Libyan Money, Academic Missions, and Public Social Science

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In spring 2011, several famous social scientists found themselves caught up in unwelcome publicity. As fighting spread in Libya, attention focused on the trips Benjamin Barber, Anthony Giddens, Joseph Nye, Robert Putnam, and several others had made to meet with Muammar Qaddafi — and the flattering essays some had written afterward. Their invitations were part of a public relations campaign organized between 2003 and 2008 as the dictator sought to improve relations with the West. This was complemented by an expansion of business relations with the West, new diplomatic cooperation, and training contracts or placement of Libyan students in a variety of Western universities.

Qaddafi's son Saif was at the center of this initiative, both personally and through the foundation he led, the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Fund (QF). It had material objectives like revitalizing the Libyan economy and improving political institutions, but it was centrally focused on remaking the image of Libya and the Qaddafi family. To carry out this public relations project, the Qaddafis relied on an array of foreign consultants and academics. The most prominent were recruited through the Monitor Group, a business consultancy formed by a group of Harvard faculty led most famously by Michael Porter, and the Centre for the Study of Global Governance at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), one of Britain's most prestigious and globally oriented universities. Saif himself studied at the LSE during this period and received a PhD in 2008.

As Libya fell into civil war in the spring of 2011, these earlier undertakings

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became controversial and, for many, embarrassing. Whatever improvements may have been achieved in the Qaddafi family image were reversed. Muammar Qaddafi was killed after mounting a brutal resistance to insurrection. Saif went from glamorous cosmopolitan to bloodied prisoner. The work of the international intellectuals, the Monitor Group, and the LSE was subjected to critical examination. Were they naively overoptimistic or pursuing plausible projects rendered irrelevant by changing circumstances? Was it unethical to have worked with the Qaddafis at all? Was it poor management not to have recognized and mitigated reputational risk? The celebrity of the intellectuals and the prestige of the institutions joined with the entertainment value of the Qaddafis, the war in Libya, and the drama of their fall to promote a storm of media coverage.

This was a sideshow to the graver story of Libyan insurrection, civil war, and NATO intervention (not to mention the rest of the "Arab Spring"), but it was not insignificant. Commentary has veered between moral outrage at complicity with a dictator and schadenfreude at the embarrassment of the famous colleagues invited on trips to Tripoli; many of those directly involved have simply been defensive. In the present discussion I want to avoid each of these three attitudes, asking instead what issues go beyond idiosyncratic lapses—or indeed reasonable judgments that look less good in hindsight—to potentially recurrent concerns.

First, a growing number of academic institutions seek to work effectively on a global scale. This raises a plethora of complex ethical and practical questions in settings where administrators and most academics face shortages of information. Second, nearly all universities and many individual researchers must search for new resources in the face of cuts in public budgets and in the context of intensified competition. This puts pressure on those who must decide which funds to pursue or accept. Third, academic social scientists are rightly concerned to make their work useful. But problems arise when this is pursued through arrangements that either close knowledge to the public or potentially distort it by harnessing it to the projects of specific clients. Public social science is generally preferable, but problems also arise when this is approached as a matter of media comments only weakly related to scholarly research.

Universities should not withdraw from building global relations and cannot withdraw from fundraising. Individual social scientists should not withdraw from public engagement or efforts to make research practically useful. But both institutions and individuals need to make decisions informed by as much information as they can gather, by serious critical reflection, and where possible by open debate. Above all, to steer through the pitfalls of doing publicly important work in complex contexts it is crucial to maintain clarity about basic scientific and educational missions.

To situate this discussion we need to start by asking why the Qaddafis made a compelling media story in the West, why Western governments were interested in pushing for better relations with the Qaddafis early in the twenty-first century, why engagements with the Qaddafis were of interest to well-intentioned individual academics and institutions, and why the Qaddafis were actively looking for such engagements.

Qaddafi Comes Calling

Westerners long oscillated between seeing Muammar Qaddafi as comical and seeing him as a diabolical force for global evil. He was the longest-lasting of the military modernizers who came to power in postcolonial coups in the 1950s and 1960s. He initially seized power in 1969 as part of a "free officers movement" but quickly established more personal dominance. Qaddafi recast the coup as a revolution over the next few years, initially embracing the Arab socialism of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser. Following Nasser, he affirmed struggle to overcome Zionism and imperialism and provide every citizen with the chance to earn an honorable living. Parts of the international Left welcomed him as a leader in a hoped-for Third World Revolution; others more quickly saw him as a loose cannon.

Qaddafi's politics drew on Arab nationalism that condemned the region's "false frontiers" as a colonial inheritance. Like other nationalists, he was a thorn in the side of more "traditionalist" Arab leaders and their Western allies. With Nasser, Sudan's Ja'afar Numeiri, and Syria's Hafez al-Assad—each of whom led his own coup at about the same time—Qaddafi was central to the effort to form a Federation of Arab Republics. Though this project failed, the critique of false frontiers encouraged Qaddafi in repeated international interventions and also in a growing embrace of pan-Africanism. He meddled repeatedly in the politics of Chad, Sudan, and other neighbors and was active farther afield through a mixture of investments and political deals.

Libya had large oil reserves, and the income helped to finance Qaddafi's projects. He was instrumental in the OPEC decision to impose production controls in order to raise prices in the wake of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war (in constant 2011 dollars, crude oil cost $20 a barrel at the time of Qaddafi's coup, and topped $100 a barrel by 1980). In Libya, oil money helped Qaddafi pursue a mixture of genuine improvements in public services, investments in infrastructure intended to promote development, and outright repression in the name of revolutionary unity. But Libyans also complained that much oil money went to finance Qaddafi's adventures and investments abroad.

In 1973 Qaddafi both declared Sharia law and initiated a "cultural revolution" to transform schools, businesses, and public institutions. Qaddafi coined the term *jamahiriya* to describe Libya, transforming the Arabic word usually translated as "republic"—*jumhuriya*—by replacing the idea of "public" with that of "the masses." His *Little Green Book* (first published in the mid-1970s) paid homage to Mao Zedong not only in its title and vision of a sort of pedagogical leadership, but also in its program for partially decentralized socialist decision making. Local councils would be self-organizing but joined together through the guidance of a single revolutionary party that would secure national unity; intermediate levels of state and civil society would be hollowed out or eliminated. The revolution—and the government—would not be institutionalized; Qaddafi combined personal power with a program of "statelessness."[1] In 1979 he gave up the office of prime minister and declared himself the "Brother-Leader" who would hold no office, but rather reflect the general will of the people (Qaddafi often echoed Rousseau); his leadership would constantly be affirmed in a kind of implicit plebiscite.

Through it all, the West couldn't resist being entertained by Qaddafi's shifting costumes. He appeared initially as something of a dandy in neat military attire, embraced safari suits and sunglasses in a Che Guevara phase, sometimes sported much gaudier uniforms with epaulettes and sashes, then turned to quasi-traditional robes that could be dressed up with gold trimmings or worn informally to give the impression of a ruler relaxed and at home.

Qaddafi at once embraced political Islam and repressed any attempts to form autonomous Islamist groups in Libya. His relations soured with both Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda. He repeatedly used violence against domestic dissent. Internationally, he backed a wide variety of revolutionary causes and terrorist actions, from Black Muslims in the United States to the Irish Republican Army. But he also earned credit with many—and Nelson Mandela's loyalty—for backing the African National Congress in South Africa long before Western powers joined the struggle against apartheid. He was a recurrent disruption challenging of attempts by the world's leading states to maintain global order. The Lockerbie incident—the 1988 bombing and destruction of Pan Am Flight 103—was a symbolically strong grievance.

But in 2003 the Libyan government and Muammar Qaddafi advanced a diplo-

1. For accounts of Libyan history, see Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830–1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986); Ronald Bruce St. John, *Libya: From Colony to Independence* (Oxford: One World, 2008); and Dirk Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), who stresses Qaddafi's policy of "statelessness—the avoidance of creating a modern state" (1).

matic initiative to reposition themselves as legitimate and constructive players on a global stage.[2] This led among other things to an agreement to pay reparations for the crash and killings.[3] The Qaddafi government announced that Libya was relinquishing all weapons of mass destruction. Qaddafi's gestures were welcomed by officials in the West (who interpreted them mainly as their own diplomatic successes). By 2009 the United States had restored full diplomatic relations with Libya, removed it from the list of states sponsoring terrorism, and ended sanctions.[4] Libya was also incorporated fully into UN activities, holding a Security Council seat for two years and—ironically and controversially—serving briefly as a member of the Human Rights Council before being removed by a General Assembly vote in 2011.

Qaddafi thus shifted his geopolitical tactics. For one thing, al-Qaeda had outperformed him in the flamboyant terrorism game. The invasion of Iraq was no doubt alarming. Sanctions may have taken a toll. There may simply have appeared to be good opportunities to benefit from playing a different global role, being useful to Washington and London as a source of intelligence and backer of security measures, being able to share more in a financial boom. Domestically, the Qaddafi government faced a stagnant economy for which oil compensated financially, but not in producing jobs or dynamism. There was growing dissent. Perhaps Qaddafi began to think more about legacy. This meant both institutionalizing more of his "achievements" and creating the economic dynamism that could sustain the revolution in a new phase. It also meant succession.

2. This was not an overnight shift in 2003. In 1999 Qaddafi started backchannel diplomacy with the United States and Great Britain. Dirk Vandewalle sees a "remarkable set of adjustments and compromises the Jamahiriyya embarked upon starting in mid-1999" and suggests that "careful observers of Libya had noted the beginning of this emerging pragmatism almost a decade before its government announced in December 2003 that it would abandon its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction" (*A History of Modern Libya*, 7–8).

3. Neither the Libyan state nor Qaddafi ever acknowledged having arranged or ordered the bombing, and the state carefully hedged the wording of agreements. It accepted "civil responsibility" (but not guilt) and paid reparations in order to have sanctions lifted, be removed from lists of sponsors of terrorism, and resume full diplomatic relations with other countries. A Libyan intelligence officer was convicted of the killing and imprisoned in Scotland until his compassionate release (on grounds of terminal illness) in 2009—which generated new controversy.

4. The Qaddafi diplomatic initiative slowed dramatically in 2009. This may reflect success, but also worry by some in Libya that it had gone too far. Supporters of Saif Qaddafi began to report that his reforms were being blocked. The Monitor Group wound up its work, though a lobbying firm, the Livingston Group, remained actively engaged—for example, arranging a meeting between Mutassim Qaddafi and Hillary Clinton in April 2009. At the same time, the National Conference of the Libyan Opposition began to expose and attempt to debunk the public relations campaign, releasing leaked copies of memoranda between Monitor and the Libyan government. libya-nclo.com/DocinEnglish/tabid/598/language/en-US/Default.aspx.

