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9. ABSTRACT

In 1975 A.I.D. issued guidelines for assessing proposed projects for their social implications: social-cultural compatibility, spread effects, and social impacts. The guidelines are not easy to apply to any particular project, since they were written to cover all types of projects. Moreover, they offer little guidance for identifying the pertinent features of the society in question. While the guidelines can be criticized, they formulated for the first time, a standard by which to define and judge the soundness of projects in terms of their impacts on the social organization of the communities they affect. What now must be done is to accumulate field experiences and codify them into approaches appropriate to various types of problems. This paper describes one such effort, begun in Thailand and used in two very diverse settings in Honduras and Senegal. This approach, though probably not applicable to all types of development projects, has the potential for clarifying dimensions of a people's social system in relation to the economic, ecological, technical, and managerial dimensions of their life. The only way in which social analysis can make its full contribution to improving development projects is through an effort to relate the social aspects of a project with the institutional, ecological, technical, and economic aspects. This step has not yet been undertaken because it is unfamiliar, takes time, and cannot be intellectually coordinated by any one of the disciplines implied in the five aspects of social soundness.

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SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The time is appropriate -- two years, many diatribes, and much experience after the initial appearance of the AID guidelines for social soundness analysis -- to assess the problems and prospects for this junior tradition in development analysis. The purposes of this paper are first, to highlight the basic issues and main ingredients of the 1975 AID social soundness guidelines (summarized in Annex A) and second, to suggest a more coherent focus for getting a handle on the main features of the social and cultural life of intended beneficiaries of a proposed project. This focus is one of identifying the pertinent features of the social setting of a proposed project as comprising a social system (a suggested, partial outline appears in Annex B).

Many people in development agencies agree that social cultural factors are significant to the success or failure of development projects, and some assert that these factors are of prime importance. But these assertions usually occur only in private conversations rather than in official project papers; or if they do, only in the preamble, not in the project design and budget. This discrepancy between profession and performance is the product of a long, uneasy relationship between project designers (who are usually not analysts of social and cultural organization) and social scientists (who are rarely project designers). Both sides have blamed the other for past mistakes, uncooperativeness and narrow-mindedness. One result of this sorry relationship has been that the basic definition of development problems and solutions in project analysis and design has rarely included any

explicit social cultural dimensions, despite the personal belief in their importance by many development officials.

It was a significant break with this dismal history when the 1975 AID guidelines for project soundness introduced an explicit framework for analysis of social implications of proposed projects. The guidelines embraced this complex task in order to improve the soundness of projects in human propositions, not to complicate unnecessarily the task of analysis: social factors are not "...hoops through which the project must jump; rather they are seen as real features of the terrain on which the project is proposed to operate."¹

It is especially clear and, I believe, increasingly acknowledged that social factors are indeed very "real features of the terrain" when the proposed project is addressed to people who are poor and rural: outside the main stream of previous national or international concern. The new emphasis on social soundness considerations is a natural, essential part of the new AID effort to provide development assistance more directly to the poor majority of the people.

The 1975 AID guidelines present the idea of social soundness in the form of three basic issues:

I Social Cultural Compatibility

- Who are the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project?
the possible victims (who might suffer)?
the possible benefactors (who might pay)?²
- In what ways are the main features of these peoples' lives and the main features of the proposed project mutually adaptable? In what ways are they not?
- What could be done to enhance mutual adaptability?

II Spread Effects: Diffusion of Innovation

- How likely are the proposed project results to diffuse beyond the initial intended beneficiaries:
without further project inputs?
by replication - with further inputs?
- How durable are the proposed project results likely to be:
among the initial intended beneficiaries?
among later, wider populations?
- What might be done in the initial project to enhance spread and durability of its results?

III Social Impact: Equity

- How would the main benefits and burdens of the project be distributed among the types and strata of people affected (e.g. rich and poor, farmers and landless...)?
- How could the project benefits be distributed more effectively among the poorer people in the intended beneficiary population?
- What might be done to lessen the burdens on project victims or benefactors, especially poor people?

This summary contains some modifications of the 1975 guidelines:

1) The idea of identifying types of project victims and benefactors is added. 2) Emphasis is shifted from the compatibility between the people's life and the project to mutual adaptability between them. Compatibility implies a fit (perhaps by happy accident) between two entities that are fairly static. The dynamic concept of adaptability is more appropriate since project designs can be adapted as needed, and human societies have adapted to their constraints and opportunities. 3) The idea of durability of project outcomes is added to the issue of spread effects. This concept does not lend any special gift of prophecy regarding future project impacts, but it does focus on the search for project design features to initiate self-sustaining results. 4) The final questions under each of the three main issues on the previous page pose the additional task of looking for ways to improve project design regarding mutual adaptability, spread and equity. This addition derives from my position that the purpose of doing social soundness analysis is not only to assess the anticipated human impacts of a proposed project, but also to search for ways to enhance the project design as a social undertaking. Some of the initial resistance to social soundness analysis may decline if this analysis can reveal specific ways in which to make projects socially more successful.

Some of the critical response to the new social soundness guidelines, given the inherent complexity of the problems involved, has concerned the difficulty of applying the guidelines in studying any particular project. Written to cover all types of projects, the guidelines do not seem to

cover any given project. The guidelines offer numerous alternative questions to pose, but no indication of how to choose among them. Some critics have felt it would be possible to gather the various types of data suggested without covering the three basic issues of social soundness. A general strength and weakness of the guidelines is the cafeteria-like offering of numerous alternative questions: they are very ample, but they may not add up to a coherent treatment of the interrelated aspects of any given project.

A related criticism of the guidelines is that, although they stress ascertaining the compatibility between a project and the nature of the local society, they offer little guidance on identifying the pertinent features of that society. Granted that this task is a very difficult one, especially in a short time, the approach suggested in this paper is aimed primarily at this very task.

We can acknowledge these criticisms without losing sight of the path-breaking value of the 1975 guidelines: they formulated for the first time in any development agency an initial standard by which to define and judge the soundness of projects in their impacts on people's social organization and cultural sense of meanings and values. If much remains to be done, it is in working out better concepts and procedures to improve this initial standard, which did not even exist before the guidelines. The task now seems, not one of making a new departure, but of accumulating field experiences and codifying them into approaches appropriate to different types of problems.

The remainder of this paper describes one such approach, begun in Thailand and used in two very diverse social soundness study settings in Honduras and Senegal. Although probably not applicable to all types of development projects, this approach has the potential for clarifying pertinent dimensions of a people's social system in relationship with economic, ecological, technical, and managerial dimensions of their life, as well as with a proposed project design.

DEVELOPMENT AS CHANGE IN SOCIAL SYSTEMS

However development may be conceived or carried out, it involves changes in people's social systems, and these altered social systems, in turn, mold the course of development. This strong interdependence is clear if we consider: 1) the nature or goal of development, 2) how people organize their lives, 3) how development projects operate, and 4) what we must know if a development project is to work.

