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9. ABSTRACT This paper discusses national community development programs in general, and, specifically, one national community development program: Colombia's <u>Accion Comunal</u> . That program has been a modest success. It also points to uses of community action which go beyond what the Colombians attempted. The broad argument of the paper is that the Colombian experience shows that the general empowerment of communities-- providing them legal recognition, educational stimulation, and resources--can assist in the development of low-income farming communities. The national administrative reform law of 1958 included provision for recognition of elected Community Action Boards consisting of residents of each district. The government was to permit popular participation through these boards in such development activities as school construction and repair, health programs, construction of irrigation and drainage systems, low-cost housing, roads and bridges, agricultural improvements, recreational and cultural activities, and organization of cooperatives and labor exchanges. The Community Action Boards spread rapidly throughout most of Colombia. By 1966 an estimated 9,000 Boards had been formed, and half of them were functioning. The national budget appropriated more than 35 million pesos for community projects in 1966, plus a larger sum for funds for grants to the boards. Investment in construction projects organized by the boards was estimated at between 100,000 and 150,000 pesos, with about 60% of the investment provided by government matching funds. Current estimates are that the annual investment has risen slowly over the past five years. Approximately 1,000 schoolrooms are constructed annually by community action boards, as are several hundred feeder roads. However, the community action program has not been a panacea for the development of food production or for the welfare of the rural poor. Total agricultural production in Colombia has not increased dramatically in the period since institution of the program. The real value of output per hectare increased by 38% between 1958 and 1967		
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**SEMINAR ON SMALL FARMER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

**Community Action Programs and Agricultural Development:  
Reflections on the Colombian Experience**

by

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COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT:  
REFLECTIONS ON THE COLOMBIAN EXPERIENCE

By

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Paper to be presented at the Agricultural Development Council Seminar on Small Farmer Development Strategies, Ohio State University, September 13-15, 1971. The author is assistant professor of economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and consultant, Center for Community Economic Development. Research in Colombia was supported by the Foreign Area Fellowship Program. All views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the institutions mentioned.

The subject of this paper may seem anachronistic. In the days of the Alliance for Progress, community development was extremely popular. Students in the United States and abroad found prestige through community organizing. Practitioners of economic development planning touted community action as a panacea. Ten years later this sense of "a movement" has faded. Some government and private programs have been abandoned, others criticized as bureaucratic and wasteful. For agricultural development, attention has shifted to the development of new varieties, and the supply of inputs. When the "Green Revolution" is criticized for neglecting the poor, community development is no longer considered immediately as a lever for political or economic changes that will redress the balance.

Nonetheless, I do not come to bury community action. I shall argue rather that it has a place in rural development, and that it can be of use, both economically and politically, to low income farmers. I shall center my discussion on one country, and one national community development program: Colombia's Acción Comunal. This program is a modest success story. It also points to uses of community action which go beyond what the Colombians attempted.

Before beginning the analysis, a definition is in order. The terms "community action," "community development," and "community organization" are used in a wide variety of ways. They have been labels for everything from the efforts of local officials to attract business to communities-- through a variety of economic, psychological and social work programs for

development or the amelioration of poverty--to geographically-based political organizations of varying persuasion. For the present purpose I shall consider as "community development or community action programs" those institutional arrangements which (A) grant to the residents of neighborhoods or communities the right to mobilize resources locally and to act as groups for purposes of economic development or social welfare, and (B) support these community endeavors by:

- (1) giving legal recognition to communities as organized bodies,
- (2) educating or stimulating communities to take advantage of these new opportunities,
- (3) channeling complementary resources to the organized communities.

The emphasis in this definition--and in my account of the Colombian community action program--will be on the empowerment of communities, rather than on the financial mechanisms or on the methods of community education or social dynamics which have formed the focus of most accounts of community development. My argument, put broadly, is that the Colombian experience shows that such a general empowerment can assist in the development of low-income farming communities.

## II

The Colombian community action program granted organizational powers to communities, and to a lesser extent gave them material and promotional assistance. The national administrative reform law of 1958 (Ley 19) included a provision for recognition of elected "Community Action Boards (Juntas de Acción Comunal) consisting of residents of each district." These were eligible to be delegated "functions of control and vigilance over certain public services"

and "a certain intervention in the management of these." The government was to permit popular participation through these boards in a number of activities including school construction and repair; health programs and construction of health centers and public restaurants; construction and administration of irrigation and drainage systems, low-cost housing, roads and bridges; improvement of agriculture; encouragement of sports and recreational and cultural activities; and the organization of cooperatives and labor exchanges. Decree 1791 of 1959 added to this list adult education, reforestation, preparation of residents of overpopulated areas for migration, and the development of animal raising for dietary improvement.

These listed activities were not urged on the boards in any systematic way. The government created a National Division of Community Action which would certify as a Junta de Acción Comunal any board elected by an assembly of a rural or urban community, which filed certain papers. A few cities imposed political constraints on neighborhood boards, including parity between members of the Liberal and Conservative parties, membership by public officials, or participation in specific city programs. Most rural boards, however, were faced with no prior requirements as to composition or activities. In both urban and rural areas, however, an expectation was present from the earliest days of the program that the primary function of community action boards would be the organization of construction programs. Government matching funds were made available for some construction programs, including the building of farm to market roads, schoolhouses, and residential water supply and sewage systems.

The National Division of Community Action also organized, after some delay, a group of "community action promoters," or organizers who worked with and attempted to stimulate the community boards. Other extension agents were assigned to work with community boards by the Ministry of Health, the National

Institute of Agrarian Reform (INCORA), several regional (departmental) governments, the Peace Corps, the National Federation of Coffee Growers, and several other public, semi-public and private agencies. Some of these agencies stressed particular programs for the boards with which they worked; all shared at least some emphasis on construction programs. By the mid-1960's, there were more than 500 promoters, including 200 American and Dutch "volunteers," and 57 National Division agents. (The number has since been reduced.)

The Community Action Boards spread rapidly throughout most of Colombia. By 1966 the government estimated that nine thousand boards had been formed. Approximately half that many were functioning. Current government estimates are that sixteen thousand boards have been formed, or that nearly half of the identifiable submunicipal communities of Colombia have at least attempted to organize boards. In 1966, the national budget appropriated more than 35 million pesos (more than two million dollars) for community projects, and a larger sum for funds which could in turn make grants to these boards. Investment in construction projects organized by the boards was estimated at between 100,000,000 and 150,000,000 pesos, with approximately 60% of the investment consisting of government matching funds. Current estimates are that the annual investment has risen slowly over the past five years. In 1969, an investment of 300,000 pesos was cited by the government. Approximately 1000 schoolrooms are constructed annually by community action boards, as are several hundred feeder roads.

The community development program has not been free of institutional difficulties. Coordination between the many organizations involved in supporting projects or promoting community action has been poor. Even communication between the boards themselves and the National Division has been

difficult. Applications for matching funds generally require undue paper-work, and many are shelved while funds are allocated at times for political pork-barrel projects in the name of community development. Nonetheless, the institutional impact of this program was important in that prior to 1958 there was no organ of government for neighborhoods or rural communities at the submunicipal level. Municipalities (which combine towns and their hinterlands) were weak. Their governments, headed by mayors appointed from outside, and an often-inoperative city council, did not represent small farmers at all. What is more, for the ten years immediately preceding the enactment of Ley 19, many areas of Colombia had been swept by civil war and disorganized violence, and had no civilian government at all--much less elected leadership.