For all his megalomania, Qaddafi appears to have realized that he was mortal and both cultivated and tested several of his sons as potential leaders. His favorite was Saif al-Islam Qaddafi. "Gifted," Benjamin Barber called him.[5] Saif was, among other things, a representative of the better-educated younger generation that had to be won over if faltering economic development was to be renewed. Saif and others of his generation became advocates for building institutions. He pushed his father to implement reforms, convening meetings of Libyan academics, businessmen, and others to make proposals (though few were accepted by his father). He also launched an international campaign simultaneously to present himself as the future of better government in Libya and to present Libya and his father in a better light.

Saif Qaddafi and the Social Scientists

Saif Qaddafi was the cosmopolitan face of the no longer very revolutionary but still dictatorial and authoritarian Libyan state. After earlier education in Austria, he went to the LSE, perhaps *the* global center of cosmopolitan thought and, with Oxford, Cambridge, and the rest of the University of London, among the British universities that had long offered advanced education to children of colonial and postcolonial world leaders. Saif's admission to the LSE—especially to a PhD program—was controversial.[6] He was turned down by two departments and admitted to a third only after unusually strong advocacy from professors who were apparently in some combination personally committed to him and moved by idealistic hopes for the political role he could play.[7] Questions were recurrently

5. Barber, "Understanding Libya's Michael Corleone," *Foreign Policy*, March 7, 2011, www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/03/07/understanding_libyas_michael_corleone.

6. Questions about Saif's admission, studies, and degree were among those taken up by the investigation the LSE commissioned from Britain's former lord chief justice, Lord Woolf. This report was presented in November 2011, months after the present article was completed; woolflse.com. It addressed all aspects of the school's relations with Libya and the Qaddafis, though not the authenticity or academic quality of Saif's thesis.

7. Debate on whether there were good reasons to hope that Saif would be a liberal reformer does not answer the question of whether such hopes are appropriate criteria for university admission generally and admission to advanced research degrees in particular. It may sometimes be appropriate to consider criteria other than pure academic performance, whether in the pursuit of diversity and balance in a student body or in recognition of particular contributions certain students might make. A medical school, for example, may want to reserve some places for students who will become general practitioners rather than specialists, or commit to practice in underdeveloped rural areas. A key issue is applying such criteria fairly. And making exceptions for individual students is different from setting policies that may be publicly stated in advance and that apply to whole categories of students.

raised during the course of his studies both about the quality of his work and about whether the work he submitted was all his own.[8]

Saif received his PhD in 2008 for a thesis focusing on theories of cosmopolitanism and civil society as sources for democratization of global governance.[9] In it, he embraced liberal individualism and argued that both self-interested and moral motivations existed for the pursuit of fair cooperation among global citizens. He argued that global justice should be approached directly in such individualist terms, following much recent "cosmopolitan" theorizing and rejecting Rawls's notion of a mediating "law of peoples." Implicitly, this also broke with the insistence on autonomy of cultures in his father's *Little Green Book*. The elder Muammar Qaddafi saw nations as driving forces in history, along with religions. Still, Qaddafi had always been militantly internationalist as well and (as in his critique of false frontiers) rejected the European idea that the nation-*state* was

8. According to the Woolf Report, departmental investigations were inconclusive; Saif was reminded of the importance of submitting only his own work and allowed to continue. Saif received an unusual degree of extra support in his actual studies, including tutors hired officially through the LSE philosophy department and researchers at the Monitor Group and elsewhere whom he hired unofficially. Saif's adviser, Nancy Cartwright, seems not to have known of this additional assistance, though at least one of Saif's teachers did, Edward McClennen, a Syracuse University professor who earlier taught part-time at the LSE, where he had advised Saif's MSc thesis and advocated for his admission. Saif evidently "dictated" his ideas in Arabic to Omran Bukhres, a Libyan national who was an associate professor at Purdue University. Bukhres would translate them and amend them in response to conversations with Saif, memos prepared by researchers at the Monitor Group, and direct input from McClennen. See discussion in the Woolf Report, pp. 42–43. Details of the plagiarism charges can be found at saifalislamgadda fithesis.wikia.com/wiki/Plagiarism. Some of the authors whose work was allegedly plagiarized (like McClennen and Benjamin Barber) indicated that they did not see the use of their work as constituting plagiarism. The University of London investigated the alleged irregularities but decided not to revoke the PhD. One of the examiners of the thesis, Lord Desai, was especially vigorous in defending the degree process; see "LSE Is Paying a Heavy Price for Saif Qaddafi's PhD," *op cit.* Discussion of the controversy (itself contested, not least by Joseph Nye, who disclaims all responsibility) and numerous relevant links appear in Siddhartha Mahanta and David Corn, "Saif Qaddafi's Democracy-Loving Dissertation," *Mother Jones*, February 25, 2011, motherjones.com/politics/2011/02/saif-qaddafi-dissertation. In my own view, the thesis is not especially good—though alas not the worst I have ever seen. In particular, it lacks engagement with research and theory challenging the positions it embraces. Whether or not it met high standards of quality or originality, it does seem plausible to take it in a general way as representing Saif's views.

9. The thesis was initially submitted in 2007; after examination it was referred for revision and resubmission; the degree was awarded in 2008 and Saif attended a graduation ceremony in 2009. Entitled *The Role of Civil Society in the Democratization of Global Governance Institutions: From Soft Power to Collective Decision-Making?* it is available at docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0B6TjDegBTuTeMGU1YWQ3MmQtZDA3YS00ZTU1LThmZGYtNTNhZDUyZDdlMDhh&hl=en. Oxford University Press agreed to publish a book based on the thesis, but canceled this plan in March 2011: www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/02/gaddafi-son-book-plagiarism-charge_n_830540.html.

the fundamental unit of politics. This brought him closer to the cosmopolitan theorists, with their refusal to see sovereign nation-states as the crucial units of political justice.[10] Emphasizing the value of "soft power," NGOs, and institutions generally, Saif argued for going further and adopted LSE professor David Held's approach to cosmopolitanism as a project in which global governance would become "collective self-management."[11]

Shortly after Saif submitted the final version of his thesis, Held approached him seeking a gift to the Centre for the Study of Global Governance, which he co-directed.[12] The purpose of the gift was initially to be unrestricted core funds for the Centre but shifted to be for a somewhat unclearly defined North African Programme that combined research with efforts to promote civil society and democracy in Libya. Saif pledged £1,500,000 (though only £300,000 was actually delivered before the Libyan civil war halted scheduled payments). On Held's invitation, in May 2010 Saif also gave one of the Ralph Miliband Memorial Lectures, named after a famous former LSE faculty member. Held introduced him as "someone who looks to democracy, civil society and deep liberal values for the core of

10. Qaddafi's emphasis was on the people, not the state. And his most important sense of nation was as broad as civilization—the Arab nation—not one artificially demarcated country. Nations were, for him, one layer of solidarity among several, from family and tribe to the world as a whole, and none of these should be denied. As his *Little Green Book* declared, "The nation in the world community is similar to the family in the tribe. The more the families of a tribe feud and become fanatical, the more the tribe is threatened. . . . People are only harmonious with their own arts and heritage. They are not harmonious with the arts of others because of heredity, even though those people, who differ in heritage, speak a single common language." English translation of the *Little Green Book* at www.mathaba.net/gci/theory/gb3.htm. It is worth noting that tribe has remained a powerful unit of political solidarity in Libya (as elsewhere in the Arab world). Qaddafi rejected representative democracy and argued for direct participation at the local level and an aggregation in which each unit of solidarity helped shape the higher level. One of the central points Anthony Giddens indicated he had made when talking to Qaddafi was that representative democracy is necessary; see "My Chat with the Colonel," *Guardian*, March 9, 2007, www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/mar/09/comment.libya.

11. So thoroughly did Saif embrace Held's idealistic approach to cosmopolitan democracy that one of the main questions raised by his examiners was whether the thesis needed more realpolitik; see Desai, "LSE Is Paying a Heavy Price for Saif Qaddafi's PhD," *Guardian*, March 4, 2011, www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/mar/04/lse-heavy-price-saif-gaddafis-phd.

12. The request came at the same time that Held made an introduction to Saif of a businessman hoping to form a relationship. The Woolf Report, woolflse.com, found among other things that the timing of solicitation and the connection to outside business projects created an "unfortunate perception." That said, it is not rare for those engaged in raising funds for universities or other nonprofit organizations to make introductions linking potential donors. Held was concerned that the gift should come from private sources like the QF not the Libyan state, and much of the debate at the LSE centered on the standing of the QF and the true sources of the funds. The other co-director of the Centre, Mary Kaldor, raised deeper concerns about the Qaddafi gift from the outset.

his inspiration."[13] Amid the later embarrassment the Centre was closed, Qaddafi's gift was repurposed to scholarships, and Miliband's son—who happened to be Britain's foreign minister—said he thought the invitation was "horrific."[14]

With varying levels of support from his father and occasional tension when he pushed too hard or went too far, Saif launched several projects. He began to build a media group; he tried to spark more economic dynamism, diversification, and entrepreneurship with a portfolio of investments. He also engaged a range of lobbyists, consultants, strategic advisers, and business partners. Beyond several big oil companies, there were "alternative asset management" firms like the Carlyle Group. *Forbes* said it was "time to return to Libya."[15] *Business Week* was more cautious, but encouraged by Michael Porter's involvement.[16] And Porter's Monitor Group was central to the new Qaddafi initiative. As CEO Mark Fuller suggested in a 2006 proposal for Libyan business: "Libya has suffered from a deficit of positive public relations and adequate contact with a wide range of opinion-leaders and contemporary thinkers. This program aims to redress the balance in Libya's favor."[17]

Funds for Saif's projects came sometimes directly from the Libyan government, but largely from the "charitable foundation" he created and led. The sources for the QF's funds are murky but may well have included fees collected from international firms seeking to do business with Libya.[18] This made the foundation itself part of the controversy that followed. In particular, though registered as a charity, it seems to have operated mainly as a vehicle for Qaddafi family interests. Indeed, one of the important points made by Fred Halliday, the leading LSE spe-

13. "Dictator's Son Who Charmed His Way to the Heart of the Business and Political Elite," *Times*, February 23, 2010.

14. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-12659391. Held also accepted an appointment to the board of the Qaddafi Foundation (along with the American academic Benjamin Barber, active in the Monitor Group's Libyan work). He was later pressed by the LSE to resign because of apparent conflict of interest, though he continued to attend meetings in an "advisory" capacity.

15. Erik Hesseldahl, "Time to Return to Libya," *Forbes*, March 7, 2002, www.forbes.com/2002/03/07/0307libya.html.

16. "The Opening of Libya," *Business Week*, March 12, 2007, www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/07_11/b4025061.htm.

17. Letter to the Libyan government, cited in Corn and Mahanata, "Saif Qaddafi's Democracy-Loving Dissertation," and posted at motherjones.com/files/monitor_letter.pdf.

18. For some, including perhaps Lord Woolf, though his phrasing in this regard is delicate, this created the implication of bribes. Whether administrators should have recognized that possibility and made it clear to higher authorities became a focus of argument. On the one hand, due diligence on the provenance of foundation funds is certainly appropriate. On the other hand, there is a grey area, because businesspeople often contribute to charities favored by commercial counterparts. In any case, other likely sources of QF funds—notably the Libyan state—raise concerns of their own.

cialist on the Middle East, when he objected to the growing LSE relationship was precisely that the independence of the QF was a "legal fiction."[19]

Saif's personal story has been narrated (and contested) elsewhere. It combines some level of serious pursuit of reform, self-interested manipulation of image, real intellectual interests, and the extravagant life of a pampered playboy.[20] As this article goes to press Saif lingers in Libyan captivity and a debate rages about whether he should be tried there or turned over to the International Criminal Court. But though Saif was an important actor in the last stage of the Qaddafi drama, his father remained the central character (a fact some of Saif's friends and backers seem to have underestimated).

The British and American intellectuals who went to talk with Muammar Qaddafi evidently saw him as a rich dictator who had done bad things in the past but now wanted to become a more respectable global citizen. He talked to Giddens about the Third Way, told Nye he was interested in soft power, told Barber he was big on direct democracy, and asked Putnam about social capital. Putnam, to his credit, recognized that this was just a public relations game and didn't come back for a second visit.[21] Others did and also wrote articles touting the transformation

19. "The funds of the QF are, for this reason, to all intents and purposes, part of the Libyan state budget. 'NGO status,' and recognition of such by UN bodies, means, in real terms, absolutely nothing." Fred Halliday, "Memorandum to the LSE Council," docs.google.com/document/d/1myZyaOqtCqeW0fdvOSPry_55GIOKNVvvqFP0y6l2Ts4/edit?hl=sv&pli=1. Oddly, the political scientist Barber regards it as exculpating that he was paid not by the Libyan government but by the Qaddafi Foundation—which makes rather more of the distinction than seems warranted: "I didn't take money from Qaddafi. The money to Monitor was coming from the Qaddafi Foundation, funded by Saif [Qaddafi's son], who was providing the impetus for reform." Quoted by Jonathan M. Wiener in "Spinning for Qaddafi," www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/03/06/opinion/main20039904.shtml.

20. Saif bought a $16 million house to occupy while studying at the LSE. He had a Libyan estate complete with pet Bengal tigers. He had wealthy and famous friends in many countries and was romantically linked to a succession of models and starlets. Trained initially in engineering, he pursued projects in architecture and urban planning. For a time, before taking up his PhD studies, he was active as a painter. His art was simultaneously surreal and political. It represented his father as an eagle defiantly doing battle with "neo-crusaders." Saif said he wanted to show that "not only do we buy weapons and sell gas and oil, but we have culture, art and history." When museums declined to host an exhibition, the oil company Petro-Canada stepped in. As one of its agents said, "Everyone admired them because it would have been disruptive to your commercial relationship with Libya not to." See James Verini, "The Good Bad Son," *New York Magazine*, May 22, 2011, and Eric Lichtblau, David Rohde, and James Risen, "Shady Dealings Helped Qaddafi Build Fortune, Regime," *New York Times*, March 24, 2011.

21. Robert D. Putnam, "With Libya's Megalomaniac 'Philosopher-King,'" *Wall Street Journal*, February 26, 2011. We can only wonder whether Qaddafi was playing or was serious when he observed to Putnam "that there were international organizations for many professions nowadays, but none for philosopher-kings. 'Why don't we make that happen?' he proposed with a straight face."

in Libya. It was "deep change," wrote Benjamin Barber. "Gaddafi is a complex and adaptive thinker as well as an efficient, if laid-back, autocrat. . . . Surprisingly flexible and pragmatic." As a result, "the United States has a potential partner in what could become an emerging Arab democracy smack in the middle of Africa's north coast. This partner possesses vital sulfur-free gas and oil resources, a pristine Mediterranean shoreline, a non-Islamist Muslim population, and intelligence capacities crucial to the war on terrorism."[22]

Saif's friend and Muammar's recurrent visitor, Barber was the author of a best seller, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, that described the world as facing a contradiction between reactionary localism and global capitalist imposition of similarity. "Jihad and McWorld operate with equal strength in opposite directions," said Barber, "the one driven by parochial hatreds, the other by universalizing markets, the one re-creating ancient subnational and ethnic borders from within, the other making war on national borders from without."[23] Barber's dualism was simplistic, and he oddly presented Islamism as a reaction of small and relatively homogeneous countries to capitalist globalization. But his framework also suggested the need for a third way between the two destructive forces—an alternative globalization that the Qaddafis could embrace, resisting both Islamist politics and the reduction of liberal politics to a support for global capitalism.

Saif sought not only to end international isolation for Libya but also to reduce domestic divisions. Notably, he spearheaded a campaign to win the loyalty of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group away from al-Qaeda. In 2009 a group of LIFG leaders did indeed issue a lengthy reconsideration of their interpretation of the ethics of Sharia law in which they renounced violence, describing terrorist approaches as ignorant and illegitimate.[24] The year 2009 marked both a peak and a slowdown in the reform project. Human Rights Watch held a press conference in

22. Benjamin R. Barber, "Qaddafi's Libya: An Ally for America?" *Wall Street Journal*, August 15, 2007.

23. Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 6.

24. The leaders apologized for violence in Libya and undertook to bring about full reconciliation of the LIFG with the Qaddafi government. The US State Department gave credit to Saif for successfully brokering this change (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5425.htm). The issues with the LIFG are a reminder that it was always illusory to think of the Libyan government as simply a participant in some unified global Islamic terrorist conspiracy. As in other settings, Islamist radicals, including some who used terrorist tactics, were often as sharply opposed to existing governments in majority-Muslim countries as to the West. And indeed, LIFG allegiances remained at issue as the Libyan upheaval unfolded. On August 3, 2011, Saif told the *New York Times* that he had formed a secret alliance with LIFG leaders, though they subsequently denied this (www.nytimes.com/2011/08/04/world/africa/04seif.html?scp=1&sq=saif%20qaddafi&st=cse).

Libya—reflecting, it said, "the expanded space for public discussion." It issued a cautiously optimistic report, indicating that amid continuing concerns there were "pockets of improvement."[25] This was based on an assessment of the Libyan situation facilitated by Saif Qaddafi and the Qaddafi Foundation.

Events changed any happy ending Saif and his friends may have imagined for their story. As 2011 opened, the attention of the Arab world was focused on Sudan, where independence of the South was imminent after long civil war. Al Jazeera tried to call attention to the leak of what it called "the Palestine Papers." But the year's biggest news story started instead with the self-immolation of a Tunisian street vendor. Protesting crowds shared his outrage at indignity and corruption and eventually demanded the ouster of the country's president. A wave of protests and insurgencies swept much of the Arab world, often calling for democracy and always for more basic dignity for citizens.[26] In Tunisia and then in Egypt rebellion fairly quickly ousted long-standing rulers (though how much revolution the regime-change will accomplish remains unclear).

It was a bad sign for Saif Qaddafi that one of the precipitating factors in the Egyptian rebellion was Hosni Mubarek's effort to manipulate the ostensibly democratic political process to pass power to his son.[27] In any case, the wave of rebellions reached Libya—broadcast by Al Jazeera, circulated on mobile phones in dramatic videos, mentioned in gossip after Friday prayers. By 15 February, Libyans were protesting.

Where the Tunisian and Egyptian protests followed mainly peaceful paths to success in ousting old leaders, Libyans calling for an end to Qaddafi's rule were met with immediate efforts at violent repression; there were deaths by the second day of protests. They were also less well organized than their Egyptian counterparts, no doubt largely because of the deeper repression of the Qaddafi

25. "Libya: In Repressive Atmosphere, Pockets of Improvement," www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/12/12/libya-repressive-atmosphere-pockets-improvement. The report itself, "Truth and Justice Can't Wait," is at www.hrw.org/node/87097.

26. It is no accident that the issues animating Nasser's and indeed the young Muammar Qaddafi's accounts of needed revolutionary struggles were all still issues in 2011. Zionism was not just alive but had been a particular grievance for many Egyptians since their country recognized Israel and above all during the sad struggles of the residents of Gaza. The heritage of imperialism persisted in international marginalization. Reminders of false frontiers were constant—not least in the Sudan. And the call for governments to provide every citizen with the chance to earn an honorable living had not yet been answered.

27. To be fair, in 2008 Saif disclaimed the idea of succeeding his father, saying that Libya "is not a farm to inherit." AP, "Qaddafi's Son Declares He's Leaving Politics," *New York Times,* August 22, 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/08/22/world/africa/22iht-libya.5.15563698.html. This did not stop speculation that he was the heir apparent.

government but also because of widespread co-optation into its networks and especially because of regional and tribal divisions in Libya.[28] Peaceful protestors were quickly pushed into becoming armed combatants. And Libya's army lacked both the traditions of professional autonomy and the external ties that led Egypt's to guarantee order and broker deals. By 20 February, Saif was back in Libya making a speech at once proposing faster reforms and predicting civil war.[29] International news coverage of Libya quickly developed the narrative of a march to war and became an important factor in the decision of several Western powers and NATO to provide military support to the anti-Qaddafi forces.[30] It is striking that Western powers reluctant to intervene directly in so many other settings chose quickly to bomb Libya — but then the Arab League also deserted Qaddafi as it never deserted, say, Sudan's General Mohammad Omar Bashir.