1. The Nature of Development

Understanding development as a phenomenon (or a set of phenomena) has been plagued by the confusion between analytical descriptions of a process of change and prescriptive statements of an ideal goal or state of affairs. A focus on development as a social process may help synthesize these two disparate approaches. I see development as a series of changes in which a people improve their capacity to organize themselves and use available resources to support their own well-being, as they define it, on a basis that is self-sustaining and generally accessible to them as a people. Different definitions of well-being by different peoples (ethnic groups, classes, farmers, fishermen, nations...) mean different legitimate courses of development. The form and level of development for any people is thus a reflection of the way in which they organize themselves and use their resources to support their well-being.

2. How People Organize Themselves

Many of the efforts by development agencies to identify intended project beneficiaries among rural poor people are worded like search warrants for an unknown quantity of individuals. Similarly, much of the writing about the actions and reactions of farming people is in the third person singular: "He will respond if...He cannot afford...He must first be convinced..." Most official writing (especially by economists) about the rural poor seems to be a vision of vast numbers of poor Lone Rangers.

In this vision 'decision-making' and 'responding to incentives' have become exclusively individual matters. This picture tells us more, I believe, about the outlooks and value preferences of western officials than it does about the way most rural peoples in the world actually live and making a living.

Sociologists and anthropologists, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the forms and rules of the structures in which people live. Careful description of these structures, and of the associated cultural views and values in which the meanings of these structures may be sought, often becomes so elaborate and refined that social scientists can lose sight of the elementary question of "what's in it" for the people participating in a social structure (such as a clan, cooperative or cult).

The rural poor peoples of the world, like all other peoples, are neither quantities of autonomous individuals nor traditionally regimented, passive members of structures. Rather, they are people who, in the course

of trying to survive -- farm, hunt, fish, eat, clothe themselves, cure disease, raise their children, protect themselves, enjoy themselves, deal with other people, learn something, grasp some meaning in life -- have joined with other people in various networks of common undertakings and interests. The crucial points, ignored in the contrasting viewpoints in the two paragraphs above are: 1) that people, including very poor people, join with other people in varied small and large associations; 2) that their lives are organized in many, complex ways; 3) and that people in these varied structures are trying to meet needs and pursue interests vital to their human survival.

We can thus expect to find rural poor people, not as roving isolates, but as people associated with others; but we can understand their organized lives only as we see how they are pursuing their vital needs and interests in their associations. As Nadel put it, "...social existence is governed by the concepts of purpose and utility...social structures 'have jobs to do...'"³ More recently, Hoben has made a similar point, saying that in order to answer the basic issues of social soundness of a project we must:

...identify the scarce resources in the socio-economic system being analyzed, the way that access to these resources is structured by local institutions, and the strategies by which individuals and groups pursue their interests in this institutional context.⁴

We start, then, with poor rural people trying to make a living and attain some sort of material and social well-being. As they assess the meagre choices open to them -- as individuals and as groups -- in the use of available resources, they make their decisions, not by the uniform dictates of 'traditional culture', but by their own best judgments on how to pursue their interests. These judgments are largely based on their interpretations of their experience of what has worked (safely, cheaply) in the past: types of cultivation practices, use of time, use of money, appropriate ambitions, types of people to befriend and trust, confidence in the future, reaction to new investment possibilities, and the like. Indeed, much of what they do and say can be interpreted as a continuing effort to discern and emphasize what has been rewarding in some sense in previous similar circumstances, while avoiding or minimizing what has not. This recent, widely-shared view of 'peasant rationality', risk aversion or survival coping mentality by rural poor people is quite compatible with the view of psychologists deriving from B. F. Skinner, whose work is variously called behaviorism, behavior modification or operant conditioning. Kunkel⁵ and others have adapted this view to sociological analysis of development.

In stressing poor people's pragmatic efforts to discriminate among whatever few choices they may have, to seek rewarding things and avoid unrewarding things, this view underlines human capacity for changed behavior - in response to rewards. It is thus appropriate for analyzing people's behavior in relation to development projects. This approach

requires, in my view, an additional element which most behaviorists reject as too 'unscientific.' As people try to discriminate among their experiences and optimize their rewards from choosing among limited resources, their judgments of what has been rewarding are products of their culturally derived views of reality and values for good living. However 'unscientific' our analysis, people's cognitive views and value judgments are too vital to the fabric and meaning of life in their terms for us to ignore them in development analysis.

A contention central to my argument is that when we find poor people engaged to some degree with others in pursuit of some interest(s), we can expect to find -- however loose, sloppy or make-shift in form -- an organization of interrelated dimensions of their engagement and pursuit:

a. They are not scattered individuals, but people occupying positions and performing roles in institutions of which they are members. Farming, for example, usually occurs in a network of some of the following types of people: farm owners, renters, laborers, kinsmen, neighbors, merchants, lenders and perhaps government officials -- all occupying positions and performing roles in different, related institutions (families, communities, stratified classes, markets, banks and governments). A special driving force for poor farmers to engage with others in making a living is their need to reduce their stark risks somewhat by sharing their meagre resources and by maintaining some sort of client relationships with richer, more powerful patrons.

b. Each type of participant in this farming network engages in fairly routine, repeated patterns of behavior in pursuing his interests (cultivating, borrowing, buying, selling, transporting, regulating, informing...). Cultivating, like most of these behavior patterns could be subdivided into smaller sub-patterns (plowing, harrowing, planting, weeding...) or combined with other patterns (borrowing, investing, hiring...) into a larger pattern (farming). It is a real advantage for development analysis and planning that we can disaggregate behavior patterns into more specific ones and aggregate them into more general ones. Although most behavior patterns are regular and repetitive, they also include an element of judgment and discrimination. Plowing, for example, is a very repetitive pattern, but a farmer may choose when to plow, how to plow, and who shall plow.

c. Most regular patterns of behavior are influenced, if not regulated, by control mechanisms normally operating among any network of people associated in the course of pursuing interests. These mechanisms take the dual form of 1) norms which participants accept (to some extent) as standards for proper or appropriate conduct, and 2) rewards, or promise of rewards (positive sanctions) reinforcing 'appropriate' behavior, and deprivations, or threat of deprivations, (negative sanctions) discouraging inappropriate behavior. These sanctions are both material (prices, profits, risk, crop loss...) and social (prestige, rectitude, integrity disgrace, ridicule...). For wealthy farmers, the prospect of higher yields and sales from improved fertilizer would be a positive sanction (reinforcing increased production), while a progressive tax on grain sales could be a negative

sanction. For poor farmers, it might be the reverse: the fertilizer too expensive and the tax not reaching down to them. The sanctions carry strength from a combination of participants' acceptance (to some degree) of the norms, the action of market mechanisms, and the exercise by power or authority figures of decision-making and conflict resolution. If the participants do not agree widely on norms for appropriate conduct, then the market and political authority are likely to be the source of whatever sanctions exist.

