own severely eroded manufacturing base realistically and stop inflating its own asset capital image, in favour of high quality-high appreciation methods rather than simply mass output. While mass production does exist with many multinationals still having their foundation in the United States, utilizing other global sources, the government must be realistic that the risk of being a country owned by foreigners is likely if it does not avoid ostentatious loans. The world is now truly multi-polar and dependence on the United States which seemed to 'have it all' has been revealed as nothing more than a temporary phase.

While the United States will remain a leader in many respects, it has to learn to see itself as the world does, as a maturing economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, seeking alternatives that go far beyond the country's Fordism Era (Maier, 1970).

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# Industrialization and Unemployment in Ghana

Dr Alexander Ayogyam\*

Economic activity in any society takes place at three separate levels or stages. The primary stage is where raw materials are found. These raw materials are usually not desirable for consumption by many people so requisite transformations are sought. The secondary stage is then visited; at this level raw materials are transformed into other products of more value to mankind. It is at this stage that one can talk of industrialization. Finally at the third stage, the products produced at the secondary level are marketed to satisfy the predetermined needs of customers.

Industrialization may be defined as a process in which a society transforms goods from an unacceptable lower level value to an appreciably higher level of value. Pivotal in this process is the manufacturing sector of the economy. And, since manufacturing is done by the people and for the people, societies which engage in industrialization are bound to experience some substantial social consequences which we might call 'revolutions'. In Roman times manufacturing was evident in the work of artisans who produced glassware but their work was limited by the available power. This brought about the first revolution: machines were produced to enhance production. During this era, agriculture was mechanized to enhance food production. Machines were constructed to replace the manual labour of human beings. This was a mixed blessing. There were many advantages but also social consequences in terms of unemployment, the spread of disease, etc. This suggests that there is a link between industrialization and unemployment; a wise community will enter into industrialization with its eyes open.

## TOWARDS INDUSTRIALIZATION

The following matters need to be investigated prior to entering into industrialization, Feasibility studies need to be undertaken with regard to:

- Finance: What budgetary allocation will be needed to meet the intended purposes?
- Skills: Are the necessary skills available to support the transformation?
- Technological: Are the necessary innovations available; are they adaptable operations?
- Transformation Processes: What are required?
- Human Resource: What people are required to undertake the various tasks and processes?

## POST INDUSTRIALIZATION

When industrialization occurs, two divergent effects can be realized and these must be studied closely. As note above, there are both positive and negative effects on any society where industrialization has occurred.

### Positive effects of industrialization

- The ability to produce goods and services in a faster manner, in huge quantities and in a way that is standardized.
- The ability to feed other industries hence increasing GNP.
- There is knowledge creation as people learn on the job.
- Some old fashioned practices are replaced making life easier for the general populace.

### Negative effects of industrialization

- Urbanization occurs; many people leave the villages for the cities.
- People lose their employment as machines and robots take over their position.
- Environmental pollution is a possibility leading to retarded growth/poisoning of crops when they come into contact with waste products. Water storage bodies may be contaminated.

## INDUSTRIALIZATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Immediately industrialization occurs in a society, the positive and negative effects create different scenarios which demand attention to re-establishing equilibrium. These scenarios when they occur create instability; if neglected they can erase the positive contributions of industrialization. Unfortunately, the negative effect is often neglected. In some cases, this is because people are not aware of the scenario they have created; in other cases they may be aware but do not have the capacity or the will to address it.

As a result, it becomes necessary to identify other bodies that have the 'third eye' to recognize the scenarios quickly and have the capacity to handle them. As these bodies make the effort to 'clean up the mess' the lives of some people within the community may be greatly affected. The unemployed may be invited to help in the process; others who lose their jobs as a result of the industrialization may decide to go entrepreneurial and, as a result, create jobs for other people. This view suggests that, generally speaking, the positive and negative effects of industrialization both may contribute to job creation, in one way or the other.