Muammar Qaddafi became the principal villain of the Arab Spring. This was facilitated by his quirky and flamboyant persona and the ways in which he and global media had used each other for decades, as well as by his long history of tensions with the West and links to terrorism. Other Arab rulers resorted to mili-

28. Libya was created by the amalgamation of three previously distinct emirates. Rebellion against Qaddafi was centered in the former Cyrenaica, while Qaddafi's support was strongest in the former Tripolitania. It was, in fact, the former emir of Cyrenaica whom Qaddafi deposed in 1969 after he served for some years as the only king of a united Libya. Berber (Amazigh) grievances against Arab domination entwined with other issues — but also, like tribal loyalties generally, created fault lines among the rebels. These come to the fore especially, but not only, in the former Al Fezzan.

29. This is the speech in which Saif famously predicted that rivers of blood would flow if conflict deepened into civil war. Dressed pointedly in a suit, he began by acknowledging that reform was needed and that some of the protestors were "political activists whom we agree with." He went on to describe others as thugs and youth on drugs. A core theme was that civil war meant the breakup of Libya. Speaking apparently for both the government and his family, he insisted, "We will fight to the last man and woman and bullet. We will not lose Libya." I quote from the translated transcript at www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article26434.html. The passages about "rivers of blood" and fighting "to the last bullet" became widely reproduced soundbites, usually interpreted simply as threats. Benjamin Barber was mocked for trying to insist that the context made the statement more a prediction of what would happen ("Libya's Michael Corleone").

30. Western coverage and that by Al Jazeera were more similar than is often the case. Many argue that Al Jazeera's sympathy for the rebels reflected the diplomatic agenda of Qatar. One of the leading clerics associated with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Yusuf al-Qaradawi (perhaps coincidentally long a resident of Qatar), announced a fatwa calling for any able-bodied Libyan soldier to shoot and kill Qaddafi. See Meredith Jessup, "Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Cleric Orders Gaddafi Assassination," *Blaze*, February 21, 2011 (www.theblaze.com/stories/egyptian-muslim-brotherhood-cleric-orders-gaddafi-assassination). Though Qaddafi had in the past supported the Brotherhood's opposition to Western influences, relations had long been tense because of his repression of Islamist organization in Libya.

tary force to repress protest, but they simply weren't as interesting to the Western media or publics.[31]

Media attention is very much the issue. The Qaddafi public relations campaign worked largely by means of media; this is part of what made visits from celebrity professors attractive—and celebrity professors are themselves partly media creations. But the Arab Spring became a much bigger media event, and within that frame, the Libyan rebellion drew enormous attention. This is one of the reasons, indeed, why it also drew support from Western powers and NATO. Televised accounts started with pictures of demonstrations apparently echoing the peaceful protests in Tunisia and Egypt. Almost immediately the images turned to violent repression, then showed rebels struggling to fight back, facing shortages of weapons and ammunition, but pitted against a well-armed regime. As it looked like the rebels might be crushed, the media story began to drive a call for international intervention.

Needless to say, Qaddafi's war to stay in power spelled the end of his new public relations campaign and attempt to reposition Libya in the global order.[32] It is not clear how much real effort had been made to increase the rights and liberties of Libya's citizens in the "reform" years, but whatever progress had been made was not enough to stop discontent. It is possible that the "progress" many saw in Libya at the beginning of this century was all illusion. It is possible that reform from within such problematic regimes is so rare that one should never put faith in that prospect.[33] It is possible that Saif's prereform overtures were all dissimulation and manipulation. But one does not have to think that Saif was entirely cynical. He might have intended to improve the lot of Libyans (and of the world, as it suffered at the hands of his father's Libya). And perhaps he might

31. Saudi Arabia and the UAE both provided military support for the repression of protest in Bahrain, not coincidentally ruled by a traditionalist monarch.

32. Though this wasn't the end of public relations: in the midst of war the Qaddafi regime sought to hire a New York–based public relations firm (several accounts of this ran in late July 2011, including Brad Hamilton in the *New York Post*: www.nypost.com/p/news/international/sympathy_for_the_devil_QNheclncKARRfmS2I8ynBO). For their part, the Libyan rebels hired a top DC public relations and lobbying firm, Patton Boggs (thehill.com/business-a-lobbying/169509-libyan-rebels-hire-washingtons-no-1-lobby-firm).

33. This seems to be John Keane's worry when he asks fellow democratic theorist David Held, "Didn't you ever lay awake at night worrying that Libya was ultimately an oil-and-gas kleptocracy, a petro-dictatorship that had abolished the old European principle of no taxation without representation, so enabling it to be ruled by a Charismatic Brother Leader, a lion who until this day still thinks he is loved by his imaginary People, a fox capable of using his front organisations to play the language games of democracy and civil society, human rights and global governance?" johnkeane.net/52/news/libya-intellectuals-and-democracy-an-open-letter-to-professor-david-held.

have succeeded. Reform, after all, can be a strategy for retaining as well as sharing power. Nonetheless, whatever his possible differences from his father, Saif enjoyed wealth and connections on the basis of being his father's son and showed no sign of surrendering either—nor of thinking about his own position in Libyan or world society from behind a Rawlsian veil of ignorance. He accepted the starting point of his political and economic inheritance, and so did those who sought to work with him. No amount of describing him as "gifted" made it either meritocratic or just.

Of necessity, nearly everyone accepts illegitimate inequalities as facts in the world even if they don't like them; they may try to compensate ethically or work to change them. For example, middle- and upper-class youth go to elite universities in far greater proportions and start life with greater security than others; accepting this privilege, they have still to find their ethical bearings. Many people with power or wealth try to do something socially good with their resources. There is no readily agreed bridge between individual ethics and moral assessment of broader distributional inequalities. Nor is it easy to answer the question of at what scale the inequality becomes unacceptable, or the inequity at its base beyond the pale of legitimation by good deeds. If unfair or even ill-gotten gains could not be repurposed in the pursuit of at least a better reputation if not eternal salvation, the world would have fewer cathedrals, Oxford and Cambridge fewer colleges, and social scientists fewer grants from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations.

Public Social Science or Public Relations?

Positive press peaked in 2007, when David Frost moderated a discussion among Qaddafi, Giddens, and Barber.[34] Such visits arguably nurtured the impression that Qaddafi was a reasonable man and should be taken seriously as a leader. After one visit, Giddens wrote in the *Guardian* that "Gadafy used to be as anti-western as they come. . . . In 2003, however, he decided that the country should open up." He acknowledged that it remained unclear how much Qaddafi had changed, but argued that Libya's best prospects were for more reform under Qaddafi's leadership. He asserted, "As one-party states go, Libya is not especially repressive. Gadafy seems genuinely popular." He held out the prospect that Libya

34. Martin Evans, "Sir David Frost Paid to Promote Qaddafi," *Daily Telegraph*, July 2, 2011, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8613991/Sir-David-Frost-paid-to-promote-Gaddafi.html.

might soon become "a Norway of North Africa: prosperous, egalitarian and forward-looking."[35]

The American international relations scholar Stephen Walt prefaced his own postvisit essay by disarmingly quoting the political scientist Sidney Verba's quip that "one should never write about a country that you haven't flown over." After this opening, he went on to say that his thirty-six-hour visit showed him Libyans who were "uniformly friendly, smart, and well-informed." Though not a democracy, the country didn't feel like a police state either. Mostly the visit gave him the occasion to write an article in *Foreign Policy* affirming the view he indicated he already held of "the improvement of U.S.-Libyan relations as one of the few (only?) success stories in recent U.S. Middle East diplomacy."[36] For the most part, the academic comments were plausible, if extremely optimistic; they did not report manifest untruths. They did give a positive postvisit spin.

As is often the case, public relations were aimed not just at external audiences. There was indeed an effort to improve the Qaddafi and Libya brands for Western policy makers, potential business partners, and the public. But the recruitment of celebrity academics was equally part of the management of Saif Qaddafi's role in his father's regime, his brand. And it was communication to Muammar Qaddafi about himself—not just how he was perceived, but how his self-perception might fit into a global context. Monitor set out to present Qaddafi as a "thinker." This is the significance of its proposal to prepare a book to be published under Qaddafi's name, combining his own insights and observations with responses from leading intellectuals. Qaddafi, the Monitor Group suggested, was "a man of ideas" who "has made significant efforts to think through many of the critical political and philosophical issues of the day."[37] It was important that the world better understand both him and his ideas. In the evaluation of Dirk Vandewalle, "The really nefarious aspect of [Monitor's parade of academics] is that it reinforced in Khadafy's mind that he truly was an international intellectual world figure, and that his ideas of democracy were to be taken seriously. . . . It reinforced his reluctance

35. www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/mar/09/comment.libya.

36. Stephen S. Walt, "The Shores of Tripoli," *Foreign Policy*, January 19, 2010, walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/01/18/the_shores_of_tripoli.

37. Monitor proposed a fee of $2.45 million for this project. Monitor Group Foreign Government Services, "A Proposal for Expanding the Dialogue around the Ideas of Muammar Qadhafi," posted by *Mother Jones* magazine, LLChttps://motherjones.com/files/a_proposal_for_expanding_the_dialogue_around_the_ideas_of_muammar_qadhafi2.pdf. Monitor later indicated that it had made "errors in judgment." See Ed Pilkington, "US Firm Monitor Group Admits Mistakes over $3m Gaddafi Deal," *Guardian*, March 4, 2011.

to come to terms with the reality around him, which was that Libya is in many ways an inconsequential country and his ideas are half-baked."[38]

Working with Libya was enticing for reasons beyond money. Qaddafi had been a dramatic rogue, a revolutionary, and a backer of terrorists. The possibility that he was interested in being a more constructive world citizen was hard to ignore (if easy to discount). When Saif Qaddafi and other agents of his father's government began to reach out for improved relations with the West, the United States, United Kingdom, and other governments welcomed the overtures. A wide variety of businesses, not just consultancies like the Monitor Group, were keen to trade.

Businesses often trade with countries that are corrupt and repressive. This may reflect mere pursuit of profit, but sometimes such trade and longer-term investments in economic production will be part of a constructive engagement that encourages improvements (potentially among all parties to the relationship). Businesses weigh moral objections and reputational risks. And many set ethical standards for their work: creating safe workplaces, refusing to use bribes to gain contracts, and offering employment on equal and open bases.

Universities can also be leaders in good practices, and it is perhaps especially disappointing when they are not. Some generally good practices, like maintaining transparency in decision making, are particularly important to universities because of their public mission, varied constituencies, and reliance on collegial participation in management. And of course, they may be all the more important in an era shaped by the involuntary publicity of electronically leaked documents. Even more centrally, though, universities must maintain a central commitment to education, the production and public sharing of knowledge, and intellectual debate. Public relations consultancies, lobbying firms, and political activists need not give these values as much weight (though some cultivate reputations that benefit from appearing to be more than cynically instrumental). Universities lose their distinctive niche and identity when they do not keep these values at the top of their priorities.

