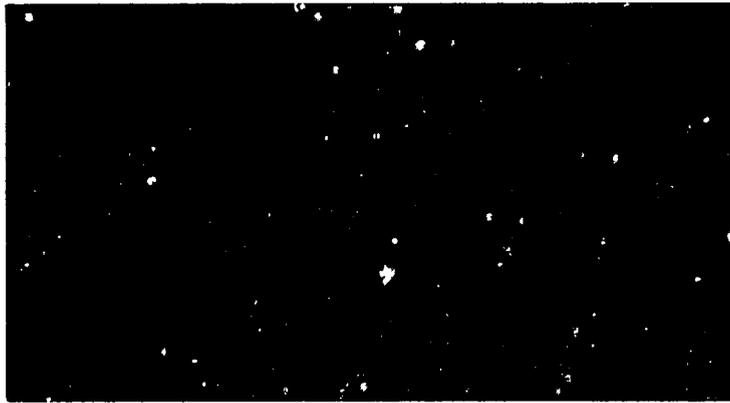
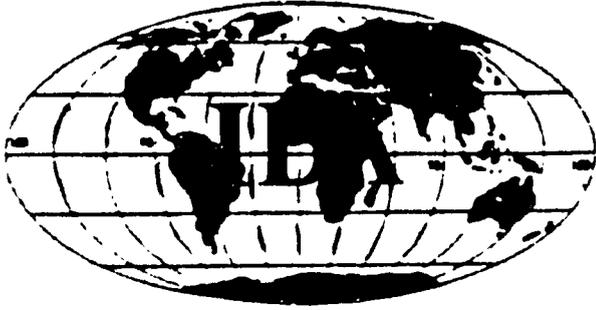


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WORKSHOP

**PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT
IN THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC:
THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**WORKSHOP ON THE PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE
YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Agency for International Development

Washington, D. C.

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A Report By

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I. Introduction

The idea of a Workshop on social science and development in the Yemen grew out of discussions between officers of the Agency for International Development and the Institute for Development Anthropology over how best to respond to the Congressional mandate, expressed in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973. A quarter of a century of financial aid, technology transfer, and large numbers of expatriate technicians had not measurably closed the gap between the rich countries and the hard-core poor (the so-called "least developed"), and had done little if anything to improve the lot of the poorest masses of many Third World states. The U. S. Congress, in that act, requires that where U. S. funds are used, the plight of those poor, primarily rural persons, be addressed directly, and that programs and projects must demonstrate how the poor benefit from the proposed interventions. Congress further identified the sectors within which investments are to be made: food and nutrition, public health, and human resource development. On a rhetorical level this may be easy enough, and most proposals now show at least a token awareness of the new requirements, with a brief, obligatory statement on "social impact". But few of these proposals provide the critical analytic depth to assure that this or that interventions will "impact" in a beneficial sense on the local people.

One finding of which we are reasonably sure is that the likelihood of nonsuccess increases with the degree of project imposition. It is not merely an ideological goal but a fundamental truth that the better projects, the enduring, replicable ones, are those whose design, implementation, and

management include substantial local participation. This means that the rural people must be involved from the beginning as expert consultants on local conditions, needs, and capacities.

This is not without difficulty, particularly for those who have traditionally conceived of development as a technical event rather than a social or political one. Those for whom the size of the harvest rather than the well-being of the farmer is the prime goal are understandably, if mistakenly, impatient with the demand of the social scientists to focus first on the producer, then on the produced. Those who measure development in terms of fractional increases in GNP have problems seeing the issue as one of distribution and equity. The new mandate for them creates difficulties which their established routines are ill-suited to solve. But it provides great opportunities for those who can creatively modify these routines, who can work comfortably from below instead of imposing actions from above.

The immediate need is for information about the local populations whose resources are to be made relevant to programs of (self-) planned change. The Yemen, with its limited degree of centralized control over the rural areas and with its energetic, entrepreneurial people, seems to be an ideal arena for change predicated on local initiative. Yet the Yemen also presents a series of features which, individually and in concert, have been seen by planners as constituting serious constraints for developmental actions. Most prominent of these is the relative scarcity and high cost of labor, a function of the attractiveness of migration to labor-shy countries such as Saudi Arabia. The remittances sent home by these migrant

laborers form the basis of much of the country's earnings. A second claimed constraint is the exceptionally poor road and communications network, which is supposed to impede the emergence of an efficient internal marketing system (although it was reported during the Workshop that growers of qat have little difficulty in seeing their produce to market.) The lack of trained personnel, particularly at the technical and middle managerial level, is cited as a third major constraint. The high economic returns from the production of qat itself seem to be a fourth constraint, for there would appear to be little incentive to increase production of food crops (although again the Workshop reported considerable success in potato and wheat farming.) Finally, a prime constraint appears to be the semi-arid habitat, with poor quality and uncertain quantities of readily available water.