I have elsewhere attempted to evaluate the community action program as an overall economic effort. (Edel, 1969) This evaluation considered the construction programs of the community boards. Where similar projects had been built by community boards and government agencies, the boards' projects proved less costly. What is more, the uses made of the works constructed were sufficient to amount to a rate of return on the investment (including promotion costs as well as local and national contributions to the investment costs) of between 12% and 18%. In this calculation, estimated benefits included the savings on transporting produce to market by truck instead of by mule; the increase in production allowed by this transport saving; the value of literacy in farming as measured by the differential returns to illiterate and literate peasants in three villages; the value of primary education in terms of income for persons migrating to cities; and labor savings in water supply and in access to physicians' services. The calculations focus on Acción Comunal in much the same manner as Colombian officials do, and as

development economists' theories have done--as a source of capital accumulation. (Nurkse, 1953; Fei and Ranis, 1964) As such, community action in Colombia appears to have been economically justifiable. Some industrial capital investments have higher returns, but a program with a benefit/cost ratio greater than 2 at a 12% discount rate appears to belong in the government's investment portfolio.

The calculation of a rate of return to construction projects does not exhaust the effects of community action. From the viewpoint of agricultural development, and from the perspective of improving the well-being of low-income farmers, the use of roads, schools, clinics, water supply systems and generators may not be the most important effect of community development. The development of a local institution, and the experience gained by the community through the construction project, may also be valuable. In many cases, community boards first organized for construction projects go on to other tasks--including agricultural development efforts--when the first projects are completed. While no attempt was made to compute a rate of return to these efforts, evidence was available that many communities did learn from their experiences with community action.

Community board activities formed a Guttman Scale, with a coefficient of reproducibility of .90, indicating a statistically significant tendency of higher level activities to occur only in communities which had undertaken all lower-level activities. Activities of sixty-seven Juntas were scaled and yielded a ranking of activities from formation of a Junta and construction projects as the lowest two stages, through bazaars and other fund-raising or social activities, petitions for matching funds, religious

and charitable functions, health and recreational programs, agricultural and other economic development programs, educational programs and literacy courses, and presentation of petitions of grievances up through the most complex activities of the boards; participation in Federations of Juntas and the formation of cooperatives. The scale is summarized in Table I. Additional evidence that the scale represents learning process is found in the fact that communities whose Juntas had been founded most recently had (by 1966, when the survey was taken) advanced less far up the scale than communities organized earlier. The median scale score for communities, by date of foundation of their Juntas, was:

Date Founded	Number of Communities	Median Scale Level 1966
1962 or earlier	14	8.5
1963	13	7
1964	16	5.5
1965	12	5
1966	12	1

The means by which this learning process occurred, and the types of agricultural development program that emerged from it, are illustrated in the experiences of the rural communities of several municipalities which were studied in greater detail. The development of community action institutions and activities in two municipalities which received outside promotional stimuli, and three which did not, are summarized in an appendix to this paper. These case studies show the manner in which the community boards of the two promotional-target communities, and in the one non-target community in which community construction activities took root, entered into agricultural development activities. Individual farmers in

Table I

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES RANKED ACCORDING TO GUTTMAN SCALE

Rank	Activity	Communities Differentiated	Cumulative Total	Errors
10	Formed cooperative	4	4	0
9	Participate in Federation of Juntas	13	17	5
8	Petitions of greivances presented	5	22	12
7	Literacy program or other courses..	7	29	7
6	Agricultural, craft, housing or other economic programs	5	34	12
5	Health, recreation or athletic programs	10	44	12
4	Religious or charity programs, including surplus food distribution	7	51	14
3	Petitions for government aid to projects	3	54	6
2	Bazaars, parties, fund- raising events	4	58	7
1	At least one construction project	7	65	1
0	Formed Community Action Board (Junta)	2	67	0
		<u>67</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>76</u>

Total number of calls in matrix: 737  
 Coefficient of reporducibility: .90  
 Menzel's coefficient of scalability: .63

Source: Visits to communities and questionnaires to Peace Corps Volunteers.

these communities also seem to have been stimulated somewhat to greater innovative activity by their experiences. Similar effects have been reported in the Colombian community for which the community development experience is best documented, the vereda of Saucio. (Fals Borda 1955; 1961; 1971)

This evidence is fragmentary and for the most part circumstantial. It must be said that community action has not been a panacea for the development of food production in Colombia or for the welfare of the rural poor. Total agricultural production in Colombia has not increased dramatically in the period since the institution of the community action program. Nonetheless, total factor productivity in Colombian agriculture increased 16.78% (an annual rate of 1.7%) between 1958 and 1967. The real value of output per hectare increased by 38% over the nine years in the production of yucca, beans, plantains and brown sugar and 35% in the production of bananas and cocoa, over those nine years (price increases accounted for a small part of the increase). These are crops which, along with coffee and corn, are often produced in the intermediate-climate zones where community action was strongest. (Coffee yields rose slightly, but its price declines reduced real income.) The per acre value of corn production did not advance. Yields as well as prices declined for the principal cold-climate crop, potatoes, although yields (but not prices) advanced in corn and barley production, other important crops in the highland zones. Acción Comunal was slightly weaker in the highlands than in temperate zones, but inter-village differences are much more significant than regional variations. (Atkinson 1969, 1970)

A precise estimation of the effects of community action on agricultural production in Colombia will probably not be possible, even when

the next agricultural census is taken. The previous census, taken soon after the inception of the program, did not include estimates of agricultural production by municipalities. While the amount of community development activity by municipalities can be estimated roughly (by the number of boards or promoters; the extent of government appropriations to community boards; or the projects constructed and listed in a 1964 survey by the National Division of Community Action), the only agricultural indices with which this could be correlated would be changes in the percentage of land in different crops, or the increase in the proportion of farmers claiming to use fertilizers or tractors.

As for the impact of community development on the poor, the case studies in the appendix show quite clearly that owners of small farms rather than non-landowning farm laborers or sharecroppers were the principal participants in community action programs. They appear to have been the principal beneficiaries of its programs. A multivariate statistical analysis of factors correlated with the extent of construction by community boards in 96 rural communities confirms the correlation of activity with the prevalence of smallholding. (Edel, 1971) Even among these minifundistas and family-farm operators, the ability to capture the benefits of agricultural improvement may at times be limited, because of unfavorable credit or marketing conditions which transfer much of the surplus generated to middlemen.

Nonetheless, the limits of success which can be shown for community action do not appear to be as great as those affecting most other Colombian programs for small farmers (with the possible exception of some agricultural credit programs, which have never been studied adequately, and which as the case of Pitalito discussed in the appendix shows, can

also themselves be organized more efficiently when community action boards are functioning.) The agrarian reform program in Colombia has been limited in the number of farmers it has benefitted, especially compared to community action's extent. A recent study by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development shows the ineffectiveness of most programs for the development of cooperatives in Colombia. Similarly, a study by E. B. Rice (1971) of the effects of orthodox extension programs among small farmers in Colombia shows similar results. Rice studied the region in the Department of Boyaca in which the U.S. supported cooperative extension service had operated in the nineteen fifties. Ten years later, there was no significant correlation between the exposure of communities to the extension program and their present use of fertilizer. (Rice found similar results for servicios in a number of other Latin American countries as well. More positive results have been shown for the later ACAR program in Brazil by Ribeiro and Wharton, 1969).