Barber's defense of work with the Qaddafis should be considered in this light:

> Is that the idea: to go back and say in 2006, 2007, 2008, when the U.S. recognized the government of Muammar al-Qaddafi, when the sovereign

38. Quoted in Farah Stockman, "Local Consultants Aided Khadafy: Cambridge Firm Tried to Polish His Image," *Boston Globe*, March 4, 2011, www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2011/03/04/local_consultants_aided_khadafy/?page=full.

> oil fund that Libya set up and that people like Prince Andrew and Peter Mandelson, or organizations like the Carlyle Group and Blackstone, were doing business with, and the heavy investments oil companies were making while others were running around and making all sorts of money—that those of us who went in trying to do some work for democratic reform, that we somehow got Saif wrong?[39]

Whether or not Barber understood Saif well, it is striking that his standards for appropriate academic engagement seem to be the same as those for politicians and businessmen.

What was the right response from intellectuals and universities? Academic institutions are neither governments nor businesses—certainly not businesses that simply seek to maximize profits or "shareholder value." A key question is to what extent the core intellectual values that define universities are in the forefront—or at least respected—when universities or academics engage in activities designed to have impacts that are not primarily intellectual. This is as much an issue when governments insist that funding for the study of history should promote patriotism or that funding for science should promote economic development as when funding for international linkages is meant to promote peace, democracy, or new levels of foreign trade. These goals do not disqualify projects, and they may bring universities needed funds, but universities need to assess them in relation to their own core missions, not only the external goals.[40]

It almost certainly makes sense for democratic governments to try to maintain and indeed expand diplomatic contacts with all manner of others. Prime Minister Blair visited Libya repeatedly, negotiating not only an end to sanctions but also a variety of forms of cooperation.[41] Academic contacts are a way of extending this

39. Barber, "Understanding Libya's Michael Corleone." Barber's comparison to the *Godfather* films speaks for itself.

40. It is in this sense that Pierre Bourdieu suggests that the academic field is divided between more autonomous and more heteronomous work. The former is usually more prestigious and closer to the defining values of the field itself; the latter may be lucrative but reflects the direct control of values and forces outside the field, like the state or economy. See *Homo Academicus* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). I would add that "autonomous" work is not necessarily better nor "heteronomous" work uncreative. This is the point of Donald Stokes's *Pasteur's Quadrant* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), drawing on the example of how great science was stimulated by solving problems for beer brewers. Significant social science also has been stimulated by practical problems and solicitations from extra-academic funders. Though heteronomous work can be of great importance, it is crucial that academic institutions still judge this work by serious intellectual standards, not only those of potential external impact.

41. Ben Smith, House of Commons Briefing Note SN/IA/5886, "UK Relations with Libya," March 2, 2011.

"soft power." This may have paid off not only with regard to the Lockerbie incident but also, for example, by helping to end arms flows to Northern Ireland, thus facilitating the 2005 peace. In this context, there is every reason to believe that the academics working in both the Monitor Group and the LSE understood their efforts to be part of the pursuit of a more peaceful, democratic, and cosmopolitan world. But this is to judge their projects by political goals, not as intellectual pursuits, and not as part of the specific mission of academic institutions.

This issue is important for social scientists; many have worried in recent years about declining public influence. Academic professionalization and competition for status inside disciplines have in some cases encouraged the production of research almost entirely for other researchers rather than either policy makers or broader publics (not to mention the prioritization of research over education). The incentive structure is oriented more to the production of new findings or new methods of investigation than to integrating particular and disparate findings into usable analyses of major issues. Calls for public social science often see engagement through the media as a remedy. Many of those who were invited to Libya, or otherwise drawn into the projects of Muammar and Saif Qaddafi, were leaders in combining academic distinction with public voice. University professors have long played useful public roles providing informed reflection on major issues—whether in the media for the broader public or on government commissions. Providing analysis and information can raise the quality of discussion in a way merely stating opinions does not. But it is important to distinguish effectively communicating social science from simply expressing opinions in the media. The public importance of social science rests not simply on publicity, nor only on better communicating existing research, but also and crucially on making sure that new research agendas produce knowledge useful for considering key public issues.

In this connection, it is significant that academic outreach to Libya created few opportunities for either Libyan researchers or researchers on Libya. For all the "engagement" with Libya, there was little increase in serious study of Libya that might have helped policy makers in 2011. Indeed, few of the academics who visited Libya during the Qaddafi thaw focused on (or even argued for) more serious study of Libya. Nearly all seemed to think that their abstract theories of how democracy, cosmopolitanism, or soft power worked were adequate on their own.[42]

42. David Held's creation of the North African Programme at the LSE's Centre for the Study of Global Governance was a partial exception, since it did call for seminars and commissioning regionally specific research papers as well as advocacy. It is not clear, however, that it was meant to involve systematic new regional research as distinct from mobilizing existing knowledge as background to policy discussions.

If they gleaned new knowledge from their trips, this may have informed their short opinion essays, but it was not integrated into more sustained research. More emphasis on context-specific knowledge might have both helped avoid embarrassment and advanced social science itself.

In short, the intellectuals who engaged with the Qaddafis and Libya did not so much give voice to the results of social science research as participate in a Qaddafi public relations project. Put to one side for a moment the question of whether anyone should want Muammar Qaddafi as a client. A further issue is whether public relations is the right role for social science or for academic institutions generally.

Critical public engagement and making scholarly, research-based knowledge available to inform public discussions are both different from being drawn into the efforts of public actors to manage their public relations or reputations. The boundary is of course not always clear, but the distinction is nonetheless important. Likewise, universities frequently play what might be called a public relations role, notably when they offer donors naming opportunities and honorary degrees, but this is different from entering directly into the public relations business. Academic recognition has considerable capacity to confer prestige and legitimacy. However, this capacity is based on putting knowledge ahead of the business of public relations or the pursuit of monetary gain. This does not mean that recognition is always disinterested. When a university names a building after a donor, part of what is honored is the meeting of an interest. But it is important both that the interest in question be a matter of core academic value and that the financing involved be truly a gift. If it is a transaction of material benefit to the donor, the legitimacy of any honor is called into question.

Clarity about core intellectual mission is vital. This does not mean that universities should be insular, or even that their work should be useful only in long-term and indirect ways. Universities can provide immediately practical knowledge; this is the most important way for them to have a short-term impact. And as intellectual communities that pursue, share, and respect knowledge, universities can also play other roles. A museum exhibition can attract audiences and promote tourism. An architecture school can help solve urban design problems. But the most important contributions do not come in short-term, instrumental projects; they come as the result of longer-term academic work. This is true for the eventual impact of fundamental research and for serious teaching and study, but it is also true in a number of other ways. Ties formed among intellectuals can solidify relations between nations; knowledge shared can improve the efficiency of bureaucracies

or markets; social science can inform the quality of public debates and public policy. But for serious intellectual work to thrive, it cannot be entirely governed by instrumental outcomes. This is a distinction of universities from for-profit businesses and governments. Unfortunately, many funding agencies — even public funding agencies — forget this as they seek to impose short-term, instrumental impact assessments on universities.

The Monitor Group is not an academic institution, even if it is led largely by Harvard professors and derives prestige from the association. It is a business consultancy focused on corporate strategy: public relations is not its main work, but it is not prima facie inappropriate. Indeed, Monitor's strategic approach emphasizes how public perception of firms or states influences their capacity to meet their objectives and deliver value to stakeholders. Side projects like doing research for Saif Qaddafi's PhD may seem undignified, but they are simply another version of research for hire. Where Monitor crossed a boundary was in becoming a lobbyist for Libya and failing to comply with the Foreign Agents Registration Act. Monitor initially framed its work as helping the government and people of Libya develop a strategy for economic reform, but much of it seems simply to have been an effort to boost Qaddafi's reputation and relations with Western powers. The stated terms of reference in a memorandum of understanding the firm prepared are clear on this: Monitor undertook to "enhance international understanding and appreciation of Libya . . . emphasize the emergence of a new Libya . . . [and] introduce Muammar Qadhafi as a thinker and intellectual."[43]

Mission and Money

It is by no means a new thing for universities to be responsive to wealth and connections. This is a significant part of how the institutions grew, whether their support came from the church, governments, or wealthy individuals. Universities compete for prestige and students as well as funding; the competition is increasingly global, especially among the elite. The strongest students, funders able to support costly programs, and faculty with distinguished research reputations can all choose among a range of academic institutions. Those at the top of the resulting hierarchy can in turn be selective, choosing the most talented students, the most productive faculty, and the funders most willing to underwrite cutting-edge

43. Monitor Group, "Project to Enhance the Profile of Libya and Muammar Qadhafi: Executive Summary of Phase I," 2007. The memorandum was leaked to and posted by the National Conference of the Libyan Opposition, at www.libya-nclo.com/Portals/0/pdf%20files/Monitor%203.pdf (accessed September 25, 2011).

research and intellectual excellence. Rankings celebrate and reinforce the hierarchy (albeit reduced to a handful of indicators).

During the long postwar boom the academic system expanded, largely due to increased government support. Many governments made higher education more egalitarian during the boom years, emphasizing an increase in places and low-cost access. In the next period, many focused investment more on hoped-for economic payoffs. Recently some began to distribute funds with intentional inequality in order to boost their top national institutions in international status and funding competitions.

Since the 1970s, along with other cutbacks in welfare states, many rich countries have seen a steep decline in the proportion of higher education costs paid by governments. This was substantial even before the wave of post-2008 fiscal austerity budgets. In the United Kingdom, reduced support for universities dates from the Thatcher years but was not reversed under Labour governments. In the United States, public funding comes mainly from the different state, so the national pattern is less unified; still, the overall decline is broadly similar. Governments were often ideologically in favor of privatization; even when this wasn't the driving factor, they had other budget priorities (state governments in the United States invested heavily in prisons; both US and UK governments maintained a high level of military expenditure).[44] Fees charged to students increased sooner and are generally higher in the United States, though scholarship funds from private philanthropy compensate for this to a greater extent.[45]

At the same time, the cost of universities kept increasing faster than the rate of inflation. This had multiple causes, including an intensified global competition for rankings. Based significantly on faculty prestige and productivity, these helped drive bidding wars for star faculty and increased investments in research. Successful competition for external research funding itself required internal investments. While this was most intense among the global elite, a very large proportion of universities tried to claim distinction in research and to promote themselves nationally and internationally in the hope this recognition would improve their position in competition for students and funds. Recruiting the "best" students

44. In the United States, private money has offset loss of government funds; tax-free private donations allow wealthy individuals to support the institutions of their choice (principally, those already richest and most elite). The private gifts have gone disproportionately to private universities; state universities — attended by many more students — have suffered a relative decline.

