**Leadership III Final Report**

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SOAN311: Leadership III, The Economic Organization of a Good Society

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The complexities of life and the major setbacks that nature throws every human being force people to adapt. People can live in the same century but have different life experiences and shortcomings. In search of a more straightforward or formulaic way to lessen the unbeatable power of nature, humans have always tried to live beyond their 100 years by putting down essential precepts, either scientific or moral knowledge, as a compass for the young and coming generations. The course of Leadership III also has served my understanding of what can be said about a good society, how a good society can be achieved, and some significant challenges that arise in ideas from knowledgeable people who lived or are still alive. In this paper, I explore what I believe to be a good society, how it can be achieved, and some crucial milestones necessary to achieve it.

When I turned 20, I loved self-help books and motivational speeches. Every civilized man must earn his living through blood and sweat. However, in modern days, many sentimental philosophies of depicting life as not grim or brutal lead more people to have easy optimism (Sumner,1914, p.5). Sumner is a realist who judges things based on reality. Every time I listened to a motivator, I made some resolutions to myself, and I felt like my life would change forever If I committed to my resolutions. But, as the days went on, my life used to get back to normal. After a year, I realized that, in most cases, changes come within. People do not necessarily fail to change because they need more information for their transformation. However, the lack of introspection and purpose to improve themselves often plays a significant role.

When it comes to organizing a society, it is even more complex. According to Sumner (1914), “poverty and misery will exist in society just so long as vice exists in human nature”(p.5). However, if we look around the world, not all societies are poor at the same level. That implies that some societies have devised better ways to organize themselves to reduce poverty. Nevertheless, success takes work from an individual perspective or society. Suppose it is challenging for someone to guide themselves toward prosperity. In that case, it is even more challenging for an individual to create a roadmap that guides an entire nation toward economic and cultural prosperity.

When the equation involves one variable, it is easy to solve in maths. According to Sumner(1914), the liberty of individuals guarantees inequality(p.4). Sumner believes the liberty of choices of individuals in nature reflects a good society. He suggests that there is no such as a right to a certain living standard. On the other hand, Okun(1974) suggests that every human deserves decent living conditions(p.7). Looking at these two great men, we see that society is like a multivariable equation. These opposing views have to coexist for a society to be good. Okun suggested that we face significant tradeoffs while balancing those variables. That is why if a society does not tolerate opposing views and engage them constructively, it is guaranteed to fail. A complex equation like society needs more ideas, opinions, and approaches to its problems' resolutions.

For a society to be good, it has to have good people. According to Schumacher(1973), people can collaborate and engage in different sorts of activities; however, when it comes to action, it becomes a personal affair (p.69). A society is made of many individuals with different dreams and aspirations. Each one may have a drive that makes them wake up every morning. Society can prosper if individuals strive to achieve their best without infringing on other people's rights. On top of competent and purposeful people, society should have a shared vision that ties the nation together despite various members' ideas, leanings, and life aspirations. That shared vision can be embedded in the culture as a philosophy or rules of laws that ensure good behaviors that lead a country to prosper are encouraged, while the ones that stump on its belly are discouraged.

A Society cannot infuse the philosophy that makes a country prosperous in one day. For a society to become prosperous, production should be a priority. As Sumner(1914) states, capital is the lever(p.3). We need capital to produce at maximum capacity. Additionally, it is a worldly accepted concept that a source of wealth is human labor (Schumacher, 1973, p.57). Capital alone cannot create wealth. The brain behind every capital must have enough skills to make decisions that will guarantee success or failure. As Friedman(1962) states, investment in human capital is as profitable as physical assets(p.86). Each society should prioritize education. Education should not necessarily mean having PhDs or Masters; education systems should be geared toward learning how to learn. If a society prioritizes that, it should have both human and physical capital to be competitive globally.

Nevertheless, for society to become good on its terms is hard. Schumacher (1973) states that small units need freedom while getting orderliness from large-scale unity and coordination (p.69). From an individual to a country, they need partnerships, coalitions, and other forms of unions to tackle common problems. In real life, parents are role models for their children at an early age. For a society, the societies that are better off become the benchmark for the rest. In a child-parent relationship, a child can be a victim of an abusive parent, and the same happens at a high level, such as in society. We live in an intertwined world where each society depends on each other. When a Society decides to follow its passions and purpose, it must abide with the rest of the societies to move forward. If it does not abide by the powerful societies, it faces backlashes that may hinder any initiative it takes.