d. The very definition of what is rewarding, positively and negatively, (of 'what's in it for me') is influenced by, and expressed in terms of, the cultural views and values with which people orient themselves to life in general and to any particular pursuit of interests with others. For example, people forcibly resettled to uplands where they did not know how to grow anything in northeastern Thailand did not find the construction of market buildings nearby a positive sanction, reinforcing greater buying and selling. By their own view of their situation and value for survival, they had to do first whatever they could to subsist.

e. The expression of people's views and values is most evident in their regular behavior patterns, which occur in a setting of human and natural relationships. People engaged in any pursuit of interests relate to each other. to other types of people outside their immediate network, and to the resources, constraints and forces of their natural environment. In situations of severe poverty, social relationships of social distance,

class hierarchy, exploitation, dependency, corruption and distrust often reflect and reinforce the poverty. Northeastern Thai peasants have certain relationships with each other, with central Thai officials, with Chinese town merchants, with Vietnamese truck gardeners; with generally poor, depleted soil, as well as limited, uncertain rainfall; and with recently improved road and bus networks.

f. Finally, the many alternative sanctions, positive and negative, of the available choices and behavior patterns for a group of farmers are continually transmitted and negotiated among them by a set of communication mechanisms. These mechanisms, in turn, reflect the views and values as well as the set of human and natural relationships of the people concerned. Exchange of information about farm prices, new inputs, current crop diseases, labor scarcity or abundance, gossip about transgressions, changing political influence of the participants -- all these kinds of information will help shape, and be shaped by, the other five elements.

The point is not that farmers, fishermen, herders or other collections of people engaged together in making a living or pursuing some interest are always tightly organized in neatly structured networks; rather that we can better understand their capacities and constraints by taking note of whatever limited, subtle but nevertheless important, interconnected dimensions may exist in their efforts to work in association with others. People do pursue individual interests; they have distinct, individual reactions; but poor farmers, herders, fishermen or people seeking health care usually cannot afford to go it alone; they usually take part in some risk-sharing

3. How Development Projects Usually Operate

Development projects usually introduce, or try to introduce, not something totally novel or unprecedented in a people's life, but modifications of already established patterns of activity such as credit, agriculture, nutrition, health care, or education.

A proposed development project is likely to have real development significance -- in the sense of helping people improve their capacity to support some aspect of their own well-being -- if the implementation of the project entails some changes in the people's current patterns of behavior.

In terms of the definition of development given earlier, people will not acquire greater capacity to organize themselves and use available resources to support their own well-being unless they change some of the things they have been doing or the ways in which they have been doing them. Thus, a proposed project is likely to have real development significance only if its implementation entails some changes in the people's current patterns of behavior. Further, if the behavior patterns of a people engaged in some pursuit of their interests are somewhat interrelated with other dimensions of their common engagement, as argued in the preceding section, then the sanctions must be identified, created or modified to reinforce the new behavior patterns implied in the success of the project. Support for such new sanctions may entail still further changes in other dimensions of their engagement - such as some of their values and relationships. A new type of rice seed, for example, may provide greater potential yield, reduce the growing time, or require more water. Whatever

its merits and limitations, its use normally implies some changes in routine farming behavior patterns -- perhaps more regular watering, more weeding, earlier harvesting, and the like. If the routine farming activities associated with the old seeds were reinforced in the past by the rewards available in the traditional agricultural system, then a project to introduce new seeds can become successful only if it can identify and contribute what is necessary to reinforce the new patterns of routine activity needed to care for the new variety of seed. To be sure, many development innovations are introduced with too little attention paid to the established patterns of activities and their social and economic context.

4. Information Needed for Project Design

The emphasis here is the same as that in STRATEGIES FOR SMALL FARMER DEVELOPMENT by Development Alternatives, Inc. Based on their field study of 36 rural development projects in Latin America and Africa, the authors found (p. 3 of Executive Summary) that the more successful project efforts included, either during their design phase or their early implementation phase:

Data on existing agricultural production practices and socio-cultural patterns in the area to determine what behavior changes are required for a project to achieve its objectives and how they might be obtained.....

Data on the capability of local institutions to provide the project components deemed necessary for success.⁶

The argument in this paper is related to the underlined phase in the quotation above. Development occurs when people change their standard patterns of behavior in ways improving their capacity to support their own well-being. My argument is that what is required to obtain such changes in people's standard patterns of behavior is modifications of those inter-related features of their social system which support those patterns of behavior. It follows that essential information needed for project success is understanding of rewards and other pertinent features of the social system which operate to support the old behavior patterns. A major social cultural aspect of the project design must be the introduction of information or resources needed to support the new types of behavior implied in the success of the project.

Another way of making this same point is through the AID Logical Framework for project design. The underlying hypothesis of that framework -- that project inputs will lead to outputs which will achieve project purposes which will contribute to more general development goals -- has no specific mechanism, channel or procedure to ensure this hypothesized process. In my approach, the analytical and design task is to understand the positive and negative sanctions of the existing social system (of people engaged in some pursuit); then to shape the proposed project inputs in explicit relation to the local social system so that the inputs could become incorporated into a modified social system as new system sanctions, which could provide people incentives for carrying out new behavior patterns. The key is translating project inputs into system sanctions meaningful to the participants, which

they could then sustain on their own after project completion.

This last point raises the issue of participation of people in their own development. Two of Berger's concepts fit here. By 'cognitive respect', Berger means that project analysts and designers, "...take with utmost seriousness the way in which others (intended beneficiaries) define reality."⁷ By 'cognitive participation', Berger means that project analysts and designers try to, "...safeguard the right of others (intended beneficiaries) to codefine those aspects of reality that are relevant to policy."⁸ The only effect and legitimate way of understanding the already existing social system sanctions well enough to devise project inputs that could realistically become new system sanctions is to combine the experiential insights of participants of the local systems with the analytical insights of observers of the system. Unless intended beneficiaries take part in defining their current situation, problems and solutions, the project inputs are unlikely to be well enough designed to fit into the local social setting (system) in a way to become self-sustaining.

Thus, in all of the senses discussed in the previous four sections -- the social nature of development, the way people organize their lives, the way development projects operate, and the information necessary for project design -- development involves changes in people's social systems, and these changed social systems then channel the development process.

Social analysis capable of providing practical program guidance must be based on a clear idea of the nature of both the project and the social system - in terms which are mutually intelligible, to facilitate an

analytical search for mutual interaction between the social system and the project design. To this end, we might define a social system as: a network of people engaged -- directly or indirectly -- in some common undertaking, association or pursuit of interests, in which:

- 1) the participants are interdependent in some way(s);
- 2) their engagement has several dimensions (six are suggested);
- 3) these dimensions of their engagement are basically variable;
- 4) these variable dimensions are interrelated.