45. At the time of the Libyan controversy, Richard Sennett suggested that stronger private philanthropy in Britain might have reduced interest in dodgy international donors, noting a relatively weak "culture of giving" in Britain; see "Universities Need Your Titians," *Guardian*, March 6, 2011, www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/mar/06/universities-titian-lse-dodgy-donors.

required attractive facilities and a capacity to subsidize costs with scholarships. One study shows the costs of higher education increasing at about the same rate as the price of luxury goods like single-malt whiskeys.[46] This happened amid increasing social inequality, which arguably made both degrees and whiskeys affordable to the rich (and inequality also increased the number of very rich who could afford to make gifts to university endowments). As state support eroded, a long trend toward greater equality of access began to be reversed. But universities not only distributed private goods like career advantages or an attractive setting for late adolescence; they were also investments in educated citizens and capacities for innovation and economic prosperity. During the years of the postwar boom, higher education was approached as a public good.

With less public funding, universities were in need of other sources of support. They invested more and more in seeking gifts from individuals and contracts from corporations. And as universities taught students from more countries and otherwise globalized, they began increasingly to seek funds internationally. This steeply increased emphasis on seeking funds was not immediately matched by new internal procedures for vetting funders. This shaped receptiveness to proposed Libyan funding, and not only at the LSE.[47] Substantial Libyan funding flowed to King's and University Colleges, to Strathclyde and Dundee, Leeds and Durham, Liverpool John Moores and Oxford Brookes, as well as universities in other countries.[48] And of course Libya was not the only country with a problematic human rights record or undemocratic government that offered funding for Western academic programs. The Saudi government funds programs at a range of elite universities, for example, including the Center for Islamic Studies at Cam-

46. Roger L. Geiger, *Knowledge and Money: Research Universities and the Paradox of the Marketplace* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

47. The LSE became the center of scandal partly because as a more famous institution it made for a better story. It was also conveniently located in London. LSE's students were more vocal in their condemnation of the Libyan links. Above all, the controversy surrounding Saif Qaddafi's doctorate and his personal role in Libyan donations gave a visible focus to suggestions of impropriety.

48. Libyan funds came to universities not only as grants and contracts but also in the form of student fees. One of the main incentives to the internationalization of UK universities has been a government policy that capped payments for British students at less than actual cost while allowing universities to charge much higher fees to international students. International students are also good business in the Australia, Canada, and the United States. No central policy limits the fees US universities can charge, and these are generally higher than in Britain even at public universities and much higher at private universities. While the richest private universities are sustained by large endowments, most are dependent on tuition and other fees paid by the "consumers" of higher education — students and their families. It has become common to "discount" nominal tuition rates by means of scholarships and financial aid. Foreign students are more likely to pay the full fees.

bridge. The Saïd Business School at Oxford is based on a fortune derived largely from arms deals with Saudi Arabia. Universities throughout the world have taken funds from China despite a troubling record with regard to both academic and political freedom. The list could go on.

Issues arise not just with gifts from undemocratic regimes, but also with individual and corporate donors whose money has been made in ways of which not all university members would approve. And indeed they arise with all donors, domestic or international, insofar as they have instrumental purposes for their gifts that are not entirely congruent with academic values. Most of these investments — including those from imperfect donors — support good work. But they have impacts on the universities that take the funds and build new relationships. Sometimes possible funders should be rejected out of hand on the basis of ethical questions about the provenance of their wealth or reputational risk. More often, decisions need to be made about whether good governance arrangements can be put in place (including the donor's willingness to relinquish control of academic decisions) and how closely the purposes of the funding fit with the institution's core mission and values. Internal discussion is important both to make sure decisions are well considered and to inform as much agreement as possible about mission and values. This discussion requires realistic attention to the need for funds and the limits of available sources. Where a proposed project is not of core academic importance, it can perhaps simply be forgone, though there should be due consideration of the possibility that it is important for particular members of an institution. But where the question involves core activities, renouncing some sources of funding only puts more pressure on others. To be simplistic about it, refusing endowment gifts may lead to raising student fees or reducing scholarships.

Seeking more funds from private donors is probably the most important way institutions have responded to rising costs and declining public funds. This means not just funding from long-established and professionally managed foundations, for which institutional best practices are relatively settled, but also funding from private individuals, corporations, and newly established foundations that may not work according to prior norms. International variation adds to the complexity. So do efforts to commercialize the results of research through claiming intellectual property rights (and how many universities actually gain more than they invest in this is unclear).

Academic institutions were never as disdainful of finances as their public image sometimes suggested. But at the beginning of the twenty-first century they focused increasingly on flows of funds. The sources of those funds also became more complex and diverse. This in turn raised new governance questions. The jobs

of vice-chancellors and presidents came to be defined more and more by fundraising and the related task of raising the institutional profile. Reputation and visibility had a direct impact on recruitment of students, securing applied research contracts, attracting philanthropic donors, and succeeding in competitions for government funds (which, indeed, were more and more distributed by means of competitions rather than allocations of student places or direct budget lines). Many aspects of university life were subjected to new levels of cost-benefit analysis. But at the same time, as academics often complained, more and more administrators were appointed, central management control came with the new funding sources, and collegial decision making played a reduced role. More presidents and vice-chancellors were brought to universities from nonacademic careers.

Many research programs prospered under the new system, but there was also a new level of inequality within and among universities. At many institutions, faculty members were evaluated on their capacity to bring in funding as distinct from the quality of their research or teaching. There was a growing internal differentiation between better-paid researchers with stronger market connections and others whose funding came more from teaching.[49] And universities with large private endowments were in better positions to compete for additional public or philanthropic research funds as well as the most lucrative links with commercial funders. Questions arose about what it meant for agendas to be guided by "clients" or by the pursuit of marketable intellectual property rather than scientific concerns or the public good. There were questions about the extent to which research results were deemed "proprietorial" and neither published for examination by fellow scientists nor made available for the public good (issues not completely different from conducting classified research for defense or security agencies). And there were questions about the "neutrality" of researchers, including when they served as peer reviewers for journals and funding agencies but now (famously in biomedical and pharmaceutical research) had their own proprietorial interests in the outcomes of studies. These issues were in play whether the funding came from Qaddafi's Libya or from pharmaceutical companies and the managers of hedge funds. Donors helped universities do their work, but also often sought to steer that work. A relatively benign version is the role of private funding in pushing medical researchers to target certain diseases and not others. Academic leaders urge donors to make their gifts for broad purposes, not narrow, but many donors insist

49. On the transformation of both research and education, see D. Rhoten and C. Calhoun, eds., *Knowledge Matters: The Public Mission of the Research University* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

on tightly specified uses for their money. And even gifts that seem unambiguously desirable can become more problematic: an "Arthur Andersen Chair in Accounting" became a potential embarrassment after the firm's "creative accounting" and obstruction of justice in the Enron debacle (though universities that received the firm's largesse generally did not return the money).

In the social sciences neither the price tags of research nor the pursuit of external funding led to transformation as fast as in fields of science and engineering. But similar issues were in play. Centers were founded and donors sought. This had the by-product of expanding the class of feudal "barons" within the university. Heads of centers and faculty members with big grants gained partial independence from departments, and direct access to the administration. Others, in need of support, were dependent on them. Bringing in publicity was nearly as valuable as bringing in money. Two distinctive dimensions of the larger trend had major significance for the social sciences.

First, a long-term rise in professional schools and degree programs organized with reference to different lines of practical employment competed increasingly with traditional disciplines. The support of external funders was central to the expansion of medical, law, engineering, and other professional faculties relative to the rest of their universities. Business education was a striking example, moving in the decades between the 1970s and the early twenty-first century from the margins of the university system to an increasingly dynamic and well-funded role.[50] Growing numbers of academic social scientists were drawn into business schools or closely related programs. The field of finance grew overwhelmingly in the context of business schools rather than conventional disciplinary economics departments. Organizational studies drew in sociologists and psychologists. Marketing integrated a broadly psychological approach with anthropological studies of culture, sociological surveys and focus groups, and a growing emphasis on communications media. The field of management was remade as the study of corporate strategy (rather than the running of factories or even commercial establishments). It developed its own elite structure, drawing on economics, sociology, and indeed history as well as operations research and financial analysis. And it took up concerns at the intersection of finance, marketing, technological innovation, law, and branding. The funding and new approaches to professional education made possible intellectual creativity, but they also changed power structures and

50. When Oxford's Saïd School of Business was created in 1996, debate centered not on Saudi Arabian links but on whether business was a suitable subject for study at an elite university.

shifted academic agendas. Nowhere was this more evident than at the Harvard Business School, the world's most influential.

Harvard is also a pivotal place to see the second dimension of change exemplified: the rise of consultancies and outside business interests among university faculty. The Monitor Group is one of the most prominent and successful examples. A significant percentage of social scientists and especially professional school faculty began to bolster their academic incomes by consultancies and contract research. There were dozens of other firms like Monitor Group just in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and there were British analogues like Oxford Analytica (and the two named are among the higher quality). Some were organized as nonprofit ventures, some on a for-profit basis. They worked in a dramatically growing field of para-academic organizations. These included a growing range of "think tanks," free-standing firms, and research divisions within broader corporations — all established to meet the research needs of industry and government agencies.

The growth of this sector had significant implications for universities. Many academics developed lucrative sidelines even while nominally full-time employees of universities. Monitor was created as a private, for-profit company by several Harvard faculty members. While it has a variety of full-time employees, Harvard faculty members pursuing this as a "spare-time" activity remain central. Michael Porter, for example, was a regular Harvard faculty member during the entire time he worked on the Monitor Group's multimillion-dollar-a-year business with Muammar Qaddafi and Libya (among other projects).

The new sector of think tanks, research firms, and corporate research created a buffer between universities and a range of applied research opportunities that potentially would both make academic social science a more important source of practical knowledge and bring much-needed income to universities. Contract-research organizations can often deliver "knowledge inputs" to policy makers faster than universities and more reliably harnessed to the particular needs of those paying. But of course this creates a risk of bias; it also reduces the extent to which policy makers are informed about the extent of consensus or controversy among serious researchers. Not surprisingly, universities tried to become more entrepreneurial in response. Most institutions accepted (and tried to create some policies to regulate) the external employment of faculty members. They also created a variety of new units to compete for "business" that would otherwise go to external organizations. These included both centers that were also bases for research funded by government and foundation grants, and more general efforts to market research and expertise. At the LSE, a "Corporate Relations Unit" was

established to be "responsible for developing, designing and delivering long-term, sustainable research partnerships between the corporate sector and the research centres of LSE."[51] LSE Enterprise was launched to market academic expertise more effectively to businesses seeking consultants. This approach expanded the potential reach of academic social science and created a framework for faculty members' commercial activities. Not without risk, it too demanded open discussion and careful management.