## LINKS BETWEEN EFFECTS AND JOB CREATION

The kind of job a particular effect will create depends largely on the objective behind the industrialization and the discomfort produced in society

- If production is increased (because the firm in question wanted to increase market share or widen its customer base) the result is likely to be more outlets opened to serve more customers and more store keepers operating.
- Some products produced become 'raw materials' for other businesses. These so-called *transformed resources* keep other service providers in business. For example hairdressers get into business when hair creams are produced for them.
- Urbanization creates congestion in the cities but this prompts real estate producers to build more houses for accommodation.
- Environmental pollution gives job to the sanitation companies.
- Some companies are contracted to develop good fertilizers for agricultural works when the effect of industrialization disturb the fertility of the soil.
- As some people lose their jobs, they tend to learn more to become entrepreneurs who will eventually employ others. There have been several examples in Ghana.
- As old fashion passes away, artisans engage in serious business to supply modern equipment to meet acceptable trends.

## INDUSTRIALIZATION IN GHANA

During the regime of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (the first president of Ghana) from 1957-66, many State Owned Enterprises (SOE's) were empowered to begin manufacturing. These enterprises were assisted financially and encouraged to use local raw materials for their undertakings. Again, those that needed to import raw materials to augment local ones were encouraged to do so. It was during that period that Ghana could boast of the Shoe Factory which relied on the use of locally produced hides for the manufacture of sandals for school children in the country. Quality bags were produced from these hides as well. This is an example of the 'horizontal industrialization' (industrializing into related fields). Jobs were created as and when the hides were put to different uses. The factory created employment for many Ghanaians during the period. Today the hides produced in the country are been used for food hence curtailing industrialization. This is because Government influence has been withdrawn. Workers were laid off and businesses established to feed the Shoe factory collapsed. Apart from the unemployment

cases, Gross National Product (GNP) in the country was affected.

Another important manufacturing body worth mentioning is the Jute factory which for the past twenty five years has ceased to operate. This factory imported yarns for the manufacture of jute sacks which is in high demand by many enterprises in the country such as Cocoa companies, farmers and market women. Many workers in this company were laid off and the Ghana COCOBOD has to import jute sacks at a huge cost from Bangladesh, Ivory Coast and other countries. This created a situation where demand for the jute sacks far exceeded the supply. As a result, many users of the sacks are out of business. The intermediary companies which would have indulged in further manufacturing ceased to exist.

The Nsawam Cannery was set up to process and pack sardines and other products brought in by local fish farmers. It was a good deal for Ghanaian fishermen; it took away the need for marketing the catch. A huge numbers of factory workers were gainfully employed at the time. Today, Ghana imports canned foods from neighbours and also from Europe.

Later in the 1980's, the Government led by Mr. Rawlings introduced the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) where the private sector was given the chance to own State Businesses. Though this was not a bad idea, entrepreneurs were faced with the challenge of accessing capital from the banks. Another challenge was the need to have smooth business arrangements with the Custom Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS) at the two sea ports in the country. These challenges toned down industrialization among the manufacturing companies in Ghana today.

The regime preceding Professor Mills's administration was led by Mr. John Adjekum Kuffuor under the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Between the years 2000-2008 the private sector was identified as the engine of growth of the economy. Many programs were initiated to serve as a spring board for the private sector but the requisite technologies to drive these ideas were not commensurate. The President empowered farmers to go into cassava plantation to feed starch manufacturing enterprises to be set up by the private sector. Many farmers responded positively to this call but unfortunately the term of office did not permit the Government to complete the project. This business would have created employment for farmers, factory workers and intermediary companies alike.

