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U.S. International Agricultural Development: What Events, Forces, Actors, and Philosophical Perspectives Presaged Its Approach?

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Abstract

The philosophical perspectives, including significant actors, events, and forces, that influenced and presaged the United States' approach to international agricultural development are somewhat unclear. The purpose of this historical narrative, therefore, was to understand the key drivers responsible for forging the U.S. framework for technical agricultural assistance abroad, especially in its formative years. The study's findings were reported by answering two questions. The first question explored historical events, including federal legislative acts and statutes, which precipitated the U.S. approach to international agricultural development. The second research question addressed the philosophical primers imbued in the U.S. approach to international agricultural development, including significant actors responsible for championing it. We assert the environmental pragmatism of Liberty Hyde Bailey and its other proponents was the philosophical foundation and worldview that informed many of the pioneers who guided the U.S. approach to offering agricultural assistance as part of the nation's international development efforts. As such, we recommend the inclusion of certain aspects of environmentalism in agricultural and extension educator preparation with implications for international and domestic development, including long-term sustainability initiatives.

Keywords: environmentalism; Extension; international agricultural development (IAD); sustainable agriculture; United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Introduction

Foreign assistance is viewed as a fundamental instrument of U.S. foreign policy and supports many objectives (Tarnoff & Lawson, 2016). Three key rationales supporting the U.S. approach to foreign assistance have been proffered: national security, commercial, and humanitarian (Tarnoff & Lawson, 2016). National security has been the foremost concern of U.S. assistance programs. For example, following World War II, U.S. aid programs primarily addressed the incursion of communist influence around the globe. Next, commercial interests have long been viewed as a mechanism for promoting U.S. exports. Foreign assistance always has been a way to create new customers for U.S. products and to improve the global competitive environment for U.S. companies. Third, humanitarian concerns have driven both short- and long-term U.S. assistance programs in response to disasters and crises as well as long-term development assistance programs aimed at eradicating and reducing food insecurity and poverty, to name a few of its objectives (Tarnoff & Lawson, 2016).

To these aims, U.S. technical assistance abroad has received generally widespread support from the American public and policymakers alike. However, little is known about the origins of U.S. technical assistance as a form of advisory services in international agricultural development (IAD), including its historically significant actors, events, and forces. It was the intention of the authors, therefore, to understand more fully the basis for and evolution of the U.S. government's approach to providing technical assistance abroad to support IAD. To understand the role of U.S. technical assistance in IAD, it was necessary to examine the historical evidence regarding its origins. This study aimed to present a historical perspective on

the significant factors influencing the U.S. approach to IAD and, thereby, provide additional clarity for its practitioners *and* their counterparts in many of the least developed countries (LDCs) impacted by such.

LDCs are defined as “low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development” (United Nations [UN], 2017, para. 1). They are extremely vulnerable to economic and environmental shock and characterized as having inadequate levels of human capital (UN, 2017). According to the UN, LDCs receive exclusive access to “certain international support measures” (UN, 2017, para. 3) in particular areas, such as international trade and development assistance. Over time, this included various forms of assistance from the United States.

Purpose and Research Questions

This study's purpose was to examine the historical events, forces, and actors that influenced and thereafter guided the U.S. government's approach to offering agricultural technical assistance to other nations, including LDCs. Two research questions guided this inquiry:

1. What significant historical events, including interagency federal legislative acts and statutes, codified the U.S. government's approach to offering technical agricultural assistance in its international development efforts?
2. What philosophical forces, including historically significant actors, influenced the U.S. government's approach to offering technical agricultural assistance in its international development efforts?

Methods and Procedures

In 2002, McDowell published a comprehensive guide for conducting historical investigations. He suggested that examining the past could illuminate the similarities between conditions governing both past and present with implications for the future. Therefore, historical research methods were used to answer this study's research questions. According to Camp and Crunkilton (1985), "[t]wo things emerge as the central foci in all such historical works: people who have made a difference and events that signal major accomplishments or turning points in the profession's development" (p. 57). "[Having a] better understanding of the past places us in a more advantageous position to appreciate change in the present and to try and learn from past mistakes" (McDowell, 2002, p. 5). McDowell (2002) added: "Historical research does not consist in the mere collection of 'facts,' but rather in the interrelationship between factual evidence and the interpretation of this evidence by historians" (p. 4). His recommendations were followed in conducting this study.