Both free-standing firms and the new commercial arms of universities also supply training and other services to clients, sometimes drawing on academic knowledge and personnel but usually not integrated with the critical intellectual activities of universities. Most contracts with Libya—by the Monitor Group, the LSE, and indeed the range of other universities involved—were in fact for consultancies and relatively narrow technical training. This is a useful role for universities, but it demands evaluation in terms of the specific projects involved, governance procedures, and time commitments of faculty and administrators. One needs to ask to what extent they serve core academic missions and to what extent they distract from them. These programs may pose reputational risks but they generally do not put direct pressure on the core activities of universities.

Universities do face pressures on their ability to make autonomous intellectual decisions. To the extent that faculty depend on external research funding, donors potentially shape agendas. This is true of state agencies as well as private funders. Many lines of academic research—including international area studies—may be more likely to be funded by private donors or indeed foreign states than by national research agencies. Centralized research assessment efforts introduce significant biases into evaluation and in turn funding. Similarly, curricular decisions are influenced both by direct funding—say, money for business or technology programs not available for history or anthropology programs—and by signals from job markets. Job market signals are complex and work by influencing student choices as well as decisions of educational institutions. But they do exert powerful pressures on universities' core academic programs. Where funding is at stake—either in immediate payment of fees or in hopes for future donations—the temptation to "adjust" academic policies grows.

Many, perhaps most, funders of academic work have agendas distinct from the core missions of universities. A medical charity devoted to eliminating a particular disease is likely to fund scientific research only on that disease, which will skew the allocation of academic attention unless other funding is available.

51. www2.lse.ac.uk/businessAndConsultancy/CRU/Home.aspx.

Wealthy private donors may provide welcome scholarships but insist that they be provided on some criterion other than pure merit or go only for the study of certain subjects (perhaps the fields in which they made their money). Government agencies may prioritize measures of "impact" at odds with intellectual quality. Where the overlap in interests is clear, and where each funder is only one of many, the differences are usually not very problematic. But academic institutions also depend for funding on political actors and business organizations that have only instrumental interests in the products of scientific research. These do not always reflect the best values and purposes of scholarship and science. Dictators are an extreme case. Businesses trying to marshal intellectual property rights for the pursuit of profit are more common. How should universities and similar institutions make decisions about and manage such relationships?

To deal with these complexities, well-run institutions typically have a variety of norms. They try to avoid funders who will not maintain an "arm's length" relationship to secure autonomy for academic decisions—for example, donors of chairs who want to name or at least hold veto power over the professors to hold them.[52] They do not solicit gifts from current students. They seek funding that supports the core mission of the institution and that will enable different members of the institution to thrive, study, and learn—not funds tied narrowly to the benefit of some or to instrumental purposes ancillary to the core mission. They try to ensure academic freedom, including freedom to dissent from the views of donors and from public policy, to disagree about research results, and to pursue unpopular lines of inquiry.[53] They vet governance and funding arrangements but

52. Hence, it is controversial for critics to charge that Cambridge and Edinburgh agreed to allow Saudi donors to choose who would run the research centers they endowed. For reporting of the charge, see Stephen Pollard, "Libya and the LSE: Large Arab Gifts to Universities Lead to 'Hostile' Teaching," *Daily Telegraph*, March 3, 2011, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8360103/Libya-and-the-LSE-Large-Arab-gifts-to-universities-lead-to-hostile-teaching.html; for Cambridge denial of the charge, see D. D. Guttenplan, "Embarrassing Liaisons at British Universities," *New York Times*, March 20, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/03/21/education/21iht-educLede21.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all. But perhaps the most constant pressure on university administrators to violate norms of autonomous academic decision making comes from alumni and donors who want interventions into the admissions process to ensure places for their children or other relatives.

53. Norms of academic freedom reflect the need for open intellectual debate to advance knowledge. They protect faculty members' rights to express opinions even when those are contrary to government, donors, or administrators. But the growing ranks of faculty on contingent contracts may feel especially vulnerable. Pressures to pursue funding may inhibit free expression even without formal censorship. And the pursuit of funding may inhibit criticism of funders—whether these are national governments or private corporations. See Calhoun, "Academic Freedom: Public Knowledge

allow researchers considerable discretion about the work they undertake. At the same time, they try to make sure that the choices of some researchers do not undermine the work of others — especially by damaging the institution's reputation for academic integrity.

In a sense, the challenge is one of corporate strategy. Universities are a particular kind of firm — historically and I hope still defined more by the public interest than profit, and by core missions of advancing and sharing knowledge through education, research, and debate. But like all firms, they need to bring their internal operations into alignment with each other and with their sources of finance in order to confront external challenges. They must deal effectively with customers, suppliers, competitors, and with the very possibility that their whole industry will change in a fundamental way, for example as a result of new technologies. As universities have grown larger and more internally diverse, as their sources of finance have changed, as they have faced new external competition, their internal cohesion, operating effectiveness, and clarity of external identity have all been challenged. Most need much-better-formulated strategies and practical efforts to bring different operations into alignment with each other.

Perhaps coincidentally, Michael Porter, the Harvard business school guru and founder of the Monitor Group, is among the leading modern analysts of corporate strategy.[54] One of his central themes is the importance of establishing brands and positioning firms through reputations and images. He emphasizes that branding can be linked to internal clarity of purpose as well as marketing: the corporation does not just brand its products; it *is* a brand.[55] Porter and his colleagues influentially extended this idea from corporations to countries, selling "nation-branding" services to countries seeking to brand themselves for investors and tourists as well as citizens — including Libya.[56]

Academics are often impatient with mere public relations — and roll their eyes when administrators discuss the institutional "brand." Nonetheless, universities depend a great deal on their reputations and are right to care about them. But it

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and the Structural Transformation of the University," and "Free Inquiry and Public Mission in the Research University," *Social Research* 76, no. 2 (2009): 561–98 and 76, no. 3 (2009): 901–32.

54. Porter's ideas are spelled out in a series of articles and books; for an early and a recent example see "How Competitive Forces Shape Strategy," *Harvard Business Review*, March/April 1979, 137–45, and "The Five Competitive Forces That Shape Strategy," *Harvard Business Review*, January 2008, 79–93.

55. This is an approach particularly suited to the era of financialization, both as part of attracting capital and as part of delivering "shareholder value" by making firms themselves into objects to be bought and sold. But manifestly elite universities are in part brands.

56. See Melissa Aronczyk, *Nation-Branding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

debases thinking about intellectual reputations to reduce them simply to rankings or brand management. It is also likely counterproductive. Trying to advance by having a better reputation than you deserve is a limited strategy. Trying to deserve a better reputation usually makes more sense. And here the "Libyan lesson" must be not simply to avoid guilt by association but for an institution to be clear about its mission and on that basis able to say clearly why it made the choices it did—and then either to explain them (if they were good decisions) or correct them as needed.

The moral opprobrium now attached to academic engagements with the Qaddafi regime is sometimes invoked in ways that would suggest universities should never work in countries where high standards of human rights or democracy are not met. Surely this is not right. It is good that universities provide education and support research in China and Saudi Arabia; we should wish there were more opportunities in Iran and Zimbabwe. Of course one might not want all of this work to be financed by the governments of those countries.

Growing academic linkages have been a part of transitions in (and sometimes away from) authoritarian rule in many settings. China is a prominent example; academic contacts grew dramatically as the country ended its relative isolation after the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao. New connections were forged by international research collaborations: Chinese students coming to the United States, Britain, and other Western countries; exchanges of professors; and a variety of meetings. The same happened on a smaller scale in Vietnam after the end of the war. It was part of the transition in Eastern Europe. It was important in each case that specific contracts for relatively instrumental training or consultancies were matched (and generally far exceeded) by other kinds of intellectual relationships. The academic linkages mattered more because they were not completely contained by such narrow mandates and also included occasions for collaborative research and more or less open discussions. Academic linkages are not guarantees of democracy, and perhaps matter most in processes of relatively gradual change, without bloody civil war, revolution, coup d'état, or replacement of military by civilian rule. This is part of the promise of academic linkages in a range of still-far-from-democratic Arab countries today and of small-scale efforts to build connections in Cuba.[57]

57. I should acknowledge having been party to these efforts at building intellectual relationships: as an individual researcher, a teacher (not least at NYU's Abu Dhabi campus, but also in China, Sudan, and Eritrea), and an administrator—notably of the Social Science Research Council, which played pioneering roles in China and Vietnam, facilitated links with Russia and Eastern Europe, helped to create the new Arab Council of Social Sciences, and works to build links between Cuban researchers and those elsewhere.

As Howard Davies put it (with perhaps a little hyperbole) on resigning from the LSE, "If we are only prepared to take money or we're only prepared to educate or train people from countries which have a Western-style democracy and governments that alternate every four years, then we're not going to be doing very much education and training."[58] Of course it may be appropriate to work in countries from the governments of which one would not take money. And one always needs to ask whether the conditions of work allow sufficient freedom that the work itself is not biased and try to minimize the extent to which providing access becomes the basis for coopting researchers into uncritical relationships.

These issues do not arise only in connection with international research and relationships. The United States and the United Kingdom have benefited from the work of universities partly because they were not and are not perfect themselves. And they sometimes present similar challenges to researchers who work with government agencies. There is an irony when some critics of international academic ties suggest waiting until potential partner countries achieve more ideal democracy or labor relations or institutionalization of human rights.

However, academic decisions should not be based solely on predictions of whether a country is changing for the better or a particular project will help that process along. They should also and crucially be based on whether chosen actions advance core missions of education, research, and intellectual debate. These missions — in sum, providing knowledge — constitute the core "value proposition" of universities, the premise on which their very existence is based. Where universities cannot do this, or cannot do do so in a public way but only for the proprietorial benefit of specific clients, they should question their engagements. Universities do other things; they run radio stations and hospitals and supply expert consultants to businesses and governments. But all activities not primarily advancing education, research, and intellectual debate should be considered much more optional, and pursued only when they do not get in the way of the core mission — and mainly when they advance it.