1) Participants in a social system are interdependent in the sense of influencing or affecting each other though they may perform very diverse, even hostile or conflicting roles; or though they may not encounter each other directly. Social systems need not be limited to groups of people in which all members interact, resemble, enjoy or agree with each other. Indeed, participants in most social systems in the world are neither homogeneous nor harmonious. They conflict with each other as much as, perhaps more than, they cooperate. The point is that by their (varied) engagement in a common undertaking -- such as marketing -- they influence and affect each other -- in such forms as prices of goods, delivery time, quality of goods, and the like.

2) The interdependent engagement of participants in a common undertaking can take several forms, in terms of the positions they hold and the roles they perform; the activities they carry on, their relationships with their social and natural environments; their cultural definitions of their system; their mechanisms of control; and their patterns of communication.

We shall treat these six aspects of participants' engagement in a common undertaking as the main dimensions of a social system.

3) These six dimensions of participants' engagement in their undertaking are basically variable, not static or fixed, as we can see, either by comparing the values of these dimensions between two or more social systems at any one time, or of any one social system through time. For example, we can compare the levels and types of farmers' activities between a farm system of corn cultivation and one of rice cultivation. The types of cultivation activities, as well as the level of activities, would vary between the two types of systems. We could also trace the changes through time in the types and levels of activities in the course of a transition from a rice to corn system. In this way, all of the six dimensions are variable, qualitatively and quantitatively rather than static or fixed.

4) These dimensions of engagement in a social system are somewhat interrelated, as we can see either by noting how the change in one or more of the dimensions is associated with change in one or more of the other five dimensions of the system; or by examining all six dimensions of engagement in a system as a somewhat integrated set of adaptations to existing or past pressures and opportunities, constraints and resources. For example, the particular (variable) combination of institutions, role activities, understandings and values, relationships among participants, mechanisms of control, and flow of information involved in the two systems -- rainfed cultivation of millet and post-flood cultivation of sorghum -- can be understood as a set of adaptive responses by Senegal River Basin people

to the pressures and opportunities of their natural and social environment. The point is not that all dimensions of these two social systems in Senegal are necessarily interrelated, nor that all of the qualities of these dimensions form some integrated set of fully coherent adaptations to the natural and social environment, nor even that each dimension is necessarily fully adaptive to the environment. The point is, rather, that we can understand better these dimensions of a people's social system if we look for the ways in which these dimensions seem interrelated and seem to express the people's adaptation to their environment.

The six dimensions of a social system on the next page -- dimensions of participants' engagement in a common undertaking -- are variable in the sense that we would expect particular values to exist for each dimension in each particular social system: particular types and levels of activity, particular sanctions reinforcing those activities, and the like. The detailed variable features of each social system must be worked out empirically; they cannot be stated in general. The following outline is merely a very general indication of the sorts of variables we can expect to find in most social systems. A somewhat more thorough outline can be found in Appendix 2.

Variable Dimensions of a Social System

- 1 The main institutions and roles within them performed by participants in the system:
 - Farm families and various types of farming roles
 - Relevant government agencies and particular officials
 - Market institutions and particular merchants, peddlers and transporters

- 2 The participants' main role behavior patterns:
 - Their major patterns of activities
 - Their use of time in various seasons
 - Main techniques, tools, machines they use

- 3 Their main mechanisms of control:
 - Norms, or standards of conduct, to which they are expected to conform in some degree
 - Sanctions, or positive and negative rewards, which reinforce some activities and discourage others
 - Means of reaching decisions
 - Means of dealing with conflicts

- 4 Their orientations toward the system, expressed in their views and values:
 - Definitions of their own interests in the system
 - Types and levels of their aspirations, ambitions
 - Levels of satisfaction with the system
 - Views of themselves in relation to natural and social forces
 - Judgments of what matters most to them

- 5 Their relationships with the social and natural environment:
 - Relationships among participants in the system, and their relationships with people outside the system:
 - dependent, interdependent, independent
 - distant/intimate, conflict/cooperation
 - stratification, exploitation, clients/patrons
 - Influences of natural forces:
 - floods, droughts, famines, epidemics, erosion, soil depletion
 - Access to resources:
 - land tenure, land use patterns, water rights, credit, influence with officials, availability of technology.

- 6 Their main patterns of communication:
 - Types of information exchanged (and withheld)
 - Channels of information
 - Differential access to information

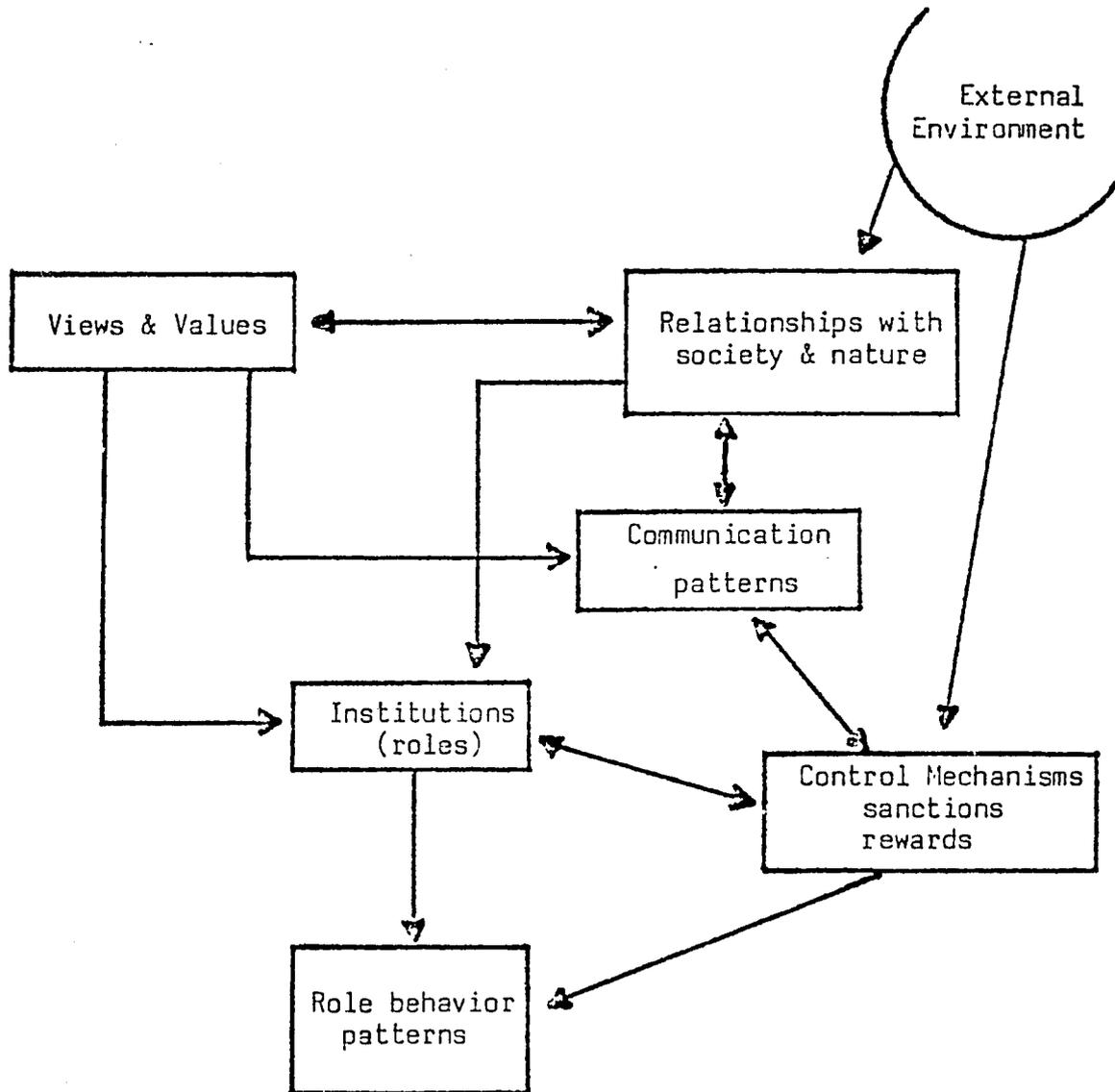
Given the great diversity in types of human social systems which development projects affect, we cannot specify all their particular dimensions. The foregoing list indicates general types of dimensions and suggests examples of types of particular variables. It is essential for development analysis to see these dimensions as variable and inter-related.