Historical data were derived from primary and secondary sources, including U.S. legislative acts, reports, and statutes; peer-refereed journal articles; and books. In addition, official U.S. government websites were examined for relevant content. The information was accessed and collected using online search engines provided by the main library at Oklahoma State University. Key search terms included agricultural development, environmentalism, international agricultural and extension education, sustainability, sustainable agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The study's sources of data were subjected to internal and external criticism by the authors to ensure their accuracy and

authenticity (Johnson & Christensen, 2010; McDowell, 2002). In all, evidentiary documents were sources as identified in the manuscript's references section.

Triangulating multiple sources supported the study's credibility and validity, as recommended by Tracy (2010).

Findings

Research Question #1: What significant historical events, including interagency federal legislative acts and statutes, codified the U.S. government's approach to offering technical agricultural assistance in its international development efforts?

The provision of technical assistance, including programs involving agriculture, is not a concept first dawned by the U.S. government (American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service [ACVAFS], 1953). For example, according to the Near East Foundation [NEF], "the practice NEF established of working in tandem with foreign governments and local organizations . . . provided a model for many of today's most well-known development organizations – including USAID and the Peace Corps" ("History," 2016, para. 7).

The U.S. Congress authorized the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Act (46 Stat. 497) in 1930. This act assigned the FAS to lead USDA's efforts in improving the agricultural systems of LDCs, including their international trade capacity, a precursor to its present-day objectives of partnering with USAID to deliver high-impact food aid programs and support for agricultural development initiatives (FAS, 2015). The FAS mission reads "linking U.S. agriculture to the world to enhance export opportunities and global food security"; its motto is simply "linking U.S. Agriculture to the World" (FAS, 2015, para. 6).

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) inherited immense challenges during his presidency beginning in 1933, especially the *Great Depression* – a singularly dark period in American history (McCalla, 1969). By the 1930s, persistent drought was evident throughout the Great Plains region, which manifested crop failures, soil erosion, and large dust storms (Schubert, Suarez, Pegion, Koster, & Bacmeister, 2004). According to Lal, Reicosky, and Hanson (2007), the U.S. agricultural revolution, especially escalating use of the plow, which occurred over many generations, invariably transformed the American landscape. They noted the “[u]se of the plow expanded rapidly with the introduction of the ‘steam horse’ [i.e., tractor,] in 1910 that led to widespread severe soil erosion and environmental degradation culminating in the Dust Bowl of the 1930s” (p. 1). Beginning in the late 1800s, however, strong agrarian movements in rural America, e.g., emergence of the Grange and Farmers’ movement, sought advanced methods of agriculture that would effectively reduce the negative environmental, social, and economic impacts of prolonged intensive tillage, such as water, wind, and soil erosion. Later, “Hugh Hammond Bennett led the soil conservation movement in the U.S. in the 1920s and 1930s, and urged the nation to address the ‘national menace’ of soil erosion” (Lal et al., 2007, p. 5). Bennett’s zeal for conservation stemmed from his experience “studying soils and agriculture nationally and internationally” (Lal et al., 2007, p. 5).

The Roosevelt Administration famously instituted its *New Deal*, i.e., the National Industrial Recovery Act, focused on relief, recovery, and reform in 1933 (Fraser & Gerstle, 1989), which included programs to assist U.S. farmers. Gilbert (2015) noted the New Deal exemplified four principles of agricultural democracy: “1)

decentralized administration through local farmer committees; 2) referenda to determine administrative policies such as quotas and penalties; 3) group discussion and adult education to promote ‘intelligent participation’; and, 4) cooperative planning in policy formulation and localization of programs” (p. 15). As part of the New Deal, the Emergency Conservation Work Program (P. L. 73-5), popularized as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), was a public works relief program for youth and the unemployed during the Great Depression (Maher, 2007).

The framework for the CCC was largely influenced by the emergence of service-learning as a method of instruction and success of another service-learning program, i.e., the National Youth Administration [NYA] (Roberts & Edwards, 2015). Similar to the NYA, the CCC provided employment opportunities to youth and unskilled workers. It paid these individuals to engage in civic activities directly related to conservation and management of natural resources on federal and state lands (Williams, 2005). CCC activities related to agricultural conservation were also widespread; for example, Corps members built terraces for farmers and dug farm ponds (Urban & Wagoner, 2014).