A cautiously optimistic conclusion about the effect of development on agricultural production seems to emerge from the fragmentary evidence available from other countries. The Mexican agrarian reform, through the establishment of village ejido organizations to petition for land and to obtain credit from the Ejidal Bank, contains an element of community development in the sense of local empowerment stressed in my definition. The experience of this program for agricultural development has been much debated. More than the Colombian program, the Mexican program has led to the consolidation of local leadership into a structure of political bossism with some incentive at times to block innovation which would

widen the base of power within villages. The villages have also often received too little in land and other resources for effective agricultural production. At least through the nineteen fifties, the ejido was widely regarded as an agricultural failure.

Recent analysis of the 1960 agricultural census of Mexico shows, nonetheless, that agricultural productivity on the ejidos rose rapidly during the nineteen fifties. In some comparisons of resource use, the ejidos were even shown to make more efficient use of the resources at their disposal than other farms. The extent to which the community aspects of the ejido program rather than the mere availability of land contributed to the improvements of the nineteen fifties cannot be known directly, but Dovring finds a greater efficiency of the ejido than the non-ejidal small farm. (Dovring 1970; Mueller 1970). Of course, the ejido has not ended destitution in rural Mexico. Economically, it may now be falling behind again, as Mexican agriculture becomes more mechanized. But its contribution to the improvement of Mexican agricultural production at a time crucial for national economic development cannot be gainsaid.

Even the Indian community development program, the largest and according to many accounts the least successful of community development programs, may have some positive effects on the development of Indian agriculture. Although the institution of local empowerment in the program, the panchayat, has been limited in its functioning, and the promotional apparatus has generally been criticized for bureaucratic ossification, the apparatus has served to transfer some agricultural technologies to the village level. The United Nations Economic Commission

for Asia and the Far East (1960) found differences in productivity between villages in community development blocks and those not included. Elizabeth Whitcombe, who is presently studying agricultural systems in Uttar Pradesh, suggests some role for the community development blocks in spreading the technologies of the "Green Revolution." (It must be pointed out that Whitcombe believes that the technologies introduced were not appropriate to the region. A more diversified agricultural system, which she recommends, would be possible only if even more widespread multipurpose credit institutions and local experiment stations were introduced. Greater local variation might be beyond the capability of present Indian community development systems and older Anglo-Indian rural administration systems. Their introduction would require more local organization allowing for autonomous variation. (Whitcombe 1971)

Pilot community development programs elsewhere (including Comilla, Vicos and others) have also been described as leading to agricultural development, although they do not provide anything like a systematic sample of institutionalized community development programs. Finally, for a parallel from the noncapitalist block, it appears (on the basis of still fragmentary evidence) that the Chinese are leaving more responsibility to local village "work teams" and other local institutions than the other communist countries have done, and that the results are promising. (Bardhan, 1968) Once again, it must be pointed out that all of these results do not prove the effectiveness of community development, for the introduction of some improvements into small-farm agriculture. They are, however, what I consider to be evidence of considerable potentiality for productive local organization.

## III

Despite this evidence of potentiality, the effectiveness of community development is frequently questioned. The strongest attacks have been made by Charles Erasmus (1968) in discussing Latin American peasant agriculture, and by Daniel P. Moynihan (1969) in the somewhat analogous case of community action programs within the United States "War on Poverty." Both argue that community action's virtues were touted by a cabal of community developers; that the supposed positive results were cleverly designed to be unmeasurable; and that by claiming these gains, community developers in fact merely created opportunities for their own activities, with no resulting reduction in poverty or underdevelopment. A mood of skepticism and a reduction in programs are evident elsewhere without the ad hominem attacks.

What lies behind the present unpopularity of community action? I can think of several possible factors. The empowerment of communities and their self-direction of economic and learning efforts flies in the face of much of the economic ideology of both business and government. That uneducated and poor peasants, slum dwellers or manual laborers can manage their own affairs is an idea that seems to engender opposition among intellectuals and bureaucrats alike. Noam Chomsky (1969) has discussed how both liberal Western historians and Communist analysts alike were unable to recognize that during the Spanish Civil War the anarchist workers of Catalonia and Aragon were able to maintain order and economic activities in the areas they controlled. The Scanlon Plan experiments with limited workers management have been largely ignored in the United States, despite promising initial results. A similar

unwillingness to accept that peasant organizations can function economically may affect the response to community development.

Of course, the claims made by community development proponents themselves a decade ago were often so wild as to engender skepticism. The organizers promised a new culture and a thoroughgoing economic advancement. Erasmus and Moynihan have documented the extravagance of the claims. It may be pointed out, however, that much of the extravagance stemmed from a depreciation of peasant potentialities not unlike that of those who dismiss community action as impossible. That is, the peasant was seen as able to organize his own affairs--but only after a profound psychic transformation brought about by the program. Thus community development was described by program officials as "the stimulus given each individual to search into his innermost resources," or "the process in which cooperation and communication help individual community members learn their real value in society" or "a process designed to...make people conscious of their dignity and potentials to solve their problems...and become capable of making decisions by themselves." I have heard a middle-class Colombian, who helped promote one of the community boards described in the Appendix, say that before community action began the peasants "were vegetables; now they are men." The community organizers claimed their results were so dramatic because they thought they were dealing with vegetables.

Some economic writings, which have become more frequent recently, have insisted on the economic rationality of peasant cultivators, and attacked the model of psychological traditionalism. But, as I have argued elsewhere, the existence of price-responsiveness has, at least implicitly, been interpreted as an argument that an individual free

market alone will ensure development. (Edel, 1970; see especially Bauer and Yamey, 1957). In this form, the argument is no defense of community organization. Coordination of villagers by their own organizations, rather than through the impersonal workings of the "invisible hand" is seen as either impossible or unnecessary. Only in a few cases has the recognition that community action was not needed as a cure for "irrationality" or "traditionalism" been accompanied by the recognition that community organization or empowerment might be useful for other reasons.

One of those who reached this conclusion was Allan R. Holmberg. At first, his results as director of the Cornell project at Vicos stressed the role of values, including those of "dependence and submission" in maintaining backwardness. He discussed the anthropologists' role in promoting leadership and self-reliance until in the end "the Vicosinos had come of age." (Holmberg, 1960 ). However, shortly before his death, Holmberg again reported on Vicos, at the Agricultural Development Council symposium in Honolulu in 1965. In this report, there was little on values and culture, and much on land tenure and rental and credit terms. The institutions of the manor were seen as preventing development as well as exploiting the serfs. The Cornell project was presented as allowing the development of the Indian community because "it excluded other would-be wielders of power from Vicos for a period of time sufficient to permit the former Indian serf to achieve sufficient social and economic power and enlightenment to be able to defend their own interests." Within this experiment--which he now viewed as one in land reform--Holmberg could still present evidence of specific technical lessons the anthropologists had taught the Indian community. But the emphasis was

not at all on the ability of a community developer to change natives' personalities. (Holmberg and Dobyms, 1969)

At least one function for community organization, a political role, was seen by many of the proponents of community development in the early 1960's. But their political perspectives, too, have been factors in the recent loss of enthusiasm for community programs. Community organization was, a few years ago, touted as useful for their ends by representatives of radical and conservative positions alike. Both have since turned against the program.

The use of limited social reform and local organization to reinforce social stability has long been known to conservatives. The success of some Church-sponsored community and cooperative programs for this end has been documented--in the case of French peasantry--by Suzanne Berger (1969). In Colombia, the Catholic hierarchy supported the organization of credit unions and rural labor unions, and to some extent community action boards out of a desire to stabilize the countryside against the threats of violence and possible Communist influence. (Fals Borda, 1971). Much of the support for community action in the late 1950's and early 1960's stemmed from a desire, by the United States, to prevent the success of possible or actual Communist insurrections.