## PRACTICES OF INDUSTRIALIZATION IN GHANA VIS A VIZ THE WESTERN WORLD

Ghana is naturally endowed with natural resources such as Gold, Cocoa, Timber, Diamonds, Manganese, and many cash crops. The country is interested in discovering new things but does not spend time on research to find out how the already discovered can be transformed into other offerings capable of arousing

the interest of Ghanaians. It can be said that, Ghana is interested in 'vertical industrialization (the discovery of issues in unrelated fields). Ghana is therefore seen to be practicing the Dutch Disease Syndrome where it deeply exploits the natural resources but demonstrates a decline in the manufacturing sector (Yumkella, 2010). This attitude by Ghana has rendered her non competitive in the world hence it's inability to create jobs for the youth in the country over the years. It was not surprising when Ghana was rated 102 out of 134 in the 2008/2009 Global Competitive report. Ghana is yet to add meaningful value to Cocoa beans so as to generate other products after 132 years of Cocoa existence in the country. Between 70% and 80% of Cocoa beans produced every year in Ghana are exported in their raw state for foreign exchange. After so many years the country still searches the globe for buyers of raw beans. For this reason, creation of jobs in this sector of the economy has been a mirage. Japan and the United Kingdom create multiple products from the Cocoa beans they buy from Ghana. This translates into the creation of many related jobs.

Not quite long ago, Malaysia picked the palm fruit from Ghana and introduced it to her farmers. Today, Malaysia has gone through many forms of industrialization with this fruit from Ghana. They have been able to create many other products from the by-products of this single fruit meanwhile Ghana is yet to outdoor a generic product apart from the local 'palm wine' and 'palm kennel oil' which are not known beyond its borders. Malaysia can boast of furniture, fertilizers, building materials, medicine and many other products from the palm tree which are generic in nature. This industrialization attitude of Malaysia can be described as 'horizontal industrialization' (manufacturing from existing product). The country is at least sure of the continuous flow of knowledge in those related areas. In Ghana's case, there is regular import of knowledge to assist in her kind of industrialization. The jobs emanating from any industrialization exercise requires expertise from the western world.

China since 1974 exported oil to Japan for foreign exchange but today through accelerated development, their oil is being processed into other finished products. China now imports oil to a level which is two-thirds that of Japan's imports. This is purely industrialization into related areas where value is added to an existing raw material, in this case oil.

## **REASONS FOR GHANA'S FAILURE**

Many industrialization efforts have failed in Ghana as a result of financial constraints and poor planning. Amin (2009) claims Ghana's 2010 budget promises to exploit more natural resources such sea salt, limestone for cement, silica sand for fertilizers but has not planned adequately for the electrical power to support this industrialization.

## **ISSUES ARISING FROM GHANA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION EFFORTS**

Meanings can be read into the trends of events in Ghana since her Independence in 1957 in the area of industrialization. History has shown that Ghana started well with her industrialization efforts but along the way, certain policies derailed the good plans. The Government has not proved good enough when it comes to doing business with its citizenry; the total withdrawal from the SOEs was not the best option for the country at that time. It has been established that almost all the SOEs that were relinquished to the private sector could not stand the test of time. People lost their jobs, all enterprises that were dependent on the SOEs collapsed and industrialization ceased. It is therefore recommended that any future withdrawal must be done with circumspection. It is noted from the historical events that any move towards industrialization must be holistic. In other words, the required technology that would ensure the success of those projects must be tested for suitability, adaptability, affordability and flexibility.

Ghana is fond of discovering and breaking new ground as against the creation of new ideas using existing raw materials. Becoming more innovative could lead to diversity in manufacturing which would certainly curb unemployment.

For the private sector to embark on effective manufacturing to create jobs and to make Ghana competitive on the global market, Government must moderate certain sectors of the economy. For example, CEPS, Ghana Immigration Service, the banking sector and the legal systems of the country need to uphold fairness. The private sector on their part must scrutinize the consequences of their actions because the aftermath of every manufacturing exercise is the opportunity for other businesses to take off.

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## The Non-Profit World Has a Big Embrace - Has It Become Too Big?

Prof Douglas White\*

Most people are unaware that Harold Camping, the California radio host who keeps predicting the end of the world, is employed by a charity. Until recently his working “calculation” concluded that May 21 would be the beginning of the end. He based that result on some Byzantine mental process involving a formula he claimed originated in ancient Biblical days.