With excellent cooperation from the Office of Technical Support, Bureau for Near East (AID), the Institute for Development Anthropology organized a one-day workshop in Washington on October 22, 1976, in which U. S.-based social scientists with experience in the Yemen met with representatives of the Agency and others to discuss how their professional understandings informed on "problems and prospects for development in the Yemen Arab Republic". It was the first time that social anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, Islamicists, and economists met with persons responsible for the U. S. development assistance program in the Y. A. R. No formal papers were presented, but all persons had received some dozen documents dealing with proposed interventions in orchards, water supply systems, manpower training, soil surveys, sewerage, rural development,

local development associations, etc. These provided the overview and the specifics of the AID country program. The participants' task was to show how the data and analyses of social science inquiry in Yemen were pertinent to the needs and understandings of persons responsible for the programs of planned change in that country consistent with the focus on bettering the position of the rural poor.

The substance of these discussions is summarized in this report. Although the quality of existing knowledge about the country is generally admirable, there has been too little work in the rural areas -- and what there is remains too concentrated geographically -- to allow for valid country-wide generalizations. The not unexpected finding of the Workshop is that project-generating and project-associated social science research and the facilitation of Yemeni capacities to undertake that research are the highest priority recommendations.

The following persons kindly accepted invitations to participate:

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In addition to AID personnel, we also acknowledge with gratitude the individuals who came from the Department of State, the World Bank, the National Academy of Sciences and from other governmental, international and voluntary organizations. We hope that this report proves useful in arriving at our common goal.

II. Ecological, Economic, and Social Characteristics.

The Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) flanks the southern end of the Red Sea, and borders Saudi Arabia on the north and northeast and the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen on the south and southeast. The area of the country is approximately 145,000 km² of which two percent, or 2,900 km² is considered cultivable. The population numbers between 5.5 and 6 million, of whom perhaps one quarter are temporarily working outside the country, principally in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and East Africa. Within Yemen, 80 to 90 percent of the population resides in the rural areas and engages in agricultural work and animal husbandry.

The economy of Yemen is almost exclusively agricultural. Millet and sorghum are the primary food crops, although dates, potatoes, maize, and wheat are widely grown. Principal exports in order of value are coffee, cotton, qat*, and animal hides. Yemen's principal imports in order of value are food and beverages (over 50 percent), minor manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment, and fuel. The value of imports is approximately nine times that of exports; the gap between the two is bridged by remittances sent from Yemenis working abroad, by foreign assistance loans and grants, and through substantial import duties on imported commodities. In consequence, the YAR is in the curious position, despite the massive disproportion between imports and exports, of having large foreign monetary reserves and a readily exchangeable currency. Moreover, as Aurelius Morgner pointed out, increasing domestic food production may actually decrease the fiscal base of the government, which relies heavily on customs duties on imported foodstuffs. Nevertheless, the high level of cash circulation in

* Qat is a mildly narcotic plant whose leaves are chewed to produce a sense of euphoria and alertness in the chewer.

the country without a corresponding level of domestic production has resulted in a high inflation rate.

With government encouragement, a small industrial sector, which concentrates on the manufacture of import-substitution goods, is emerging in the principal cities. The major industrial complex is the public sector textile mill at Sana'a, although there a small number of light manufacturing industries, most notably the private sector candy and biscuit factory in Ta'iz.

Despite the rising per capita national income which is due mostly to wage labor emigration, the Yemen Arab Republic remains one of the most underdeveloped nations in the world. Prior to the establishment of the Republic in 1962, the country was isolated from the rest of the world; development projects, even when funded and ready to begin, were often shelved due to the Monarchy's xenophobic fears of outside influence and interference. Development programs in Yemen have been almost exclusively geared to the creation and maintenance of basic social and physical infrastructure. Most notable has been the construction of a primary road network linking the larger towns. Many of the infrastructural projects have been directed towards Yemen's rapidly growing cities. Along with various human resources development programs in the Yemen Arab Republic Government (YARG), foreign donors have funded and implemented urban water and sewerage systems and port and airfield construction.