Counterrevolutionary community organization had some success in the Philippines (when combined, to be sure, with military efforts), and this success was used as an argument for a community-based diplomacy in other areas, notably in the best-selling novel, The Ugly American (Lederer and Burdick, 1958; see also Poston, 1962). An American community development expert who had worked in the Philippines was sent to Colombia (by an

organization later revealed as a recipient of funds from the Central Intelligence Agency) during the earliest phases of community action there. He tried to organize support for community action among private business interests, and a Private Sector Federation for Community Action was organized, which listed its aims as

to promote...democratic potential and concurrently  
to decrease vulnerability to Communist subversion;  
to maintain political stability, thus providing a  
favorable atmosphere for private domestic investment.

As late as 1964, General Edward G. Lansdale, another veteran of the Philippine effort, argued in Foreign Affairs magazine for the formation of pig-raising cooperatives as a bond between people and leaders in Vietnam. (1964)

Liberal opinion during the Alliance for Progress period, while not centering directly on the counter-insurgency uses of community organization, did see social and economic development, stemming from community action, as providing a meaningful alternative to revolution, for the world's poor. Both this optimism and the professional support within the government for community institutions in counterinsurgency faded in the light of events, particularly in Vietnam. Cooperatives did not prevent rebellion; indeed community development programs sometimes proved to be a mere smokescreen (or euphemism) for military operations. Government policy--even that of the Peace Corps--eventually turned from emphasis on community action to other programs when development was considered a goal. And the goal of development itself was increasingly challenged as an instrument of power politics by Rand Corporation analysts who claimed a zero or even negative correlation between development

and stability (Mitchell, 1967; Wolf, 1967). A similar rise and fall of support for community organizing as an establishment anti-poverty policy occurred in the United States. (Moynihan, 1969).

Opinions of community organization on the Left might have been expected to be the opposite of those of the Right, but this has not been the case. Some radicals in the early 1960's thought programs akin to community action might be a key to revolutionary change. In the United States, community organizing in the south by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and in northern slums by the Students for a Democratic Society was viewed as the key for attacking the structure of power. The Port Huron Statement of S.D.S. presented a view similar to much that was said elsewhere in community action programs:

As a social system, we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation, governed by two central aims; that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation. (S.D.S., 1962)

Community organization was seen as forming a movement of the poor to achieve this.

In Latin America, and in other underdeveloped areas, similar views were held. Perhaps the closest in spirit was the position of the University Movement for Community Action in Colombia, founded by Father Camilo Torres, sociologist and chaplain of the National University. Torres said on one occasion:

If we consider Community Action not as a government agency, but as a method for awakening the consciousness of majority groups, for organizing them to exercise pressure on decisions, we find it involves organizing the majority to have real power... If people are confronted with their real problems and organized to try to solve them themselves, within a system that does not

permit their solution, then whatever the intention of the organizer may have been, the people, having achieved a consciousness of what they want, will become a majority pressure group. Sooner or later the majority pressure group will institute a true democracy. (Torres, in SEDEC, 1966)

Early organizing efforts, however, did not bring the revolution, and in recent years, the principal proponents of this position have altered their views. Camilo Torres is dead, killed while participating in a guerilla campaign. The emphasis in Latin American revolutionary movements has shifted from the peasantry, among whom organizing appeared to be an appropriate tactic, to urban guerilla warfare. Some of the early SDS organizers have joined underground movements, others have moved to a variety of other strategic positions. An organization of former Peace Corps Volunteers has attacked that organization's efforts as counter-revolutionary. (For one Volunteer's account of his disillusionment see Cowan, 1970).

The political dissatisfaction with community organizing, like other dissatisfaction with community development, is, I believe, related in part to an underestimation of the potentiality of the communities themselves. To be sure, opposition by some establishment interests may stem from a realization that empowerment of local communities will lead to real redistribution of wealth and power. Some cases of abandonment of community organizing by the Left--such as the abandonment of cooperative organizing for armed resistance by some missionaries in Guatemala--were in turn forced by the violent opposition of the conservatives to organizing efforts. In other cases, however, a rejection of community organization and empowerment seems to me to stem from an unwillingness to believe that communities left to themselves will act in a "good" manner. The radical fears they

will not be revolutionary, and the moderate liberal "reform-monger" fears their demands for power will be disorderly and irrational, rather than an orderly quest for justice and democracy.

There is, of course, no solid evidence that community organizing can assist in the attainment of social change, of a sort which would transfer resources to poor communities while at the same time not precluding those social ideals of democracy and justice which (in their best moments) both the radicals and the moderate reformers of the nineteen sixties proclaimed. There is not even the web of circumstantial evidence which I have earlier cited to giving confidence that community development can assist in agricultural progress when resources are available to the empowered communities. (There is, to be sure, a long record of failures of other approaches either to social revolution or to reform from above. Paternalistic reforms do not appear to have done much for the peasantries of Latin America [Feder, 1970] nor has a revolution which did not base itself on--and indeed destroyed--rural local organization been notably successful among the peasantry of Russia.) But are there, at least, some straws in the wind?

In this regard, I will make a few final comments on Colombia, where I believe the organization of peasantry through community action programs has led to the beginnings of effective political force from the rural areas. This force may provide a basis for electoral social reform should the impetus for such a reform emerge from other sectors of Colombian society; it may take an eventual revolutionary turn if meaningful reform is not forthcoming; and it might also serve to protect the poor farmers (and community liberties) within any revolution that

may occur. For the present, this organization is limited. But it stands in contrast to previous periods in which what were apparently peasant uprisings were in fact directed entirely by small "counter-elites" which were easily co-opted (Fals Borda, 1969) or degenerated into purely local activities or into mere aimless violence.

One evidence of this change is the growth of federations of community boards in several regions of Colombia. These are particularly active in some of the regions where the violence was strongest in the nineteen fifties. They have, in a number of cases, made demands upon the government for improvement of services, enforcement of land reform laws, and an end to specific abuses. The National Director of Community Action once commented, "The government has received more complaints of dishonesty or failure by public employees through the Community Boards than by direct denunciations by individual citizens. The Minister of Justice told me that the Community Boards gave him more work than all the rest of the country with their petitions." In some cases the Federations have succeeded in obtaining the removal of government officials unfavorable to their activities, and in a few cases they have entered elector political activities and won seats on local councils.

A second evidence is the continued funding of community action projects by the Colombian legislature, which has attempted at times to reduce the promotional effort. The original institution of community action in Colombia was also fostered by community pressure, at the termination of the violence. Guzman and Fals Borda wrote at the time

The new consciousness of the rural residents is reflected in the petitions presented at the signing of peace treaties: schools, health posts, credit, roads, markets for agricultural

products, land, chapels and priests, peace to work, seeds, means of telegraphic communication, authorities who will respect them. These are elementary needs, but they demand them with the security that they have a legitimate right to them. (Guzman, Fals Borda and Umana, 1962)

The community action program, at least in part, was seen by the administration of Alberto Lleras Camargo as a minimum-cost method of meeting these needs. Once the Juntas de Accion Comunal were organized, they have demanded further funds and have had the strength to obtain them, at least to some extent. The Colombian legislature has often approved the formation of small "pilot programs" of various sorts, when faced with demands for reforms. In the case of Accion Comunal, however, they created a pressure group which could lobby for more support.