They are variable in the sense that people's types and levels of aspirations (point 4 on the preceding page) will vary between the social systems of subsistence shifting cultivators and irrigated agriculturalists and within each of these systems changing through time. We can expect their aspirations (and other dimensions) to vary as a function of the state of the system.

These dimensions are interrelated in the sense that it is the state of the system that shapes the values of the variable dimensions in relation to each other. People's aspirations are a function of their regular role activities, the rewards they can anticipate, the sorts of relationships they have with other people and with nature, the other views and values they hold, and the like. The qualitative type and the quantitative level of people's aspirations is affected by, and in turn, affects the other variables in a social system. Indeed, the very interdependence of these variables is a product of their varying through time in relationship to each other, as the system changes.

This emphasis -- the dynamic process of continuing interdependence of system variables, continuing to interact with each other during conditions of system stability and change -- is important for development analysis. It focuses our attention on both the dynamic character of continuing change in human life and the web of interactions among various dimensions of a people's life, with implications for social benefits and costs in conditions of stability as well as change. This approach also gives us some handles for grasping some of the most essential features of a people's life in order to see how mutually adaptable a proposed development project might be with their life.

This rough diagram, necessarily simplified and arbitrary, is an attempt to depict interactions among the variables of a people's social system:



The 'message' of this little diagram is not that all peoples' lives are fully bound up in great closed networks of everything related to everything. Discontinuity, breakdown, and disorganization are very common, indeed basic, features of human existence. The message for development analysis is to look for such systemic strands of organization as seem to exist in the efforts of people to pursue some aspect of their well-being, for which a program is proposed. Recognition of those aspects of organization, as well as disorganization, enables us to assess people's lives in explicit relationship with a proposed project.

We should note that development projects affect at least two, probably more, types of social systems. One type, more commonly described by social scientists, is a 'community system' in which the network of people engaged is composed of all the members of a group: the residents of a village or town, the citizens of a province or nation, and the like. The members of communal farms for agrarian reform in Honduras form such community systems. Another type is an 'action system' in which the network of people engaged is composed of certain types of people who undertake something, or pursue interests in relation to each other, but who do not necessarily all relate directly to each other, and who are not members of a single group or institution. Farmers, merchants, and officials in the Senegal River Basin who have some part in raising and marketing crops after the river recedes from the flood plain (but who do not live or work together) are participants in an 'action social system'. The geographic boundaries of such action systems would be very difficult to specify. The social boundaries might be vague but more possible to ascertain.

We should also note that people normally participate in several undertakings (farming, herding, trading, living in a community together, relating to kinsmen, relating to supernatural forces, operating a government, and the like). Thus, they are likely to participate in several overlapping action social systems, some of which may interact with each other. In any given set of people, such as those living in the same village, individuals will naturally participate in some of these social systems more than in others. Our search for social system features does not ignore the equally basic feature of individual differences. To be sure, any adequate understanding of common features of a people's way of life must be based on some grasp of the range of individual differences among those people. The point is not to end the search with these differences -- trying only to get the 'progressive' ones to 'accept change' -- but to find the more general social system conditions and rewards that might permit more general development.

On the other hand, the main forces affecting a people's level of development are not all internal to their local system of agriculture, health care, education, religion and the like. The external social and natural environment may impose more important parameters influencing a people's development than the variables within the control of their local system. National political forces, class or ethnic exploitation, general (but partly local) environmental degradation, regional economic imbalance -- all these forces may exert greater constraints on removing poverty than any dynamic changes within a local system. Development analysis must address these macro and micro forces in their relationships with each other.

SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND PROJECT SOUNDNESS ANALYSIS

Applying my approach, we can examine the social soundness for many types of rural development projects by analyzing the efforts of a people to pursue some aspect of their well-being as a sort of social system and relating it to a prospective project design in order to answer the three basic issues of social soundness summarized on page 3.

Given a proposed project (preferably not too advanced in detailed planning), we seek to identify some network of people among the intended beneficiaries engaged in pursuing that aspect of their well-being: a way of making their living (agriculture, fishing, herding, processing crops...); curing various forms of illness; educating their children or themselves; improving their household or village infrastructure, or whatever. If their engagement in the effort shows the four conditions discussed earlier -- some interdependence among participants, in several ways, which are variable, and interacting -- then we can analyze their engagement in terms of a social system, either a community or an action system.

For illustration, we might refer to a project to introduce irrigated agriculture along the Senegal River where people now raise crops during the rainy season and after flood recession and graze animals farther upland.

Since we would concentrate on the features of their system most pertinent to its current operation and to the operation of the proposed project, we might begin by identifying the main types of institutions in which these people perform various roles (of farming, fishing, grazing, marketing, and governing). We would then select the institutions and roles likely to

be most involved and affected by a development project, and examine the main patterns of behavior in these role performances, treating them as strategies of managing (limited) resources to seek role objectives.

We would next ascertain the positive and negative sanctions available to people performing these roles: what is in it for them, what rewards they may hope to enjoy and what deprivations they may suffer. We could take these three dimensions -- institutions and roles, role activities, and positive and negative sanctions -- as the primary features of their current system in relation to potential development. We would then examine three further dimensions of their current system -- views and values, relationships with society and nature, and communication patterns -- only as much as necessary (1) to understand the connection between their behavior and current rewards structure, and (2) to judge how the project inputs would fit with or modify the current rewards structure. For both role behavior and sanctions, we would concentrate on the main patterns and on apparent trends of recent change.