The National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 (P. L. 73-67) codified conservation of soil and water as a national priority, including funding to fight soil erosion as the result of a combination of drought and poor agricultural practices (NRCS, 2016). Excessive use of the moldboard plow on the nation’s prairies had marginalized ecological stability and soil health in favor of mechanized production agriculture to meet both domestic and international demand for food and fiber products (Lal et al., 2007). Moreover, a wind-break program, the Shelterbelt Project of 1934, was also implemented by FDR’s

administration in response to the widespread wind and soil erosion, which required extensive interagency cooperation between the USDA's Soil Conservation Service, state, county, and other local agencies, and farmers (Williams, 2005). The shelterbelt project integrated environmentalism and conservation concepts frequently used in forestry with novel farming practices and traditional approaches that reduced water, soil, and wind erosion, such as planting windrows (Lal et al., 2007). During this period, the Soil Conservation Act of 1935 (P. L. 74-46) established the Soil Conservation Service, renamed the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 1994, as a permanent agency within the USDA (Lal et al., 2007). As a consequence, USDA managers explored ways to extend *conservation assistance* to farmers for the first time ("A Brief History," 2018; Lal et al., 2007).

In 1938, Dr. M. L. Wilson, director of federal Extension in the USDA, visited the Macedonian Project in Greece (Allen, 1953). He observed the NEF had successfully adapted the methods of U.S. county agents and other extension personnel to a culture very different from that of the United States (Curti, 1988). However, his tenure abroad did not begin there. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Soviets hired select U.S. agriculturists to help establish improved farming systems in the Soviet Union (Stock & Johnston, 2001). Among those selected, Wilson traveled to the Soviet Union with highly detailed plans for establishing integrated farming systems (Stock & Johnston, 2001). Dr. Wilson belonged to an elite group of *agrarian intellectuals*, including five economists and a sociologist, "who led the USDA during the New Deal" (Gilbert, 2015, p. 13):

Henry A. Wallace, secretary of agriculture; M. L. Wilson,

undersecretary of agriculture and director of federal Extension; Howard R. Tolley, chief of the BAE [Bureau of Agricultural Economics]; Lewis C. Gracy, premier land planner, Bushrod W. Allin, top planning official; and Carl C. Taylor, leading rural sociologist. (Gilbert, 2015, p. 13)

"Half organic intellectual and half low modernist as the agrarian intellectuals were, the tradition they created was short-lived" (Stock & Johnston, 2001, p. 238). Many agriculturally focused New Dealers, however, pursued international careers following the end of WWII (Gilbert, 2015). For example, Tolley served as chief economist to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (Gilbert, 2015), and others demonstrated an IAD focus earlier in their careers. According to Gilbert (2015), "Henry Wallace always stood as an internationalist" (p. 259). He added: "As vice president during most of America's participation in World War II, he took it as his mission to internationalize the New Deal, . . . [while Dr. Wilson] pushed the globalization of the 4-H youth program" (Gilbert, 2015, p. 259). Wallace began his intellectual life as a "Jeffersonian and participant in the Country Life Movement. . . His point of view, and that of his father and grandfather, Henry C. and 'Uncle Henry' Wallace, had been expressed, he recalled, by Liberty Hyde Bailey" (Kirkendall, 1997, para. 3). These agrarian New Dealers "ended their long careers abroad, working on land reform, rural development, and community development projects in places far removed from their native Midwest" (Gilbert, 2015, p. xv), including, in some cases, countries with government's more receptive to their pragmatic approaches to participatory rural development.

As U.S. president, FDR had a reputation for reorganizing governmental operations with the intention of increasing their efficiency (Olson, 2001). The Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1939 (53 Stat. 1431) instigated the regrouping of federal agencies to reduce costs and eliminate duplicitous programs (Roosevelt, 1939, para. 4). One result was the brief disbanding of the FAS and renaming it The Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations [OFAR] (ACVAFS, 1953). OFAR “[provided] technical knowledge and personnel, on a governmental level” (ACVAFS, 1953, p. 21). During this period, U.S. IAD policies were heavily reliant on national economic goals (McCalla, 1969), i.e., “imports of strategic raw materials,” and less, as some critics have argued, on offering technical assistance to developing nations (Paterson, 1972, p. 126). Gifford Pinchot, first chief of the U.S. Forest Service and an early champion of international conservation efforts, held correspondence with the president (Miller, 2013). In his September 8, 1944 letter, Pinchot urged FDR to convene a global summit on conservation with the United Nations (Miller, 2013). This was not the first time Pinchot had pushed for this kind of international conference. As early as 1909, he made his original request to President Theodore Roosevelt, but President William Howard Taft put an end to such an initiative on his ascension to office (Jundt, 2014). FDR died in the final year of WWII, and his successor, Harry S. Truman, became president on April 12, 1945.