Some evidence of the pressure of the community boards on the prerogatives of the Colombian establishment may be found in the complaints of the latter. Some of these appear to be local instances of special pleading by local interests. Thus, the novelist, Eduardo Caballero Calderon, complained recently that community action has created a problem of confrontation between the Juntas and local authorities: "In Tipacoque, I represent the State as Mayor, but I have the Junta to contend with. Any request to the government has to be made through the Juntas. The Juntas are useful, as long as they do not oppose the municipal authorities; as long as the two understand each other the system works. But now there is grave disarticulation...The community action philosophy is good as a mechanism to assure popular participation, but not as co-government." (El Tiempo, Bogota, June 7, 1970). But then Caballero Calderon's earlier novel about Tipacoque was a nostalgic evocation of a feudal past in which the Patron dispensed justice from his hammock and intervened with the outside world for his peasants.

A more important sign is that the administration of Carlos Lleras himself attempted to weaken the power of the community action boards by creating several alternate channels by which government services were to be channeled to the peasants, thus circumventing the growing influence of the community action boards. Assemblies of Users of Government Services were created to coordinate programs of agricultural credit and supply; and a National Office of Popular Integration was set up to organize coordinate government agencies with local groups, (including community action boards). The latter office, which duplicated some of the functions of the National Division of Community Action, thus weakening the old promotional apparatus, has been limited in its effect. The Assemblies of Users of Government Services have, however, come into conflict with community action organizations in a number of regions, and have thus weakened the organization of popular pressure. This weakness was particularly apparent when a director of Agrarian Reform came under conservative attack in 1971, over the distribution of lands. The director sought to mobilize support for his position through the Assemblies of Users, but not through the community action boards, which he stated were only non-political agencies for mobilizing construction efforts. He did not succeed in mobilizing enough support to save his position.

There is no chance, of course, that the community action boards and federations of Colombia can become the dominant political group in Colombia. They have mobilized, basically, only one of the important strata (operators of small farms and minifundia, and some tenant farmers) of a rural population which has become a minority of the nation's

inhabitants. In some instances, community action boards or the cooperatives sometimes associated with them have become instruments for the individual advancement of some members of them alone. (Fals Borda, 1971) But this is not their main weakness. By becoming one pressure group within an established political order, the small-farmer group may make some gains, but, as Robert Paul Wolff (1965) has argued, the "pluralist" pattern of bargaining among organized and countervailing groups does not necessarily result in any meaningful redistribution of resources and power.

Nonetheless, as part of a wider movement for social restructuring, the Juntas and Federations of community action could be an important element. In Colombia, this appears to have been ignored by much of the organized Left. Gilhodes (1970) comments that the Communist party misjudged the importance both of rural unions created by the Church and of the local community boards created by the government "and thus became marginalized with respect to the peasant struggles of the lower Sinu (Cordoba) and of Magdalena." The same could be said of activities in other regions and of other organizations.

The conclusion, as I see it, must be stated as a set of contingent (as well as tentative) morals. Where development of small farms is accepted policy, and resources are to be made available to farmers in meaningful quantities, community organizations would appear to be an appropriate channel. Where resources are withheld, community action will not have massive economic effects, but I believe it has a role to play in coalitions for structural reform or social revolution. This advice is not for everyone, of course. It is rather more like one of the morals of the drinking song which includes separate last verses

directed to amorous students and jealous husbands. The decline of official support for community development in recent years indicates to me that jealous establishments already have drawn their moral.

## APPENDIX: MUNICIPAL STUDIES

This appendix presents brief descriptions of community development in five Colombian municipalities. These townships, like most in Colombia, contain several communities, including urbanized centers, dispersed rural communities called veredas, and (in some cases) rural nucleated hamlets. (Field work was carried out in 1966. Other visits to Cogua were made in 1962 and 1967.) Two of the municipalities studied, Cogua and Pitalito, were selected as having received outside promotional stimulus, at different levels. In both cases, considerable community action activity had resulted. Three other municipalities where little outside promotional effort occurred were also studied. The communities were those that had been reported as examples of farming in three separate regions by investigators of the University of Wisconsin Land Tenure Center--Tamesis, Contadero, and Cerete. Of these three, Tamesis had been able to organize some community development activities on its own. In Tamesis, as in Cogua and Pitalito, community construction activities led to some stimulus to the diffusion of agricultural innovation.

### Cogua (Cundinamarca)

Cogua is a municipality in the highlands ninety minutes by bus from Bogota. The population in 1964 was 8146, of whom 745 lived in the town and the rest dispersed in several veredas. Although the majority of the rural residents owned property, most of the farms were extremely small. Only 7.4% of registered properties were more than ten hectares, and 42.6% were less than one hectare. Wheat, barley and potatoes are the principal crops. Soils are generally adequate if fertilizer is used. Vegetables

can be grown with irrigation. Dairying is also a proven economic activity, but the majority of farms have no cattle, while some of the best pastures are absentee-owned. The residents supplement the returns from their minifundia with wage labor, either in agriculture or in the nearby city of Zipaquira.

The area of cold climate in which Cogua is located is generally considered to be marked by "peasant conservatism," although the mestizo population retains little traditional Indian culture. Older residents of Cogua claim a strong preference for rural life, while many young people return to the veredas after working in Bogota. Some risk-aversion is shown in a preference for the "en compania" system of sharecropping, in which the land owner puts up the labor as well, but grants a share to the partner who provides seed and fertilizer over the contracting of fixed debts. It is even possible to find examples of the pattern that Foster (1965) terms diagnostic of the "image of limited good;" in a neighboring town a man's success in business is attributed to a discovery of wealth in a cave.

The importance of this conservatism can be exaggerated. In a cross-sectional comparison of community development results throughout Colombia (Edel, 1971) highland communities proved to have invested slightly less than communities in intermediate altitudes, but the difference was not statistically significant. In Cogua, there is considerable evidence of an orientation toward commerce and change. Prices and their variation are a frequent topic of conversation. Although the residents of Cogua feel that one should not work on Sundays, this prohibition was ignored when a pea crop had to be harvested rapidly to take advantage of a

favorable market. Nonetheless, the community development effort directed toward Cogua has generally been oriented toward "inducing cultural change" in what is presumed by the developers to be an initially unprogressive environment. As in another highland town for which a comparable community development effort has been reported--Saucio (Fals Borda, 1961)--the community development effort has led to an acceleration of agricultural and economic progress, although it is doubtful that there would have been a complete stagnation in its absence, given the increasing influence of the Bogota market.

Community action in Cogua began in 1960 in the vereda of La Plazuela. Several absentee owned dairy farms share a road with a number of peasant farms. A Bogota doctor, who acquired one of the farms, began medical consultations on his days in the country. He offered to turn over the fees he received for the service to the vereda, for community projects. A community action board was formed, with the doctor as its first president. It built a chapel, added several rooms to the existing school, and constructed a community center with space for the medical treatment and for the eventual installation of a store. Funds were raised through festivals, as well as from the medical fees, while the local residents donated the labor.