The review of main institutions and roles pertinent to current agriculture and to the proposed irrigation would explicitly cover current features and apparent trends in the division of labor by sex and by age. The activities performed by boys and girls, men and women and old men and women in the households, fields, pastures, market and offices is a fundamental human resource and constraint in the transition from current agriculture to irrigation, in the sense of who can do what and who cannot. A review of this sort -- types of activities performed by both sexes and all age groups through the seasons of the year -- is essential to establish

the possibilities and limits to change. The irrigated rice cultivation proposed in Senegal could greatly increase the roles performed by women in the fields, with implications for household changes and pressures, as has happened elsewhere. Social analysis should involve informing the people of this strong possibility and getting their initial reactions.

A review of the main role activities and the positive and negative sanctions involved should provide some clues regarding two important issues for development analysis: traditional ways in which the system has adapted to its environment and the current distribution of social benefits and costs. Although more understanding may be required of the people's relationships with their social and natural environment, a clear picture of the things they do and the resulting things they may receive would, in itself, give us a good indication of the sorts of success and failure the current social system of agriculture has had as an adaptation to its larger environment. This understanding of how, and how well, people have adapted could provide useful information for designing realistic forms of adaptation for the new irrigation system.

Secondly, this review of participants' main role activities and their major positive and negative rewards can provide us with important indications of social benefits and costs to various types of participants of the social system before the project. By understanding what different types of participants do (activities), are expected to do (responsibilities), and what positive rewards (rights, privileges) and negative rewards (obligations, deprivations) they may get -- by understanding some of these, we can estimate the current distribution of rights and obligations. While noting some of

the important social costs likely to come with development, we must also note the types and levels of costs which some participants must pay before any development project begins.

Having examined briefly the first three system dimensions (institutions and roles, role behavior patterns and positive and negative sanctions), and examined the second three dimensions (views and values, relationships with the social and natural environment, and communication patterns) only enough to understand the primary three dimensions, we would be ready to try to answer the three main questions of social soundness.

I. Social Cultural Compatibility

A. Who would be the intended project beneficiaries, as well as the possible victims and benefactors? We would identify them by examining the roles which poor and rich people perform in the institutions in the system. Understanding these people as participating in some sort of social system enables us to see them more realistically in their actual social setting, including positions of different wealth, power, prestige and the like. Identifying various levels of rural poor people should not begin with head counts but with an inventory of the types of positions people occupy in the local institutions and the relative rewards available to people performing these roles. We would thus establish different types of poor people at different levels before making any count or estimate of their numbers. With these types and levels clarified, we can consider the likely impacts of the project on people in different positions, and thus identify the various types of project beneficiaries, victims and benefactors at different economic and social levels.

B. In what ways are the main features of the people's lives and the main features of the proposed project mutually adaptable? In what ways are they not? Having begun by identifying the institutions, role activities and rewards of intended beneficiaries, we would understand the ways in which they are currently realizing some aspect of their well-being (certain crops in two seasons and cattle for the

for the people in the Senegal basin) and also the ways in which they are failing or falling short, in their view as well as in the view of agriculturalists. We would next identify what changes in their current patterns of role behavior would result from their successful participation in the irrigation project, and what positive and negative sanctions the project includes that would provide the incentives to support such changes in role behavior, and probably in role relationships among participants. The ways in which and the degree to which project inputs could support such changes -- from the point of view of the analyst and some of the potential beneficiaries -- would comprise the mutual adaptability of the project and the people's lives. Simply put, mutual adaptability lies in whether or not the project could make it worth while for the people in their own terms to make the changes implied in project success. An important variable is thus the people's level of satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, with their current system.

C. What could be done to enhance mutual adaptability? The answer is in finding ways to modify proposed project inputs so they could become incorporated into the people's social system of agriculture as sanctions, making it worth their while to undertake the changes implied in the project. This approach assumes that project designs are always adaptable to some degree, and that local social systems are also; but that the range of adaptability of social systems of poor people is always limited. Once project inputs became translated into real

economic and social incentives intelligible to them, rural poor people can adapt their own social system of farming to take a cumulatively greater advantage of the project inputs. The success of people in many villages along the Senegal river in adapting (at least initially) to very small irrigation pump projects supports this position. I would thus argue that mutual adaptability between project designs and local social systems must begin with appropriate modifications of the project design to make it compatible with the people; and that their social system can only change and adapt (more or less) to irrigated agricultural conditions in the course of time.

II. Spread Effects

A. How likely are project benefits to diffuse beyond the initial intended beneficiaries? Some projects obviously lend themselves to diffusion more easily than others -- preventive health measures could be more widely diffused than irrigation techniques which are limited to an irrigable area. Probably a single change in health habits could also be widely diffused more easily than a set of mutually reinforcing changes in an integrated rural development project.

It is evident from many experiences that poor people accept changes which make sense to them in their own terms, have very little risk and some promise of usefulness; and that many such changes are not in officially organized development projects.⁷ It follows that we can anticipate the prospects for diffusion of proposed project results if we know

how compatible they are with current role behavior patterns and how rewarding they would seem to the people. But we would also have to examine the relationships which the people have with each other and with people outside their local system, and their communication channels as well. The types and extent of their patterns of relationships (trading, grazing, travelling...) and communications would also affect the ways and range of potential spread. The Senegal River farmers, for example, were aware on their own of the success of irrigation projects far downstream. They had noticed that people who used to come up to buy certain crops were no longer coming; they could raise their own.

B. How durable are the project results likely to be? Both among initial beneficiaries and among later, wider populations, durability of project results is largely a matter of how thoroughly the changed activity patterns introduced by the (irrigation) project become incorporated into the social system. The degree of this incorporation is, in turn, largely a matter of how thoroughly the new rewards, necessary to support the new kind of activity, can become integrated into the control mechanisms of the social system of the people involved. Their social system must become capable of providing the sanctions to support their changed behavior patterns and relationships. The task of analysis is thus to judge, first, the adequacy of the potential material inputs compared with new levels of cost and risk (higher yields, credit availability, future market demand, technical help...) and the social inputs (training and organizing greater capacity for collective water management, authority to legitimate such management...) in the project design, and second, the likelihood of these

inputs become incorporated as sanctions in the local system of irrigation.

Once the types and rough extent of changes (in behavior and other dimensions of the social system of agriculture) have been identified, the two tasks above are questions of judgment, not precise measurement. Assessment of project durability in the future cannot be, and should not be, considered a matter of precise or certain knowledge; but this fact does not remove or reduce the importance of making such judgments for project analysis.

C. What might be done in the initial project to enhance its spread and durability? As suggested in the previous paragraphs, a project's potential for spread and durability is a matter of how well it is genuinely adapted to the life of the people. Thus, efforts to increase its adaptation to their life in a way that can stick (project inputs becoming incorporated into the social system as sanctions) will also tend to increase its chances for spread and durability.

III. Social Impact: Equity

A. How would the main benefits and burdens of the project be distributed among the people affected (rich and poor, farmers, landless..)? The crucial comparison is that of the balance between positive and negative rewards which people in different positions experience in their current system, compared with the balance they would probably experience with the project. By making that crucial comparison for richer and poorer participants in the current system, we could fairly anticipate the project impact regarding social equity.

