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How Administrative Arrangements Can Influence Program Outcomes

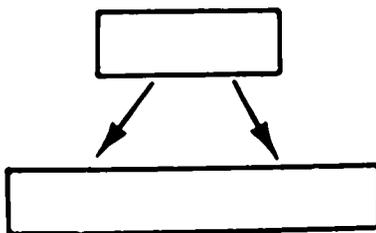
The form of the administrative arrangements used to implement a project or program can be crucial to its success or failure. Even when there is the will and the capacity to conduct a project or program, and strong justification for it, the outcome is more likely to depend on the type of arrangements used to implement it than on the ideology of the leadership of the character (i.e., democratic or authoritarian) of the regime.

An excellent illustration is found in John D. Montgomery's study of twenty-five land reform programs.

Montgomery categorized land reform programs, in terms of their administrative arrangements, as *centralized, decentralized, and devolved*. For each he measured changes in four factors: 1) peasant incomes, 2) peasant land tenure security, 3) peasant political power, and 4) political power of the bureaucracy which conducted the program.

Centralized

Montgomery found that those regimes which, regardless of their political character, employed an existing centralized administrative arrangement were generally unsuccessful in increasing peasant incomes and political power, only partially successful in improving security of land tenure, and consistently successful in increasing the political power of the bureaucracy. (See table, "Effects of Administrative Arrangements.")



Centralized: There are two actors: the central authority which may be some variant of a Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reform and the peasantry. Information is collected among the peasantry and flows up to the center. Decisions flow downward.

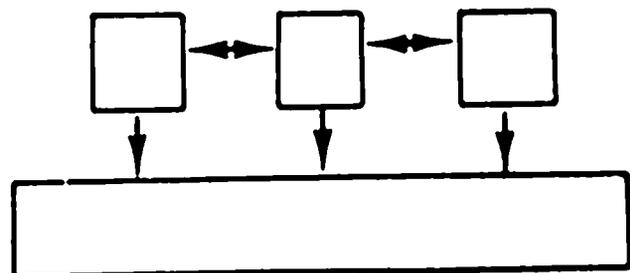
The social links of an elite bureaucracy are more likely to be with prominent landholders than with peasants. Land reform programs offer an almost irresistible opportunity for economic and political self-aggrandize-

ment. Centralized authority and decision-making arrangements discourage the perception, expression, and satisfaction of local needs and interests.

Centralized administrative arrangements involve certain diseconomies of knowledge use. Centralized decisions about program implementation require knowledge and judgments about local conditions. Physical, social, and political distances encourage delay, misinterpretation, and irresponsibility. Decisions which must be sent down from the center for implementation may not fit local conditions. Delay itself is often enough to block the successful implementation of a program.

Decentralized

Decentralized administrative arrangements, where a number of agencies were each given partial responsibility for program implementation, resulted in greater increases in peasant incomes and land tenure security than did centralized arrangements. But peasant political power did not increase, and the bureaucracy's political power increased in every instance observed. (See table, "Effects of Administrative Arrangements.")



Decentralized: The specialized agencies may be Ministries of Agriculture, Social Welfare, National Development Banks, and Farmer Representatives. Information is collected by these agencies among the peasantry, coordinated among the agencies, and decisions made.

Each of these Design Notes states a lesson which may be useful to those engaged in planning, managing, or evaluating development efforts, such as technical assistance projects. A given note may describe a technique and discuss its use, may present and explain a useful concept, or report a functional relationship between some intervention and some outcome. Design Notes are backed by cited evidence from PASITAM studies, published literature, or the reports of development agencies.

Comments and queries are invited, along with requests for additional copies and supplemental materials.

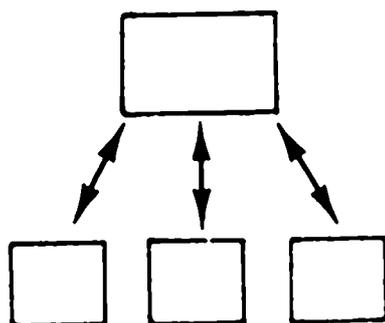
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Decentralized arrangements may result in better program information. When each agency develops knowledge within its particular sphere of competence it may do so more rapidly and economically. Yet there is duplication of information-gathering activities, confusion and conflict over authority, and dispersion of responsibility. Accountability and control are problems.

Devolved

In devolved arrangements, where significant administrative responsibility was vested in local political leaders and structures, peasant incomes and political power increased in a majority of cases. Land tenure security increased in all cases. With one possible exception bureaucratic power did not increase. (See table, "Effects of Administrative Arrangements.")



Devolved: The central authority initiates, coordinates, supports, and guides the program. Decisions are made at the level of tenant associations, campesino unions, and farm tenancy committees.

Greater efficiency and effectiveness in decision-making occurs when those with knowledge of local conditions are given responsibility and authority for implementing the program. There are obvious increases in the

rapidity of decision-making when knowledge which is locally available is used by local authorities to make decisions of local concern.

This does not imply a lack of governmental involvement; rather, it calls for new patterns of response in support of local authorities to whom the centralized bureaucracy is now in some measure accountable.

Conclusion

The evidence indicates that the devolved arrangement promotes long-run political stability because of the responsiveness of the bureaucracy to local needs and interests and because of increased popular support.

Montgomery's study was concerned only with land reform programs, but his illustrations of the effect of administrative arrangements on program outcome have implications for many kinds of efforts.

Administrators and technical assistance experts at the national, regional or local project level should consider the possible use of devolved arrangements in their specific enterprises.

For further information see:

Montgomery, John D. "The allocation of authority in land reform programs: a comparative study of administrative processes and outputs." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17:62-75.

U.S. AID. *Spring Review of Land Reform*. 12 vols. 1970.

This Design Note was prepared by Paul Cunningham.

Effects of Administrative Arrangements in Land Reform Projects

Administrative Mode	Peasants Increased Tenure Security	Peasants Increased Political Power	Peasants Increased Income	Increased Bureaucratic Power
Centralized (9 cases)	2 (22.0%)*	1 (11.0%)	1 (11.0%)	9 (100.0%)
Decentralized (6 cases)	4 (66.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)	6 (100.0%)
Devolved (10 cases)	10 (100.0%)	8 (80.0%)	8 (80.0%)	1 (10.0%)

Source: John D. Montgomery, "Allocation of Authority in Land Reform Programs: A Comparative Study of Administrative Processes and Outputs," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(March 1972):62-75.

*Number and percentage of cases.