Over the years, the doctor withdrew from active participation in the Junta, although his medical services are still a source of funds. Through his initial contacts, in part, the vereda received some donations of fertilizers for its community store, and a gift of an electric generator from the United States aid mission. Later, leadership developed from within the vereda. In 1967, the president was a young man who had worked

in Bogota for a while, and returned home to start a farm. He had become an innovator in vegetable growing, and had acquired a truck, which he bought initially with loans from a credit union formed by the community action board. He had repaid the loans and was able to profit while underselling outside truckers in the transport of local crops to the Bogota market. Under his leadership, the community action board was organizing agricultural fairs, extending electrification, and negotiating for the purchase of some of the absentee owned farms, for resettlement of the owners of several hillside minifundia onto flat lands.

The initial success of La Plazuela, and the publicity it received, led to the assignment of a National Division promoter and of Peace Corps volunteers to Cogua during the first years of these programs. These agents concentrated on the other rural veredas. A Junta organized in the most isolated vereda, Paramo Alto, constructed a road to Zipaquira. The project was delayed by problems in obtaining a surveyor, and by debates over the route with some of the absentee dairymen. After two years, the project was completed, and allowed the vereda residents to sell potatoes and milk commercially for the first time. In Casablanca, a vereda located near the main road in the valley rebuilt a schoolhouse to allow a second grade to be added. Later, the Peace Corps provided funds, through the school-to-school program, for three more grades to be added. Several other veredas also built schools or water supply systems. In the urban center of Cogua, a community action board was also formed, which made some additions to the water supply and sewer systems.

In all of these community action efforts, the emphasis was almost entirely on construction of public facilities. Although the promotion meetings were often accompanied by a considerable amount of rhetoric about the need to look to the future, democracy, and the dignity of man, the thrust of the promoter's activities was concerned with specific projects. The school-to-school program in Casablanca was, in fact, offered to the community without any prior request from the vereda for further school construction beyond the already completed room for the second grade. (One result was that the new school received much less voluntary labor from the residents than the other community action schools built in Cogua.) As a result of this emphasis on construction, it is not surprising that after three years the Peace Corps volunteers reported to their supervisors that "people are nearing the end of what they think Accion Comunal to be: the building of schools, aqueducts and other physical projects through their efforts and some outside financial help." The Peace Corps, they said, was unable to present any further aspects of community development. The volunteers and the National Division's promoter were accordingly transferred out of Cogua. The veredas continued working on their projects and in some cases began new construction, after their departure.

Community development in Cogua received a new impetus in the second half of the 1960's from a private organization, the Colombian Rural Reconstruction Movement. This organization was supported by several Colombian bankers and modelled on the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement. It established a center in Zipaquira, to provide specialized agricultural and medical services to several surrounding

municipalities, and stationed rural development workers in three of the veredas of Cogua. The MCRR discovered quickly that it was easiest to achieve results in those veredas, particularly in Cogua, that had already been involved in community action projects. In the surrounding municipalities, there had been less of a prior promotional effort. In one town, Nemocon, there had also been opposition to community action boards by the parish priest. The MCRR found in some cases it had to organize Juntas for simple projects, before its complete program could be carried out.

One of the MCRR programs has involved agricultural demonstrations of new seeds, fertilizers and techniques in the veredas. For these demonstrations, farmers make plots of land available for planting, using the new methods. MCRR has kept records of the numbers of volunteers, and the numbers of demonstrations, which show the greater response in veredas of Cogua than in veredas of Nemocon, among the communities in which MCRR has extension agents stationed. In Cogua there were also requests for demonstrations in veredas without MCRR agents stationed there. This did not occur in Nemocon, where the attempt to introduce new fertilizers and crop varieties through experiments on individual farms led to suspicion, and demonstrations were possible only after intensive efforts by the promoters. A comparison of the results is made in Table II. The results in terms of eventual higher yields were not yet known at the time of the study. But the earlier experience of La Plazuela, before the arrival of the MCRR, attests to some effect of community action on agriculture in Cogua, even before the formal demonstrations began.

In La Plazuela, the Junta and the doctor had invited agronomists

Table II

PARTICIPATION IN MCRR AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT PROGRAM  
IN COGUA AND NEMOCON, CUNDINAMARCA, 1966

<u>Veredas</u>	<u>Number of persons undertaking experiments</u>				<u>Persons asking to participate who could not be attended</u>
	<u>new potato variety</u>	<u>different wheat varieties</u>	<u>other grains</u>	<u>different fertilizer varieties</u>	
<b>VEREDAS OF COGUA WITH PROMOTORS</b>	(Average of 19 applications/vereda)				
Casablanca	2	1	0	7	11
Redamontal	1	0	0	1	16
Quebradahonda	5	0	1	6	7
<b>VEREDAS OF COGUA WITHOUT PROMOTORS</b>	(Average of 4 applications/vereda)				
El Altico	0	0	0	0	4
El Olivo	0	0	0	0	2
Patasica	1	1	0	1	0
La Plazuela	2	2	1	3	0
<b>VEREDAS OF NEMOCON WITH PROMOTORS</b>	(Average of 7 applications/vereda)				
Astorga	4	2	0	0	1
Moguá	4	3	0	0	0

Source: Reports by the staff of the Movimiento Colombiano de Reconstrucción Rural, 1966.

to give lectures early in the nineteen sixties. According to one of the agronomists, who later joined the staff of MCRR, several residents were interested in the talks and tried to adopt the methods suggested. The result can be seen in an increase in potato yields and increased rotation of potatoes with an extremely profitable crop, green peas. According to the 1960 census of agriculture, 78.1 hectares in the municipality were planted in peas. In 1966, a survey of only some veredas by the MCRR found more than twice this area in peas. Much of the increase took place in and around La Plazuela. In 1961, a survey by the Junta there indicated around 60,000 kilograms production in La Plazuela and two neighboring veredas. In the 1966 harvest, estimates of the number of truckloads of peas marketed from these veredas indicated production had at least tripled. The 1961 survey also showed yields of five to ten cargas of potatoes for each carga planted. In 1966, yields had risen to an average of twenty to one. This had in part been due to increased expenditure on inputs, but rotation with peas and more efficient planting methods were also a factor.

The MCRR program in Cogua has included a wide variety of activities including experiments with new varieties of potatoes and fertilizer, literacy classes, home economics instruction, vaccination of animals, medical and dental clinics, and excursions (including a trip by one young woman to an international meeting of 4-H club leaders in Brazil, which probably made her the first resident of Cogua to travel that far.) Community action construction projects have also continued. The most ambitious activity was the formation of the integral agricultural cooperative of Cogua. This institution was proposed by the MCRR to the leaders of the community action boards of the different veredas. They

agreed to the formation of a cooperative which would begin operations with a store selling drugs, veterinary supplies and fertilizers and agricultural supplies, in the town of Cogua.

Close to ten thousand pesos (\$500) was subscribed for the drug store by the vereda organizations, and the cooperative was inaugurated in a storefront lent by the parish. At the inauguration, the Minister of Health contributed 5000 pesos worth of drugs and acclaimed the project as a result of the administration's program of national transformation. The Juntas, however, showed who the principal authors of the work were by raising four times that money in the two day fiesta that commemorated the event. The largest amount was raised by a children's beauty contest in which each vereda entered a candidate and a decorated float. Votes were sold, with the money used to subscribe more shares of the cooperative, to be held by the Juntas. The festival raised enough money for the opening of the fertilizer section. Within the next year, twenty thousand pesos were subscribed in individual memberships, and a consumer goods section was also opened.