After attempting to convene a global summit on conservation with three different U.S. presidents, Pinchot finally succeeded when he presented his plan to President Truman (Jundt, 2014). “In 1946, at the behest of President Truman, the United Nations (UN) announced that it would hold a conference to consider the conservation and effective utilization of natural

resources” (Jundt, 2014, p. 44). This was not the only initiative in regard to the United States’ forthcoming role in integrating conservation and sustainability concepts in its IAD efforts. Inspired by the success of the NEF, as observed by M. L. Wilson in Greece (Allen, 1953), the Truman administration received approval from Congress in 1947 to offer technical assistance to Turkey and Greece (USAID, 1999). Paterson (1972) noted the “Truman Doctrine[’s] assistance to Greece and Turkey was part of America’s postwar economic offensive” (p. 119) in regard to mitigating the rise of communism.

In a speech at Harvard University, Truman’s Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed an outline for the European Recovery Plan, better known as the *Marshall Plan* (McCalla, 1969; USAID, 1999). The 4-year Marshall Plan was authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948, which established the Economic Cooperation Agency [ECA] (USAID, 1999). McCalla (1969) concluded the United States seemed ready to assume the mantle of world leadership at the end of World War II, and further stated: “The postwar period was marked by efforts led by the United States to reconstruct Europe and to rationalize international trade” (p. 337).

To that aim, President Truman announced during his January 20, 1949 inaugural address:

[C]ontinued support of the United Nations, the Marshall Plan, and military agreements such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Rio Pact. [And] [w]ith relish, he moved beyond these three points to announce a fourth point, a ‘bold new program’ of technical assistance to ‘underdeveloped’ areas [of the world]. (Paterson, 1972, p. 120)

As a result, the *Point 4 Program* was established in May of 1950 as Title IV of the Foreign Economic Assistance Act (Paterson, 1972). Its objective was to approach international development not through aid alone, but rather by facilitating technical assistance and private investment (Paterson, 1972). Some observers, however, took a contrarian viewpoint and saw the program as a “[m]eans for the United States to manage the postcolonial world while keeping less developed countries out of the Soviet [Union’s] fold” (Jundt, 2014, p. 47). Moreover, “[i]n this neocolonial system the United States sold former colonies the American way of modern industrial and consumer life while collecting payment in the form of their natural resources” (Jundt, 2014, p. 47). Nevertheless, the Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA) was established within the U.S. Department of State to implement the Point 4 Program (Erb, 1985).

The Point 4 Program was a series of bilateral agreements and contracts pertaining to “agriculture and rural programs” (ACVAFS, 1953, p. 33) between non-governmental organizations, foreign governments, and the U.S. government (ACVAFS, 1953). Henry G. Bennett, the first TCA administrator, led the Point 4 Program; Bennett also served as president of Oklahoma A&M College, now Oklahoma State University (Clark, Davis, & Simon, 2008), a land-grant institution. Unfortunately, Bennett died in an airplane crash in Iran while on assignment for the Program (Clark et al., 2008). The mission and vision of the Point 4 Program persisted, however, and in 1951 then U.S. Representative John F. Kennedy suggested “[y]oung college graduates would find a full life in bringing technical advice and assistance to the underprivileged and backward Middle East” (Maier, 2009, p.

200), i.e., an allusion to the forthcoming Peace Corps.

During the period after Representative Kennedy’s speech, the Mutual Security Act abolished the ECA and replaced it with the Mutual Security Agency (MSA), which launched major U.S. foreign assistance programs (Morgner, 1967). The agency’s main goal was to empower developing countries while containing the spread of communism by providing technical foreign assistance, including military and economic support (Morgner, 1967). To assess the impact and efficacy of U.S. foreign assistance programs, the ACVAFS published a study made possible by support from the Ford Foundation. The council’s report assessed *The Role of Voluntary Agencies in Technical Assistance*, which stated: “[T]echnical aid proposed by government and intergovernmental groups must of course extend far beyond the limitations of non-tax supported agencies” (ACVAFS, 1953, p. vii).

In one of Dwight D. Eisenhower’s first acts as president in 1953, he renamed the Point 4 Program the *Technical Assistance Program*, and reorganized the TCA and MSA into the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) to harmonize their efforts (USAID, 1999). Later, in 1955, the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) replaced the FOA (Morgner, 1967). Even though USDA’s technical agricultural expertise was in high demand in many LDCs at that time (USAID, 1999), two studies were implemented by the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate to assess the nation’s international development efforts due to increasing pressure from the legislators’ constituents: *Administrative Aspects of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Programs and Agricultural Surplus Disposal and Foreign Aid* (USAID, 1999). Findings of the two studies stoked political uncertainties regarding further

adherence to the international development framework manifested by the Marshall Plan (USAID, 1999).