For many universities, internationalization became part of the core institutional mission. The LSE was the United Kingdom's leader in international higher education. It recruited prominent faculty members from outside the country. It developed a range of research programs with international emphases and a large portfolio of master's degree programs targeted especially at international students and more generally at students seeking international careers. It became an impor-

58. "UK University Ex-Chief on Libya Funding Controversy," CNBC, March 10, 2011, www.cnbc.com/id/42003472/UK_University_Ex_Chief_on_Libya_Funding_Controversy.

tant educational option for those seeking to work in the United Nations, in the proliferating field of nongovernmental organizations, and in international business and finance. And it recruited very strong international students from a wide range of countries. All this added reasons to try to raise funds internationally and to develop relationships enhancing work in diverse regions.

The LSE and the Monitor Group both faced public relations challenges when the Libyan civil war called their previous activities into question. Resignations and apologies were part of "brand management."[59] That Monitor operated as a separate firm insulated Harvard despite its close ties. Neither instituted a public inquiry. The LSE made significant moves like repurposing the QF donation to fund scholarships rather than activities of the Centre for the Study of Global Governance.[60] On March 3, the LSE announced an external inquiry.[61] The LSE thus responded promptly to the issue, but new facts gradually came to light over an extended period, prolonging public relations difficulties. Of course, for each organization this was more than just a public relations question; it had implications for management, morale, collegiality, and basic operations.

Complex matters can appear simple in hindsight. Not only is our vision clearer; time also takes contingencies out of the equation and makes certain possibilities appear to be simply the necessary path of history. In the spring of 2011 it was no longer a question whether the Qaddafi family might voluntarily play a leading role in reforming Libya, creating a more globally responsible country, possibly bringing democracy or at least the rule of law at home. Saif was perhaps slow to recognize this change in the structure of possibilities. But in any case it was a change. Between 2003 and 2008, there were different possibilities—even though there may have been good reasons to think the odds of Saif bringing democracy to the country were not especially high. It is precisely this uncertainty that makes

59. Efforts at self-exculpation by individual academics (notably Barber and Held) generally made matters worse for themselves, and in the case of those at the LSE, for their institution. Used to debates that go on for years without closure, academics may have a particularly hard time heeding the advice of crisis management experts, a large part of which amounts to "Disclose everything, apologize, visibly connect problems, and move on."

60. Eventually, at the end of July, the LSE closed the Centre, though partly for reasons unrelated to the Qaddafi gift.

61. The Woolf Report, cited above. The release of the report produced another flurry of publicity in late November 2011; the School announced that it accepted all of Lord Woolf's recommendations. These centered on "ethical and reputational risk" and called for adopting an ethics code. Woolf suggested that while universities may have high ethical standards, they generally lag behind and can learn from commercial corporations when it comes to implementing those standards in management structures.

open discussions representing diverse views important when major policy questions are considered.

It was during this earlier phase in the Qaddafi story that most of the Libyan visits by prominent social scientists took place and that the LSE and Monitor Group chose to build relations with the Libyan regime. It was not yet clear how badly the story would end. Indeed, not only were governments encouraging such relations, but organizations like Human Rights Watch were praising progress in Libya.

Still, issues were raised early on, at least at the LSE—notably in a memorandum written to its governing Council by Fred Halliday, a prominent recently retired international relations professor with expertise on the Middle East. Halliday did not argue against all contacts or connections, but asked for a distinction among different kinds of relationships: "While I am in favour of British government and business attempts to develop links with Libya, and support LSE work that is of a consultancy and advisory character, and while encouraging personal contact with whatever Libyan officials we meet, I have repeatedly expressed reservations about formal educational and funding links with that country." Halliday's concerns centered on the very real reputational risk—and seemed prescient by 2011 (and all the more poignant because he had died in 2010).[62] But reputational risk wasn't the only issue. The School also needed to consider how proposed projects fit—or didn't fit—with its core mission and what implications they posed for its internal operations. In the event, a series of separate decisions were made, incrementally committing the LSE to a much deeper and potentially more problematic engagement with Libya than most of its students or faculty realized and one its leadership would come to regret.

Academic Lessons

Qaddafi was a particularly prominent villain not only because he was bad, but also because to Western tastes he seemed weird. From his clothing styles to his rambling speeches to bringing his tent along when he traveled, he offered a target for lampoons as well as a focus for fear. This made him a much more attractive object of media attention than blander dictators. It was apt, thus, that Qaddafi's son should make a public relations campaign central to his effort to help his country and help position himself as a leader. And it was not surprising that intellectuals and academic institutions drawn into this public relations project would find

62. See his memorandum to the LSE Council of October 4, 2009, at www.opendemocracy.net/fred-halliday/memorandum-to-lse-council-on-accepting-grant-from-qaddafi-foundation.

themselves subject to much more scrutiny than those linked to less publicity-oriented clients (and less drawn to publicity themselves).

For individual scholars, the biggest issues are maintaining integrity: not knowingly dissembling and, perhaps harder, retaining a critical, analytic perspective.[63] Associating with the rich and powerful can be a temptation to modify intellectual judgments to keep the invitations coming.[64] This temptation is felt by intellectuals invited to Davos, the White House, and 10 Downing Street as well as those invited to Tripoli (and for that matter, it exists for those keen to win applause at the World Social Forum). Such visits can be sources of insight and information. But if the visitors are to remain serious intellectuals, they need to resist the temptation to adjust their views to please their hosts. And to be social scientists as well as intellectuals, they need not just to express personal opinions, but also to produce and share knowledge based on research.

No doubt there were individual lapses among those who visited Qaddafi—pride, naïveté, greed, or deficiencies of critical reason. Such lapses are not as rare among intellectuals as we might wish. But it isn't obvious that accepting an invitation to visit Qaddafi in Libya is an egregious example or even necessarily an ethical error. If intellectuals are to speak truth to power, conversations are generally a good thing. More generally, individual academics may pursue political commitments or simply seek opportunities to make money, though we should hope without sacrificing intellectual values to instrumental goals. One of the conditions of academic freedom is actually that universities be relatively neutral on political issues about which professors legitimately disagree. The decisions of individual

63. In an open letter to David Held, for example, John Keane argues that Saif Qaddafi was dissembling and that Held either must have known this or should have known this; the implication is that not addressing this clearly impugns critical judgment. See "Libya, Intellectuals, and Democracy." See Held's own "Personal Statement" from February 25, 2011 which describes Saif as "a young man who was caught between loyalties to his family and a desire to reform his country" and indicates that "my support for Saif al-Islam Gaddafi was always conditional on him resolving the dilemma that he faced in a progressive and democratic direction" (www.lse.ac.uk/Depts//global/PDFs/Libya%20-%20a%20personal%20statement%20from%20David%20Held.pdf). Yet this is an argument over whether Saif was sincere in his intentions to be a reformer. It does not address what must be the more basic questions for a university: whether he was admitted fairly and appropriately and whether critical analyses of his gift were given appropriate welcome and weight.

64. It is not enough to avoid lying, or even to say something critical. The deeper question is whether one begins, perhaps unconsciously, to make speaking in ways that particular audiences appreciate one of the factors in how one formulates intellectual judgments—even theories or statements of fact. For social scientists this is not just an issue of authenticity—as perhaps it is when critics accused Bob Dylan of selling out because he willingly left protest songs off his program for a well-paid concert in Beijing. It is an issue of how much confidence one can place in the core products of intellectual work.

academics to visit Muammar Qaddafi, as Fred Halliday emphasized to the LSE, are a very different matter from forming institutional relationships.

Taking funding for programs, providing services, and conferring honors all raise questions that need to be addressed in more institutional ways through careful, analytic review. The first issue for universities is making sure that flows of funds support and do not distort the agendas of research, education, and intellectual debate.[65] A university must raise enough money, raise it from appropriate sources, raise it with few or only acceptable strings attached, and raise it in ways that preserve the institution's capacity to set its own mission and agenda. These desiderata often clash, which makes it important that decisions about how to resolve tensions are informed by strong discussion representing different stakeholders and different points of view, and are communicated with reasonable transparency. Open communication ensures both that relevant issues and concerns are addressed and that the institution's core commitment to intellectual exchange and cooperation is sustained. Openness need not mean that no meeting is closed to the press—restricted publicity can be the basis for more effective debate—but it is crucial that contending perspectives are represented and welcomed. Nor do academic decisions need always to be made by popular vote; but decision makers need to listen and to be able to articulate reasons. It is important to encourage vigorous discussion about potentially controversial decisions and to have a clear account of actions and reasons to offer when controversy arises.

For universities to work in the current complex global environment requires making decisions with high levels of uncertainty. It is important that such decisions be made carefully, not casually, and with attention to the full range of issues involved. This should not rule out working under conditions much less ideal than academic leaders would choose. Likewise, universities need funding and must assess different sources of funding in terms of trade-offs, not simply abstract ideals. But funding creates a relationship, and there needs to be serious judgment of what kind of relationship any gift or contract creates. This means not just whether it ties the university's reputation to that of an unsavory donor, but whether it creates inappropriate conflicts of interest, interference with intellectual autonomy, or distraction from core academic mission.

Universities need money, but their success cannot be measured entirely in financial terms. Universities contribute to peace, security, prosperity, and other

65. A longer discussion could elaborate this framing of the core mission of universities. It might take up the question of where "service" fits alongside more directly intellectual agendas. It would certainly expand the term *research* to include scholarship and the maintenance of resources like libraries.

goals of governments, but they are not the diplomatic service, army, or ministry of finance. Their achievements are necessarily first and foremost intellectual. They educate students for each of these lines of work and many others. They develop research-based knowledge for each of these undertakings. And in both education and research, their work depends on critical thought and open debate.

Debate is also crucial to keeping attention focused on both ethical values and core academic mission when deciding what funding to accept, what programs to build, and what intellectual and academic connections around the world are worth strengthening. Guidelines are important, but every decision is case-specific, and cases are better understood when seen from multiple angles. Judging any international linkage depends on serious knowledge of the local context; judging any new program depends on assessing its impact on the university as a whole.

Universities do not have the choice of working in a world where money doesn't matter, where international competition for rankings isn't influential, or where it is not a challenge to reconcile the pursuit of fame or connections to power with the "internal" norms of science and scholarship. This places a premium on the ways in which they deal with the need to seek money. Likewise, academic institutions have considerable ability to confer honor and legitimacy, and they should neither squander nor abuse this; they should pay attention not only to what is being built but also to what is being justified. To make all these decisions well, a university needs to be clear about its core mission and attentive not only to risks but also to whether activities advance its ability to succeed in that mission.