The community development of Cogua illustrates the succession of different activities, including agricultural programs, characteristic of Accion Comunal. The process of learning, or of increased confidence from successful projects which allows the undertaking of more complex activities, is illustrated in many ways: the success of MCRR where building projects had come first; the success of a municipality-wide cooperative, where five years earlier a federation of vereda juntas had been impossible; the organization of a store and credit union by La Plazuela, which at its initial organization had failed to establish

a suggested milk cooperative, because at that time nobody was willing to trust other residents with that much money. The increasing prosperity of the community is, to be sure, the result not only of community action, but also of the opportunities available where peasants are landowners (albeit smallholders), and where urban markets and jobs are near. The promotion received has been among the most intensive--and expensive--of that given any municipalities in Colombia. And the amount of cultural or psychological change involved may be overestimated. The doctor at La Plazuela argues that before community development, the peasants "were vegetables; now they are men," and the confidence of village leaders in dealing with outsiders has visibly improved over the past decade. The active members of the community, however, see the changes as stemming from their own actions and their own initial desires and abilities to learn. The experience of other municipalities also studied shows that some of the same learning process, including the spread of agricultural information, can occur without as intensive a promotional effort directed toward cultural change as that which was present in Cogua.

#### Pitalito (Huila)

The municipality of Pitalito has received a promotional stimulus more typical of the Colombian pattern. The National Division has never stationed a promoter there, but several Peace Corps volunteers have worked there. Agricultural extension workers from the National Federation of Coffee Growers have devoted some attention to community action. The Agrarian Reformer Institute, INCORA, has also operated a supervised credit program in Pitalito, which included on its staff a community development promoter. However, much of the impetus for the formation

of community action boards preceded the activities of these community development agents.

Pitalito is an isolated region, in the south of the Department of Huila, to which many farmers fled during the violence of the 1950's. The Catholic-oriented National Agrarian Federation (FANAL), which was interested in combatting the violence, had established an agricultural labor union in Pitalito during this period. In addition, self-help schools were organized by the Catholic-action educational radio station, Radio Sutatenza. The first Junta de Accion Comunal organized in Pitalito was formed in 1959 by leaders of the labor union, who learned of the community action laws from Radio Sutatenza. Before 1963, when the first Peace Corps volunteers were stationed in Pitalito, several other veredas also formed community action boards. Most of these built schoolhouses, with aid from the National Federation of Coffee Growers in some cases, or organized evening literacy classes, in collaboration with a literacy team from the ministry of education which was in the area during 1962 and 1963.

The number of community action boards increased after Peace Corps activities began. Most of the veredas organized were in coffee-growing areas or newly-settled lands on the hills beyond the valley in which the town of Pitalito is located. Most of the farms in these areas are owned by resident smallholders, while farms in the valley are more often owned by urban residents. The building of access roads became the most important activity of community action in these newly organized veredas, although the construction of schools and water supply systems also took place. By the time the first Peace Corps volunteers finished their two

year tour of duty, thirty of the sixty veredas of Pitalito had organized juntas. Another fifteen juntas were organized the next year, when the INCORA promoter began his activities in Pitalito.

By the middle of the nineteen sixties, community action programs in Pitalito began to branch out from construction to the provision of agricultural and other services. A second group of Peace Corps volunteers was sent to Pitalito, this time working for a national nutrition program, which seeks to introduce vegetable gardens and rabbit and poultry production for home consumption. The volunteers found the villagers were receptive to their work, in part because they had been interested in vegetable growing by Radio Sutatenza. But the limits of radio description for agricultural extension were also apparent: after a demonstration one farmer told the volunteers how glad he was to see what a carrot was, after hearing it praised on radio for so many years. The community action apparatus proved useful in the demonstrations, because they could gather people for meetings. In one group of veredas, a volunteer who kept statistics organized seventy home gardens and two dozen rabbit raising projects in a year. Other volunteers reported a high demand for vegetable seeds they sold, and a slowly increasing demand for rabbits. All reported considerable initiative by the veredas in organizing demonstrations and experimenting with new ways of planting seeds. In addition, presidents of the Juntas of several veredas were given rabbits and installed demonstration hutches, which were more effective than the Peace Corps volunteers' own demonstration rabbit-hutch in the town of Pitalito in arousing interest in the program. The volunteers reported

they did not know whether the residents accepted the new practice at first due to an interest in rabbits as such, or only because it was seen as an honor being given to vereda leaders. But the practice took hold.

A similar, and economically more significant, experience was felt by INCORA's supervised credit programs. The credit supervisors, who at first had difficulty in finding clients, discovered eventually that it was more effective to accompany the community action promoter on the INCORA staff to meetings of vereda assemblies and to explain their programs there, than it was to go from house to house unannounced. In addition, many of the Junta leaders were among the first applicants for credit. Whether this took place because activity in community projects had increased their receptivity to change, or whether they were farmers who would have been more receptive to credit anyway (because of ambition or farm size), was not clear. But whether community action increased receptivity or not, the community action institutions at least served as a channel for communication. To some extent, extension workers of the Coffee Growers Federation also made use of the community action boards to enable them to contact more farmers.

Eventually as well, the community action boards of Pitalito formed their own extension program, on a small scale. They did this through a Federation of Community Action Boards, which was organized by one of the leaders of the agricultural labor union. This man, a small farmer and a migrant from one of the areas of violence, had participated in several national courses and seminars on agricultural organizations and community development. He had participated also in a tour of the United States for FANAL agrarian leaders. He is obviously a leader oriented toward

politics, from what would, in some other countries, be termed a Christian Democratic perspective. After helping to organize a credit cooperative in Pitalito, he decided that community action was more likely to both attract a following and provide services to the small farmers than was trade-unionism and transferred his attention to organizing a municipal-wide Accion Communal organization. After a failure to form a Coordinating Junta of professionals and city officials to work with the veredas, he used the occasion of the visit of some church officials to call a meeting of all of the Accion Comunal presidents from the veredas. These formed an association on a one-vereda, one-vote basis (with the INCORA promoter, a priest and one of the Peace Corps volunteers as advisors).

The association has as its expressed purpose

the coordination of all the Community Action Boards in the municipality, the technical orientation of all programs of work they carry out, and the representation of them with the official and private institutions to obtain aid and technical assistance for the different programs that they have.

Part service agency and part nascent political machine, the association has lobbied for more government matching funds for Pitalito's juntas, has exerted pressure on large landholders for the granting of rights of way and the contribution of funds for roads, and has conducted negotiations with some private enterprises, (such as bus lines, over issues of routes and fares). Through fortnightly meetings of the vereda presidents, the association provides an effective means of communication among the veredas, which has been used by a number of government agencies for spreading word about their programs. A newspaper distributed through the Juntas and a program on the local radio station also are used for this communication. The association also was able to take over the

task of promoting the formation of Juntas in new veredas and to assist the veredas with the paperwork required of community action boards.

In the agricultural area, the association began its activities as a service to the member Juntas, and as a means of keeping their allegiance. It has organized agricultural exhibits, and through donations from CARE and other sources it has acquired agricultural equipment which it lends to the veredas. But its most ambitious agricultural activity, at the time of my study, was a program of agricultural demonstrations. These began when the municipal government allotted one thousand pesos for the observance of a national Peasants' Day in 1966. The original plan for the observance included speeches by city officials and little more. Association leaders after considering use of the occasion for a demonstration of strength through a rally, demanded that the city give them the money instead, for organization of appropriate ceremonies in the veredas, instead of in town. Two officials of the association were sent to the national experimental farm of the Coffee Growers' Federation, for training in methods of cultivation. The thousand pesos were invested in fertilizer--and further donations of fertilizer were given by the Coffee Growers--and a program of visits to veredas was begun. In each vereda, the local Junta was asked to select a centrally-located coffee farm, which was in need of care, and to invite all of the farmers of the community to a demonstration of proper methods of fertilizing, weeding and pruning coffee, and using shade trees. The demonstrations were held weekly for as long as the original supplies of fertilizer lasted and continued thereafter on a less regular schedule, as fertilizer became available or as INCORA or other agencies suggested new topics for demonstration.

in the case of the experiments of the MCRR in Cogua, it was too early to tell at the time of the study what the effects of community action in Pitalito would be on agricultural productivity. But the development of community action institutions had certainly increased the efficiency with which new inputs and techniques could be diffused in the municipality. Whether the political activities of the federation of Juntas would itself lead to greater availabilities of assistance or resources either for community projects or for individual small farmers remained to be seen as well.