In the current state of the world, it is hard for a society to follow its trajectory as it wishes. According to Chang (2002), there are historical economic concepts developed societies have used to get where they are that have explicitly accepted today as a way for a society to develop itself (p.240). When we argued in class about the best path toward changing Africa, some students suggested that we do not need to follow their trajectory to get where they are. However, Africa can never win in the game where rules keep being redefined by the West during the game. Powerful societies keep redefining principles that are considered to be moral at the expense of African societies. In the current context, African societies can only sustain themselves if there are mental and practical shifts in what we believe to be the path to success, which would require years of hardships to reach a level of autonomy.

Although some societies are victims of other societies, African societies have self-inflicted economic inefficiencies. As De Soto(2000 )points out, capitalism has succeeded in the West due to its ability to use assets in double roles(p.45). When traveling back home, there are many unused lands when someone looks down while sitting on the plane. From Burundi village to Ghana, it is hard to see all the resources that we have being used to generate wealth. We have weak laws and property rights that force us to trade with people within our vicinity. In Burundi, an entrepreneur cannot raise money for a business idea or company by selling shares. Having a market for shared ownership of houses, land, and businesses takes time and effort. The lack of these laws makes it hard for people to start a business, trade with strangers, and build trust with people they do not know.

Because we find ourselves in societies with many problems, constantly complaining is unhealthy. According to Friedman(1962), “The free man will ask neither what his country can do for him nor what he can do for his country. He will ask rather, "What can I and my compatriots do through government"”(p.10). Every community member should not expect to live at the expense of the community. Individual freedom of action should reign supreme while avoiding negative externalities. Then, if there is some liberty in choosing what to do and how to do it, every member should take responsibility for his failures and success and keep pushing for a more fair and equitable society. By doing so, society can move from the less better to the more better society.

On the contrary, the community should not expect to be better off by some individuals. It should be a collective effort, with everyone willingly pitching in what is within his power. No one should be forced to share their hard-earned money or wealth unless it is through their acknowledgment of the community's contribution to their success. Every member of society should live for the betterment of the community. In contrast, nobody in society expects anything from anybody except the government in place in terms of sound policies to ensure peace and security of individual dealings.

As society strives to be a good society, SDG4 (Education) should be among the top priorities. According to Acemoglu (2012), A country that neglects the education of its people pays a high price in the inclusive market (p.92). If a country has a high level of literacy, people can learn and communicate knowledge with the rest of the world. For instance, Burundi is now one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the PASEC report(2019), in the sixth grade of elementary education, less than 30 percent of students attain scores exceeding the minimum proficiency level in reading, and only 60 percent reach the minimum score in mathematics. These statistics mark a notable decrease from the statistics reported in 2014. The impact of this decline in quality will have far-reaching effects on Burundi. Every society should be aware of the impact education has and take precocious measures to ensure that the education given to people gives them a competitive advantage in a global market.

More than educating people is required. As Schumacher(1973) states, work gives human dignity, and every economy should focus on the production by the mass, not on mass production(p.77). For instance, 80% of Burundi's population are farmers; however, in July 2023, headline inflation surged to 26%, primarily propelled by escalations in food and fuel prices (World Bank, 2023). Even though there is a large portion of the workforce in agriculture, no output can make the country self-sufficient due to the lack of tools and infrastructure necessary for adding value to agricultural produce. That is why Sustainable infrastructures and industries (SDG9) are necessary. People need to have infrastructure and industries where they put what they know to work. A country with quality industries and infrastructures secures many alliances.

With all being done, a society has to ensure that people feel treated reasonably. According to Acemoglu(2012), nations fail because of the extractive nature of their economic system and institutions(p.440). A large talent pool does not guarantee that those people will use them in a country that trains them. In Africa, we have the most significant issue where talented people can live within our country due to threats they face when challenging the status quo. The Justice and strong institutions (SDG16) must be prioritized. For instance, in Burundi, converting our local currency into foreign currency takes much work. There is no market for stock. If an investor has an investment portfolio in Burundi, it is hard for them to cash out the return on investment by transferring those funds to other countries(U.S. Department of State Report, 2022). It is hard for someone to do a long-term project in a country where they know if they oppose any powerful personality, their businesses or property will be nationalized or ruined. Strong institutions guarantee that most people can pour capital into our society despite its current problems.

All in all, organizing a society is a complex task. The course of Leadership III has taught me to question every argument of what a good society is and how to get to have it in the first place. We cannot give up because a good society seems unachievable. We must do our best to ensure that each community member is respected and valued to the level they feel ready to contribute to the common good at their best ability.

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