We can extend the scope of equity by making the same crucial comparison for people of different sexes, ages, ethnic groups, religious groups, social classes, and the like. We can contrast the trends in this crucial comparison (towards more favorable or less favorable balance with the project) between men and women, young and old, majority and minority groups. Without becoming very precise, we could identify the positive and negative rewards for people in each major role, (without and with the project) get some estimate of their magnitudes to assess which roles (men/women, old/young, richer farmers/merchants, Muslim/'pagan' and so on) would probably move toward more favorable balances and which toward less, once the project begins.

If we consider the current balance of positive and negative sanctions for people performing a role (farmer, landless laborer, peddler..) in the current system as the sum of what they can expect from the system -- their current benefits and burdens, or their current rights and obligations -- then we have a simple way of seeing the current distribution

of people's rights before a project. By noting the trend toward more or less favorable balance of rewards for people performing the main roles, we could see how the project would affect the rights and obligations of different types of people. For example, if men are currently in charge of selling cash crops; and women, surplus subsistence crops, then irrigation would presumably greatly increase the cash crops -- and the relative benefits of the men selling them.

We can extend still further the scope of equity by moving from individual roles to some of the institutions affected by development. The most critical one, especially in poor rural societies, is the family. We would examine the family as a central institution in the current system of agriculture, noting the extent of agricultural work performed by family members exclusively, and the various life functions associated with family life. To the limited extent we could anticipate from the proposed project (and to the greater extent we could observe in irrigation projects among similar people) any decline in family life support functions, we would have a compelling reason to ask if longer-term equity interests were being well served by the project. Since the poorest rural people can usually rely only on their family for support and security functions, family stability is generally most important for poorer people. Although such analysis could not be very precise, it could be accurate enough to identify some potential weakening of family support functions to poor people, which could possibly be strengthened by adding some other resources in the project inputs.

By careful examination of the main types of roles and the main

institutions (especially the family) affected by development, and by serious attention to the idea of equity -- both analytically and ethically -- we can use this simple social system approach and deal with such amorphous and contentious issues as equity and justice, women's roles in development and human rights -- as integral aspects of a development project. These three issues are polemical and very difficult; but they should not be ignored in a seemingly neutral, anti-septic project analysis, or placed in an innocuous annex, in order to 'take care' of an AID requirement. They should be treated as serious, integral aspects of the development process, because every people trying to improve its capacity to support its own well-being in a long term manner must resolve, in its own way, these basic issues of equity and rights between the sexes, ages, classes, urban/rural, rich/poor and so on.

B. How could the project benefits reach the poor with greater equity? The main approach was already stated: identifying the types of roles performed by the poorest participants and identifying their patterns of positive and negative sanctions. It is essential to find out what types of rewards, positive and negative, they are getting from their performance, as well as how much (or little) they are getting. And, it is essential to get it in their terms, what it means to them, as Lynch et al have so appropriately stressed.

10

11

As Epstein and Emerson and many others have shown, poor people's own definitions of the significance of their rewards may be so different as to be surprising to outsiders. What may appear to others as exploitation, may seem to the poor people concerned like an essential relation-

ship of security. Foster has emphasized the personal character of many relationships of reciprocal help set up among individuals who can trust each other.¹² Many poor people also establish such personal relationships as they can with wealthy land lords or townsmen: reciprocal help with personalistic ties between poor clients who offer services and loyalty and rich patrons who offer protection and support.

With our current (totally justified) interest in reaching the majority of poor people, we risk removing subtle security and prestige benefits from them in earnest schemes to replace middle men -- especially wealthy ethnic minority groups -- with untested credit associations, which may turn out to be more expensive for poor peasants.¹³ Many situations, especially those of land tenure badly biased in favor of large land owners, may be hopeless for the poor without sweeping reform or revolution. But, many reforms and revolutions have come and gone with only temporary or cosmetic help for the landless or small holders.

One sober lesson, especially in the many poor countries without strong political leaders strongly committed to increasing the access of the poorest people to resources and to power, is that more change, and most centrally directed change, of rural social systems seems to benefit the rich and powerful rather than the poor and weak. In such situations, perhaps the most common around the world, those wanting to help the poorest rural people with development projects can only succeed by finding out exactly what rewards and constraints, however small and seemingly trivial, poor people must work with. If they manage to survive in harsh conditions of poverty with some attachment to one or more

strong clients and very little solidarity or cooperation with their fellow poor, then the best equity through development programs may come from modest gains in resources for them without reducing the rewards for the patrons or middlemen. If the latter can see some advantage, or no loss to themselves, in having somewhat wealthier, healthier clients, then they might even support the development - to the final advantage of the poor.

This argument is no plea for 'trickle down.' It is only a caution regarding the danger of removing whatever little cushion the poor may have against disaster -- in the name of reform or equity. Project designers and analysts can probably be more helpful with projects that enable poor people to strengthen their position by carefully consulting with the intended beneficiaries, and with some of the patrons and middlemen. If the essence of development is greater capacity of a people to support their own well-being, then most people, especially the poor who need such capacity the most, are unlikely to attain it unless they take an active part in the difficult process of writing their own script of their own continuing drama of development.

WIDER HORIZONS

I asserted earlier that social soundness analysis should judge the human soundness of a proposed project but also should help improve its design. The only way in which social analysis can make its full contribution to improving development projects is through explicit effort to interrelate the social aspects of project soundness with the institutional, ecological, technical and economic aspects. This difficult step of integrated project analysis, a necessary but not sufficient condition for integrated project design, has not yet been seriously undertaken in AID or in any official development agency. Little wonder. It is unfamiliar, takes time, and cannot be intellectually coordinated by any one of the disciplines implied in the five aspects of soundness listed above.

I have tried to use the simple approach to social systems presented here in various ways: field observations in irrigation settings, an interdisciplinary writing attempt with an engineer and an economist,¹⁴ two attempts at social soundness analysis, and several brief interdisciplinary project analyses in this country with Development Studies Program field teams. I believe that this approach is appropriate to the wider task of relating the social dimensions to the other dimensions of project soundness in which all are essential, none is prior, and the interactions among them are more crucial than the content of any one.

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Annex A

SOCIAL SOUNDNESS ANALYSIS

Summary of Current AID Guidelines
With a Few Revisions

I Social Cultural Compatibility

- Who are the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project?
the possible victims (who might suffer)?
the possible benefactors (who might pay)?
- In what ways are the main features of these peoples' lives
and the main features of the proposed project mutually
adaptable? In what ways are they not?
- What could be done to enhance mutual adaptability?

Types of Information Suggested to Get Answers to these Questions:

A. Who lives where?

Locations of types and numbers of people likely concerned.

B. How are they organized?

What sort of social and power relationships do they have?
Should development be promoted thru existing or newly created
organizations?

C. How do they allocate their time?

How do people in different roles spend their time among their
task? e.g. - how much time on subsistence and how much on
commercial tasks?
How much time are they occupied at different times during the
year?
How does their allocation of their time influence their view of
their own incentives?