#### Tamesis (Antioquia)

Community action in Tamesis, a coffee-growing municipality mostly lying in the temperate climate zone, was first organized in response to the violence of the nineteen fifties. Veredas with different political affiliations had been at war with each other for several years when a new priest--a native of Tamesis--was installed. He began searching for ways to restore peace, and after two years of preaching in the veredas, seized on formation of community action boards when these were suggested by Law 19. The priest's records, in the parish files, provide some glimpses into his approach. Organizing one vereda to construct a chapel, he comments

all the people were interested. We spoke especially of the problem of violence and communism...The chapel is secondary. The undersigned is more interested in uniting these naked and ignorant people, and forming concepts in them. The ground is hard, but by the grace of God it can be plowed.

Some meetings yielded no results "because of the special conditions of social unrest." In other veredas there was an "excellent will to work, and many confessions and communions." By 1963, eighteen Community Action

Boards were functioning; several chapels and water supply systems had been built; over 100 literacy classes had been organized using the Radio Sutatenza broadcasts; seventeen new schoolrooms were in operation, and the violence was largely gone. The priest organized a municipal-wide Central Junta of Community Action, composed of vereda presidents and some municipal officials. But then the priest was transferred to another parish. His successor continued to visit veredas, but only to take up collections for projects in town, including the repair of the church, which had been damaged in an earthquake. The rural residents, seeing this as a drain on their resources, simply stopped meeting. The central Junta disintegrated. (It was at this point that Havens study of Tamesis was made, and showed, not surprisingly, there was no consensus about the aims of community action. A year earlier there would have been a consensus that the aims were pacification and physical rebuilding of the rural areas. The original aims had been met by 1963, and leadership had been interrupted before a second phase could be securely begun. (Havens, 1966)

Only after years in which no community action projects took place did a new priest and mayor attempt to stimulate new community projects. They hired the leader of one of the veredas--a young man who had taken a course run by the Catholic educational radio station for rural leaders--as a locally-supported promoter. He also became, for a time, the president of the credit union previously organized by the parish. A Peace Corps volunteer was also assigned to Tamesis for a brief period. This new impetus led to a revival of community action boards in several of the veredas, and to a number of new construction projects. The efforts were smaller than those in Pitalito or Cogua, to a considerable

extent because of a lack of resources. The economy provided less cash to small farmers than that of Pitalito or Cogua, and the government made less in the way of matching funds available. Even though under Antioquia's regulations, public works agencies were supposed to lend their vehicles and bulldozers to community action boards on weekends and holidays, veredas trying to take advantage of this law found that there were no public vehicles near enough to make the law meaningful for them. Finally, after a further change of priest and mayor, the local leader was attacked as a heretic and removed from his post.

Even this sporadic and weak development of community action had had some effect on agricultural extension programs in Tamesis. Like the INCORA agents in Pitalito, the practicos of the National Federation of Coffee Growers in Tamesis say that it is easiest to maintain contact with farmers when they are organized into community action boards. The extension worker complained at having to disassociate himself from community action during the period after 1963 when the juntas were seen as collection devices by the new priest. Even during this period, however, a surviving junta in one of the more isolated veredas petitioned the Coffee Growers Federation to send a home economist to their section of the municipality. After the change of priests in 1965 the Federation resumed contact with the juntas, and the home economist was sent. In several veredas, most families began home gardens under her direction. The isolation of Tamesis has been a problem in this program, however, as it has been for the acquisition of vehicles, because there is no reliable local source of packaged seeds.

Contadero (Narino)

Contadero is located in the cold climate zone of the Narino highlands. In this region, there was a tradition of projects, such as road repair or church construction, before formal community action was introduced. Such work was always at the direction of the priest or some similar traditional authority. Community action in Contadero did not change this system. Projects have been constructed only when materials were donated from the outside and when some institutional leader directed the project. One mayor induced the town to repair a road by setting up a junta with his brother as president. Another granted 1500 pesos to the vereda where he had a farm. A junta was formed there and repaired the school. Two other veredas repaired schools when an INCORA promoter visited their briefly and gave them materials for that purpose. But no continuing organizations have been set up, and none of the several agencies that have promoted community action elsewhere has assigned agents to attempt to develop active and self-reliant community action boards in Contadero.

That these boards have not been generated locally, as in Tamesis, even without outside promoters, may be related to the absence of the pressure of violence, or to the preexistence of a traditional cultural difference between highland Narino and Antioquia. (Rogers and Neill, 1965) found higher levels of achievement motivation in Tamesis than in communities of Narino.) Nonetheless, some introduction of new agricultural technology proved possible in Contadero in an experiment by members of the Wisconsin group. (Adams and Havens, 1966; Ramirez and Adams, 1966) The introduction of new corn varieties proved to require use of the

traditional channels of communication that did exist--that is, the influence of the parish priest. Comparing this experiment with the experience of agricultural diffusion in Cogua, Pitalito and Tamesis suggests that the same function of spreading information in an acceptable form was here fulfilled by the parish that elsewhere was more effectively and eagerly carried out by the Juntas. How much additional agricultural innovation could have been carried out had community action been promoted in Contadero cannot be guessed. Whittengarger and Maffei (1966) found that in Contadero participation in such community development programs as existed was correlated with information seeking, but not with actual adoption of credit or innovations.

#### Cerete (Cordoba)

Cerete is located on the tropical coastal plains. Large farms and cattle production predominate. A number of Juntas were established after the regional promoter for Cordoba visited the municipality several times, and a group of university students spent a summer working in community development. Projects were carried out in several veredas, but the Juntas fell apart within a year. A similar round of activity occurred a few years later under stimulus of CARE and INCORA, but again no lasting organizations survived after the end of the brief period of promotion.

Cerete is an area of latifundia, with few small farmers. (Havens, Montero and Romieux, 1965). This, just as the extreme minifundio of Contadero, appears to be an unfavorable circumstance for community action. A comparison of the five communities studied in detail, as well as a statistical cross-sectional analysis of a larger number of communities (Edel, 1971), suggests that Accion Comunal has largely been successful

among operators of small to medium sized farms, rather than among landless laborers, extremely poor minifundio owners, or owners of large properties. The same groups affected most by community action would appear to be the groups that could be most benefitted by the spread of agricultural techniques beyond the sphere of those large farmers already able to use them. In Cerete, operators of large farms do have access to modern technologies when they choose to engage in cotton production rather than extensive ranching. Community action would appear, from these case studies, to be a program which--in the Colombian case at least--cannot benefit all rural residents, and probably not the poorest rural residents. But it does affect a large number of low to moderate income farmers, and these it has benefitted both through construction projects, and through the opening of channels for communication of agricultural techniques.

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