To “expand and unify American aid operations and strengthen the economic development component” (Morgner, 1967, p. 66), major policy reforms occurred in U.S. aid agencies offering technical agricultural expertise to LDCs (Morgner, 1967) during the 1960s. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy launched the United States Peace Corps, and the ICA was renamed the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as arranged under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (Morgner, 1967). The reorganization occurred because of increased dissatisfaction with the existing foreign aid program, and it combined already existing U.S. assistance efforts abroad (Morgner, 1967). Moreover, in 1959, the economist Walt Whitman Rostow published his economic model *Rostow’s Stages of Economic Growth*. The model posited that economic growth occurs in five basic stages, including traditional society, preconditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity, and age of high mass consumption (Rostow, 1959). This “economic development theory . . . provided the premise for much of the development planning in the . . . U.S. Agency for International Development” (USAID, 1999, para. 16). The approach was not without critics; for example, pushback arose against the position held by USAID and endorsed by the Washington Consensus on Agriculture, i.e., a growing point of view casting international aid as a *business* (Kydd & Dorward, 2001).

Nonetheless, USAID is the modern standard for international and intergovernmental cooperation through its development projects and humanitarian aid, relief, and recovery programs (USAID, 1999), including efforts devoted to agricultural development. However,

understanding better the origins and precursors of U.S. technical agricultural development assistance to other nations includes the need to examine the actors and philosophical influences that manifested its emergence, evolution, and status.

Research Question #2: What philosophical forces, including historically significant actors, influenced the U.S. government’s approach to offering technical agricultural assistance in its international development efforts?

By examining the individuals responsible for developing the notion of *conservation of natural resources* in the United States, including the intersection of anthropocentrism, i.e., dominated by humankind, and its antithesis, nonanthropocentrism, their influence on traditional agricultural practices becomes observable (Minteer, 2006), especially differing philosophical positions. In the decades after the USDA’s incorporation into the presidential cabinet in 1889, two preeminent environmental ethicists and longtime allies experienced a philosophical schism (Williams, 2005). Gifford Pinchot, first chief of the U.S. Forest Service and credited with establishing the definition for conservation of natural resources, and John Muir. Muir was founder of the Sierra Club, a naturalist, an eloquent spokesperson for the environmental movement, and author of many articles in national publications on nature (Williams, 2005).

Considered leaders of the United States’ nascent environmental movement, Pinchot and Muir fomented the notion that differences existed in American conservation. Further, they argued the movement could be conceptualized as two distinct camps: *conservationists* and *preservationists* (Minteer, 2006). Pinchot and Muir are largely credited with creating

the dialogue on how we as a nation should manage and preserve our natural resources (Minteer, 2006). Their relationships with Presidents, both Muir and Pinchot with Theodore Roosevelt and in regard to FDR and Harry Truman only Pinchot, influenced the passage of significant federal legislation protecting and preserving natural resources in the United States (Minteer, 2006). Such impact included formation of the Soil Conservation Service and other agencies within the USDA (Minteer, 2006). For example, the CCC was modeled after work camps established by Pinchot in Pennsylvania “in an attempt to relieve unemployment” (Pinchot, 1998, p. xv) during the Great Depression.

Other Historically Significant Actors

Minteer (2006), however, noted the competing narratives created by conservationist Gifford Pinchot and preservationist John Muir were oversimplifications of the rich and moral tradition of environmental thinking in the United States. In his book, *The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmental Thought in America*, Minteer (2006) suggested the existence of a “third way tradition to the intellectual landscape of American environmentalism, a philosophical path that has been almost completely obscured . . .” (p. 2). He perceived this path to environmentalism was advanced by

Liberty Hyde Bailey, a horticultural scientist and rural reformer who was a leading figure in the agrarian wing of Theodore Roosevelt’s conservation movement; Lewis Mumford, an urban theorist, cultural critic, and regional planner-thinker active in the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) during the interwar period; Benton MacKaye, a forester and

conservationist (and Mumford’s RPAA colleague) who proposed the Appalachian Trail in the 1920s; and, finally, Aldo Leopold, the forester-philosopher and author of the environmentalist classic *A Sand County Almanac*. (Minteer, 2006, p. 2)