D. What are the characteristics of participators?

What are the minimum requirements or requisites for people to
participate in the project?
e.g. - minimum resources, education, skills, attitudes,
exposure to innovation, sustained exposure....
What are the maximum levels, above which people are not likely
to participate (not inclined or not eligible)?

E. Who are the most likely beneficiaries?

Combining information from the 4 items above, who are the most likely participants, non-participants, victims, and benefactors?

How will these types of people be affected?

F. What social obstacles or opposition may arise?

What types of people may oppose the project?

What types of non-participants might oppose or disapprove of the project?

What social gaps exist between project personnel and beneficiaries?

G. What are the people's motivations?

What are their reasons for participating in the proposed project?

How much similarity and difference seem to exist in the motivations (and definitions of interests) by the intended beneficiaries and various government officials?

How compatible are the motivations of the people with the development goals of the project:

as we see it?

as they see it?

H. What sort of communications strategy should be used?

What information should be transmitted among potential beneficiaries in the initial and the wider populations?

How early should this effort begin?

How should information be communicated among diverse people across social cultural gaps so that they can understand the intents of the project and its potential advantage for them?

II Spread Effects: Diffusion of Innovation

- How likely are the proposed project results to diffuse beyond the initial intended beneficiaries:
without further project inputs?
by replication - with further inputs?
- How durable are the proposed project results likely to be:
among the initial intended beneficiaries?
among later, wider populations?
- What might be done in the initial project to enhance spread and durability of its results?

Types of Information Suggested:

A. What are the patterns of leadership and authority?

Who are the leaders (modern or traditional) or opinion shapers in the wider area, whose cooperation or non-opposition may be vital to project diffusion?
Can indigenous leaders be influential in project diffusion?
How can such leaders be supported in this process?

B. What are the patterns of mobility and migration?

What is the area of mobility within which people live, work, worship, trade, and visit within the year?
What sort of seasonal movements, mobility, or migration do they have?
What is the area of mobility of officials, and their range of contacts with people?
What is the geographical area (horizontal) and the social area (vertical) within which people receive information?
Thus, what are the areas within which people get information, learn, and adopt innovations?

C. What about previous projects in the region?

What influence might previous or other projects in the area have on diffusion of this project (roads, schools, institutions....)?
What influence might previous projects that failed have on diffusion of this project?

D. How long is required for information dissemination?

What information has to spread? Knowledge, techniques, methods, skills, attitudes, values, behavior patterns, products...?

How long is it likely to take people in the area of spread to acquire and absorb the information and learning necessary?

How long is it likely to take the desired spread effects to move enough to have a reasonable chance of continuing? Can any spread effects be anticipated, or encouraged, without new project inputs?

III Social Impact: Equity

- How would the main benefits and burdens of the project be distributed among the types and strata of people affected (e.g. rich and poor, farmers and landless...)?
- How could the project benefits be distributed more effectively among the poorer people in the intended beneficiary population?
- What might be done to lessen the burdens on project victims or benefactors, especially poor people?

Types of Information Suggested:

A. What relative access to resources and opportunities do the people have?

What differential access to land, capital, credit, education, information, markets, etc. do they have?
Would the project broaden or narrow this access, especially of the poorest people?

B. What differential employment opportunities do the people have?

Will the project improve or reduce their opportunities?
How much employment would the project generate? For whom?
Would project involve labor-using or labor-replacing practices?

C. Whom would the project displace or uproot?

Would the project push any groups off the land, or displace any groups from their current livelihood?
Where would they go? What would they do?

- D. How might the project affect people's power positions and participation?

Each of the 3 items (A-C) is related to redistribution of power and capacity to participate; but would the project also change the relative capacity of intended beneficiaries to influence public policy?

Annex B

VARIABLE DIMENSIONS OF A SOCIAL SYSTEM

As explained in the text (esp. pp. 7-27) these dimensions are treated as the aspects of the engagement of some set or network of people who are associated in some sense in the pursuit of their interests. The dimensions are all variable, either in magnitude or in type; and they are somewhat interrelated.

- 1 The main institutions and roles within them performed by participants in the system, a brief descriptive inventory:

- Farm families and various types of family and farming roles
division of labor by sex and age

- Relevant government agencies and particular officials

- Market institutions and particular merchants, peddlers and
transporters

- 2 The participants' main role behavior patterns:

- Their main patterns of activities
a brief description of those which seem most important
to the performance of the role

- Their general allocation of time to these main activities
including important seasonal variations

- The major techniques, tools, machines they use in performing
their main activities

- An indication of the physical space in which they operate:
number of different locations
distance from home
seasonal variations

3 Their main mechanisms of control:

Norms accepted (to some degree) by different types of participants:

standards or rules for appropriate conduct in given situations

Sanctions imposed to reinforce certain standards or types of behavior:

positive rewards which support valued behavior
material and social incentives

negative rewards, deprivations or punishments which discourage

excessively deviant behavior

material and social disincentives

informally or formally imposed

externally or internally imposed

Decision-making mechanisms

imposed by power/exercised by authority

done by leaders (local or regional)/done by people concerned

Conflict coping mechanisms:

negotiating, bargaining, forming alliances or coalitions...

competing, fighting, using coercion or influence, exploiting...

withdrawing, avoiding, retreating....

4 Their orientations toward the system, expressed in their views and values:

views: assumptions, beliefs, understanding, knowledge.....

values: judgements expressing preference for certain significant, desirable human conduct or conditions rather than others.

Dimensions of variability (quantitative and qualitative) for views and values:

types of definitions of the nature and meaning of the system;

types of definitions of their own condition and interests in the system;

perceptions of alternatives available;

types of views of self in relations to others in the system;

types of reactions to natural and supernatural forces;

types of definitions of time;

types of cultural symbols used to express views and values;

types of judgements regarding action and its consequences;

level of aspirations for themselves, for their children;

types of intensity of interest in change, progress;

types of judgements about their own and other ethnic groups;

types of standards used to support value preferences:

ideological, survival, vested interests, social class.....

5 Their relationships with their social and natural environment!

Social relationships with each other in the system:

for example:

farmers with each other and with farm laborers
farmers with herders, fishermen or other rural people
farmers with officials and with merchants
officials with merchants

Social relationships with types of people outside the system:

dependent--interdependent--independent
distant--intimate
conflict/cooperation
client/patron relations
stratification, exploitation...

an indication of the physical space in which their main relationships occur

(note: these dimensions of variability would apply to relationships with people inside and outside the local system)

Relationships with natural forces:

floods, droughts, dessication, soil depletion, erosion...
famines, undernourishment
epidemics, environmental health hazards
inadequate environmental sanitation

Differential access to resources:

land tenure, land use patterns, water rights...
credit availability, influence with officials...
access to technology

6 Their main patterns of communication:

Types of information exchanged, and withheld

Channels of communication

formal/informal
types of channels which they trust the most

Differential access of different types of participants to information