Aside from the fact that no such formula exists in the Bible, whatever did incite Mr. Camping’s imagination could not have taken into account that Julius Caesar and Pope Gregory XIII — in whose names calendars were tweaked — would come along some day and turn on its head any prediction of a date-specific Rapture. That Mr. Camping’s organization, Family Radio, is a charity means all Americans are paying for his lunacy.

And it is no small charity. According to its most recent tax return, Family Stations (which runs Family Radio and pays Mr. Camping’s salary) raised more than \$18-million in 2009 and owned net assets of more than \$70-million, a third of which are held in stocks. Not only are the donations to this organization tax-deductible but the sales transactions within its investment portfolio are also conducted without tax payments.

Much of the \$18-million donated to Family Radio, spent by Mr. Camping and subsidized by the American taxpayer, was spent on advertising the imagined Rapture. The message that the end was inevitable and time-certain was strong enough that many believers reportedly quit their jobs and ended their relationships with loved ones!

The issue is not just that the cause is controversial or that those who disagree, often vigorously, share the same planet. It is about whether we want to consider such organizations part of the non-profit world and give them special privileges, like tax subsidies.

Many nonprofits have controversial perspectives. It is probably safe to say, for example, that the bell curves of the beliefs of those who support Greenpeace and those who support the National Rifle Association are not closely aligned. Those groups are most certainly even less aligned for supporters of Planned Parenthood and National Right to Life. Of the total supporters of Greenpeace or the National Rifle Association combined, the vast number who support only one probably feel the other group is dead wrong in the way it looks at the world. But most of us can understand, or at least respect, opposing viewpoints and can live with the idea that when it comes to granting tax exemptions to charities, a wide spectrum of beliefs and understanding is a healthy thing.

But the spectrum may be growing too wide. In the absence of the Rapture, we may be witnessing something as important, and much more real: a rupture. A rupture in the non-profit world as it grows to accept anything, no matter how unintelligent or irrelevant to the advancement of society. In short: a non-profit world that begins to mean nothing.

The IRS denies only 2 percent of all applications for tax-exempt status each year. In 2009 Rob Reich, a Stanford University associate professor, and his students wrote a paper, called “Anything Goes”. They reported that, among the vast majority of applications that are approved, some interesting, and certainly questionable charitable causes are subsidized by the rest of us. Of the 20 examples in the report of strange charities recently granted exemption, my vote for the weirdest is the Grand Canyon Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, an international order of drag nuns dedicated, according to their Web site, to “the expiation of stigmatic guilt and the promulgation of universal joy.”

So it comes as no surprise that Project Veritas<sup>1</sup> recently received the news that it, too, is now an official tax-exempt entity. Project Veritas is the group that unfairly manhandled, through deceit and lies, such organizations as Planned Parenthood and National Public Radio. Its founder, James O’Keefe, is a 26-year old who describes himself on his Web site as an “independent journalist.” But words have been used so malleably in recent years that it matters not that he is no journalist and makes no pretence of being fair, unbiased, or independent. The only stories he investigates are those that satisfy right-wing political goals. If the rest of the world can embrace sneak attacks and intentionally biased writing within the word “journalism,” why should the IRS, of all places, care to fine-tune that claim?

The confluence of the recent attention garnered by Harold Camping and James O’Keefe might itself be a warning; based not on an imagined ancient formula but on important and relevant facts of today. If the work of the non-profit world is a reflection of our commitment to advancing society, and if we’re going to spread the cost of that advancement among all taxpayers, then at some point we are going to have to infuse some common sense into the process of deciding what we mean by a non-profit.

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<sup>1</sup>NB In no way connected with the Veritas e-Journal – Ed.

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*\*Professor Douglas White is Academic Director of the Heyman Center for Philanthropy at New York University and author of The “Non-profit Challenge: Integrating Ethics Into the Purpose and Promise of Our Nation’s Charities” (Palgrave Macmillan). This article is printed with Professor White’s permission.*

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