The *third-way tradition* offered an integrated and progressive view on land stewardship, traditional U.S. production agriculture, and the intersection between human ideals, interests, and non-material values. Beeman (1994) acknowledged Bailey and Leopold as major contributors to the third-way tradition, better known to Bailey as the Nature Study Movement (Connors, 2012). Jane Addams of Hull House also held similar views on using agriculture as an avenue for achieving social justice. Further, Beeman (1994) identified Edward Faulkner as a catalyst for this movement, and cited him as an antagonist for many scholars and practitioners of the period. His approach, however, was rejected because

. . . doing the opposite of what Faulkner preached was easier, more economical in the short-term, and was supported by the agricultural establishment, including the land-grant college scientists, the experiment stations, the Farm Bureau, the USDA, and especially those vested interests in agribusiness who had little to gain from the wholesale rejection of agricultural chemicals. (Beeman, 1994, p. 99)

Nevertheless, Beeman (1994) concluded Faulkner’s message was well-received by Hugh H. Bennett, the *father of soil conservation* and first head of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (Nelson, 1997).

Foor and Connors (2010) examined the historical backgrounds and impacts of several early agricultural educators, including Liberty Hyde Bailey. Moreover, as Connors (2012) pointed out, researchers and practitioners should revisit Bailey's idea of *nature study*. He recommended Bailey be "remembered along with other noted individuals, as one of the pioneers of agricultural education" (p. 51). Peters (2006) concluded Bailey viewed agriculture as a means for awakening farmers during the formative years of Cooperative Extension. Speaking to Bailey's vision, Peters (2006) wrote: "[T]he main purpose of awakening farmers to this point of view was not to develop a more efficient, productive, and profitable agriculture, but to advance the larger cultural ideals of a 'self-sustaining' agriculture and personal happiness" (p. 190). To this point, we assert recognition of Bailey's influence should be extended further and credit him with laying much of the philosophical foundation of the modern third-way environmentalism movement, which, in no small part, presaged the early approaches imbued in the U.S. government's aims regarding IAD for LDCs.

Historically Significant Events

It was Bailey's Nature Study Movement that garnered the attention of Gifford Pinchot and President Theodore Roosevelt (Ellsworth, 1960). Pinchot and Sir Horace Plunkett, Theodore Roosevelt's second tutor on agriculture and founder of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, "created the memorable, working partnership of the colorful Roosevelt and the talented Bailey" (Ellsworth, 1960, p. 159). Bailey was eventually appointed by Roosevelt as chairman of the Commission on Country Life (Peters & Morgan, 2004) at the behest of Pinchot after Bailey had initially rejected an invitation to chair the

group (Ellsworth, 1960). Bailey relented and accepted the appointment after Roosevelt appealed to him with a "mixture of praise and reproach" (Ellsworth, 1960, p. 162). Roosevelt admonished Bailey's refusal and said that he "would not have created the commission unless he had assumed that Bailey would accept the chairmanship; that Bailey's refusal would jeopardize the greatest opportunity which had yet presented itself to influence country life conditions . . ." (Ellsworth, 1960, p. 162). Other commission members included Kenyon Butterfield, Walter H. Page, Pinchot, and "Uncle Henry" Wallace (Connors, 2012; Peters & Morgan, 2004), Henry A. Wallace's grandfather and editor of *Wallace's Farmer* (Shoemaker, 2010).

Ellsworth (1960) further noted: "Bailey and Pinchot proved to be Roosevelt's most influential advisors in agricultural matters" (p. 157). The *Report of the Country Life Commission*, as authored by Bailey and colleagues, showed the "general condition of farming life in the open country, and point[ed] out its larger problems" (Commission on Country Life, 1911, p. 3), but such was met with ambivalence from some stakeholders (Ellsworth, 1960). However, despite the indifference of some, the commission's report ultimately provided stimulus for passage of the Smith-Lever Act (Ellsworth, 1960).

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 was premised on the need to fund a Cooperative Extension Service (CES) with the purpose to diffuse "among the people of the United States useful and practical information, on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage application of the same" (Pope, 1958, p. 270). The CES has long embraced the strategy in which programming matched the needs of its beneficiaries. Other initiatives to improve rural life were realized in 1919 with creation

of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life, and emergence of the National Country Life Association (Ellsworth, 1960). Moreover, “[r]ural sociology became a separate and thriving academic discipline as a result of the prestige given to it by the Country Life Commission” (Ellsworth, 1960, p. 172).

Bailey’s point of view makes it difficult to cast him in one philosophical tradition over another. Bailey (1893) wrote:

I am not pleading for mere numbers of students; of those we shall have enough. But I am urging those principles which, more than any other movement, must carry the university mission and influence to the homes of the people. I am pleading for the education of the farmer in those special occupations which the major part of our population must always follow, and not alone because it makes him a better farmer, but because, as well, it makes him a better citizen. All prosperity rests ultimately upon the land, and no higher institution of learning can serve the best interests of philanthropy and patriotism until it plants itself firmly in the soil which gave it birth! (p. 12)

Minteer (2006) referred to Bailey as an idealist *and* a pragmatist – a man who transcended philosophical boundaries and concerned with the nexus of “intellectual, aesthetic, and social character of rural life” (p. 21). Such appears compatible with the third-way tradition as a strand within environmentalism that should not be deemed entirely anthropocentric or nonanthropocentric, preservationist or conservationist, nor aesthetic or utilitarian (Minteer, 2006). These dispositions were manifested by Bailey’s “promotion of nature

study for school children and an argument for its significance in creating an environmental ethic among country dwellers, especially farmers” (Minteer, 2006, p. 21).

Discussion and Conclusions

The U.S. approach to IAD was modeled after the work of organizations such as the NEF (“History,” 2016). Gifford Pinchot, first head of the U.S. Forest Service and a confidant to several U.S. presidents, led a decades-long crusade to globalize conservation and introduce an international audience to the use of natural resources as guided by sustainable and economically viable practices. The Shelterbelt Project of 1934 was the first evidence of interagency cooperation and the use of multidisciplinary teams to integrate environmentalism and traditional agriculture concepts in the United States (Williams, 2005). Moreover, key political and governmental figures advocated for legislation promulgating IAD by agencies of the U.S. Government (Gilbert, 2015).

Minteer (2006) proposed that a *third-way tradition* was embodied within American environmentalism. He concluded the third-way tradition was advanced by Liberty Hyde Bailey, Aldo Leopold, Lewis Mumford, and Benton MacKaye, among other proponents. Bailey initially declined a position with the Country Life Commission, and if not for Theodore Roosevelt’s, Pinchot’s, and Plunkett’s efforts to secure his leadership as its chair, the commission’s success was considered uncertain (Ellsworth, 1960). Beeman (1994) also alluded to the existence of a third-way to modern environmentalism, i.e., the precepts for a paradigm of sustainable agriculture practices, which were often diffused as part of U.S. IAD efforts. Based on his work with sustainable agriculture *and* the traditional American agriculture paradigm, Beeman

(1994) concluded Edward Faulkner, in addition to Bailey, Lewis, Leopold, and MacKaye, was responsible for popularizing the notion of sustainability and conservation, including select preservationist concepts, among the general U.S. populace. Aspects of this philosophy were manifested during the New Deal and led by champions that Gilbert (2015) described as *agrarian intellectuals*. Although their influence was short-lived domestically, many of these individuals migrated to working in international settings, including early post-World War II projects featuring agriculture and rural development (Gilbert, 2015). Their efforts presaged the U.S. Government-led initiatives that would become USAID (Gilbert, 2015).

In regard to participatory-democratic culture, the American education philosopher and reformer, John Dewey, (1939) stated: “An immense difference divides the planned society from a continuously planning society” (p. 321). In what he called the *Great Community*, Dewey asserted that “practical experience and experimentation in problem solving could teach communities and societies how to become more democratic” (as cited in Gilbert, 2015, p. 256). The notions of civic pragmatism and environmental ethics introduced significant implications imbuing the philosophical underpinnings of the U.S. approach to providing agricultural technical expertise as foreign assistance (Gilbert, 2015; Minter, 2006). These worldviews, however, also suggest a philosophical chasm that grew to be deeply embedded in the U.S. approach to environmentalism, including social, political, economic, and cultural manifestations (Reid & Taylor, 2003) with ramifications for agriculture. Yet, we know this to be only a partial account of the larger phenomenon. To that end, agrarian New Dealers “believed that expertise must join with the local knowledge of farmers and that

federal authority should decentralize to citizens. They sought both to merge science with citizen knowledge and to integrate government action with local participation” (Gilbert, 2015, p. 21). It is likely Dewey would have supported such an approach to governance, including the stewardship of natural resources. Their philosophy, however, failed to promulgate in rural America to the extent they had hoped it would (Gilbert, 2015). Nevertheless, the agrarian New Dealers did take aspects of their third-way tradition of decentralized, participatory rural development abroad: “[L]ocal social change bore fruit globally before coming home to help shape major social reforms in poor rural and urban neighborhoods throughout the United States” (Gilbert, 2015, p. 260).

In addition, the crucial role of *indigenous knowledge* in the U.S. approach to domestic and IAD efforts should not be understated. For example, the *issue of equality* (Rogers, 2003), in both formal and non-formal teaching and learning environments, is important domestically and internationally. In international development, agricultural extension agents have a tendency to engage with farmers more similar to themselves, i.e., the principle of *homophily* and related communication behaviors (Rogers, 2003). As a consequence, knowledge transfer between agents and farmers is likely to expand the *knowledge gap* between the different groups comprising a social system, especially those less similar to change agents and early adopters (Rogers, 2003). It is prudent, therefore, that international extension professionals are sensitive to the potential pitfalls associated with widening inequalities stemming from adoption behaviors favoring the already advantaged in a society (Rogers, 2003).

Moreover, in developing countries, these systems are often only linked to

national governments instead of coordinated with and implemented through decentralized agencies, as organized in the United States (Swanson & Claar, 1984). In describing the national agricultural extension systems (NAES) of such nations, Swanson (2006) wrote:

In examining trends to date, it seems clear that public agricultural research and extension systems cannot compete effectively with major multi-national life-science companies that are supplying large-scale commercial farmers with highly productive, proprietary technologies. If national extension leaders continue to pursue this strategy, these national extension systems will likely follow the pattern of agricultural extension systems in Europe, North America and Oceania, either in being progressively downsized or disbanded altogether. (p. 15)

Most NAES in developing countries perpetuate the notion that adoption of sustainable agriculture techniques and modern technology will increase yields (Van den Ban & Hawkins, 1996), i.e., practices diffused commonly in more developed nations such as the United States. As a counterfactual, a move toward participatory, decentralized extension systems has been successful in China and India (Swanson, 2006). In participatory extension, “[t]he focus is less on *what* we learn, and more on *how* we learn and *with whom*” (Röling & Pretty, 1997, para. 27).

In the United States, the social science tradition of participatory-democratic, rural agrarian reform had a brief life span (Gilbert, 2015). This aspect of the New Deal was defeated by old-fashioned power politics, and many of its ideals ended

with it, at least, regarding agrarian reforms (Gilbert, 2015). As such, partners in U.S. IAD efforts ought to learn from past mistakes while emphasizing the value of local knowledge and the exchange of information and ideas among extension/advisory service providers, other educators, researchers, and host-country nationals through participatory-democratic collaborations. Navarro (2008) called such efforts the *co-creation of knowledge* by and for agricultural extension agents, researchers, and farmers such that we move “toward a vision of agricultural extension as an interactive and integrative model of shared knowledge and joint discovery” (p. 75). Such practice could address the admonitions of Rogers (2003) and others regarding pro-innovation bias and issues of equality that so often accompany the introduction of new technologies and practices, including those having significance for the agricultural sector.

Implications and Recommendations

A number of countries have developed deeply rooted and philosophically moored environmental traditions and, in many cases, adopted principles espoused by the U.S. Government and other nations’ development agencies (Minteer, 2006). This study shone some light on the philosophical foundations of agricultural and extension education in regard to IAD, with a view toward influencing contemporary policies intertwining with environmentalism and traditional agricultural production practices in the United States and abroad (Brosnan, 2007). We recommend strengthening cross-cultural understanding and communication between academic traditions and with global partners by contextualizing environmental and agricultural ethics within their historical, intellectual, and geographical settings while “deemphasiz[ing] the most radical aspects” (Chamberlain, 2010, p. 90) of

Environmentalism ideology. Instead, we urge development specialists to embrace the earlier version, i.e., Bailey's Nature Study Movement (Connors, 2012), and later understood as the third-way tradition taken abroad by Gilbert's (2015) agrarian intellectuals.

The actors illuminated in this study that argued philosophical perspectives on participatory development and conservation of natural resources while calling for sustainable use of the same should be studied by *all* students in colleges of agriculture. For example, Pinchot's works on *conservation ethic* and Leopold's writings concerning *land ethic* have long been studied and recognized in the field of forestry; however, they are not as well known in other allied disciplines, including agricultural and extension education. It is also important for these concepts to complement the more sustainable traditions of production agriculture in the United States. We further recommend exploring foreign influences on American agriculture and environmentalism, including their philosophical primers. In addition, attention and clarity concerning high and low modernism as well as the relation of such to agriculture and an educated citizenry is warranted, including the period following the New Deal era and the technocratization of federal agencies advising and regulating U.S. agriculture. Inquiries could include the period beginning with the *Green Revolution* and move forward to more recent approaches to IAD and the longstanding involvement of U.S. agricultural and extension educators.

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