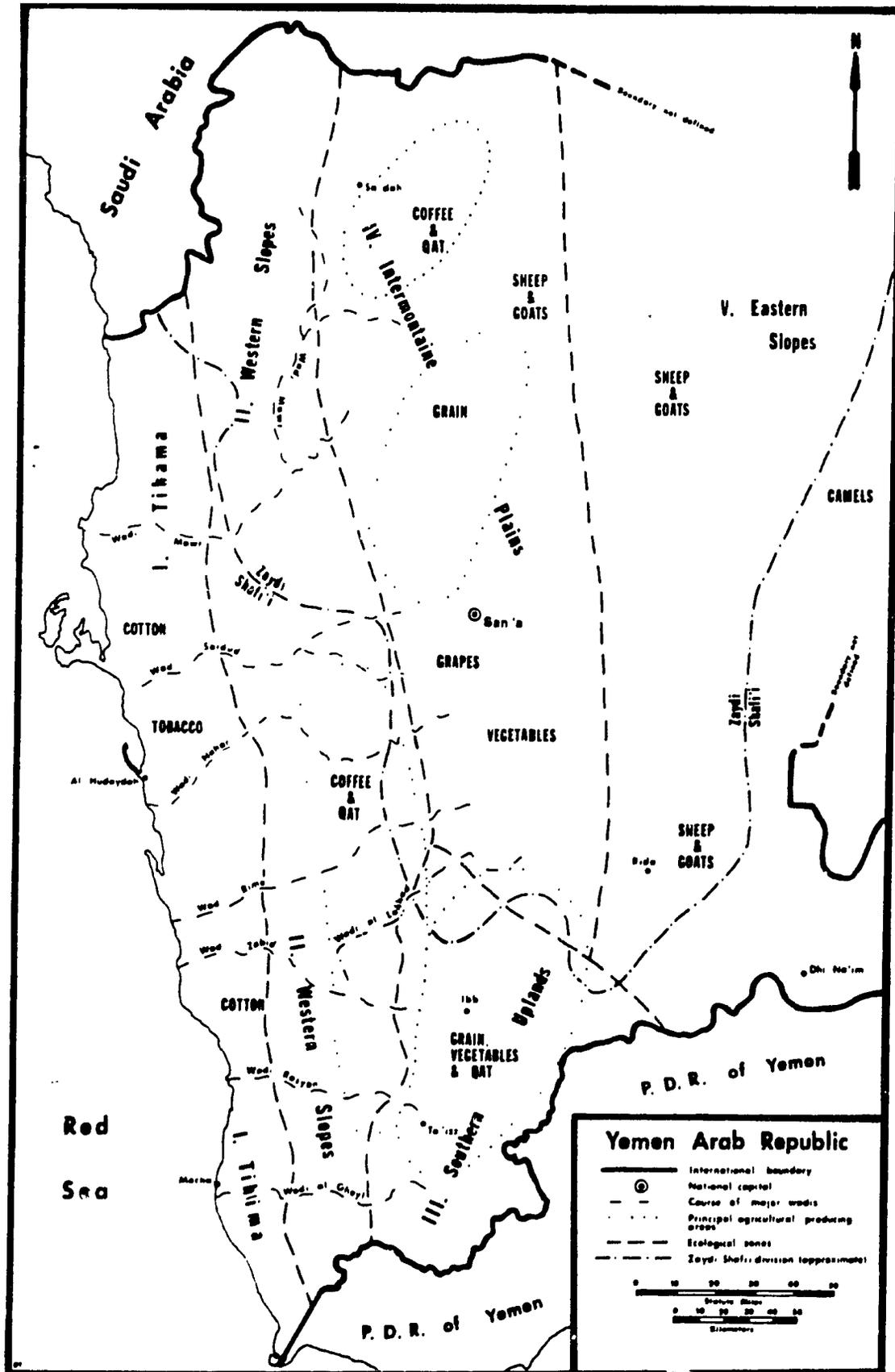
Mr. David I. Steinberg, Director, Office of Technical Support, Bureau for Near East, Agency for International Development, who co-chaired the Workshop, stated that AID has followed a "traditional" development program

in Yemen, emphasizing technology transfer and infrastructure. Pursuant to Congressional directives to focus on programs which better reach the rural poor and in line with YARG goals of raising the standard of living of the rural population, AID is now in the process of designing and implementing projects which aim at increasing food production and improving the conditions of life for the rural population.

Since Yemen's population is overwhelmingly rural and agricultural, economic development boils down to improving agricultural production and opening new opportunities for the farmers and their families. One of the primary purposes of the Workshop was to review the present conditions of agricultural production in Yemen from a social anthropological viewpoint, to describe and analyze the social landscape within which rural development activities take place.

Yemen may be divided into five geographical zones, which are ecologically distinct, implying different types of agricultural regimes and social organizations: (1) the Tihama, or coastal strip; (2) the Western Slopes; (3) the Southern Uplands; (4) the Intermontaine Plains; and (5) the Eastern Slopes. (See map).

The Tihama is a relatively flat and arid zone which receives an average yearly rainfall of about 150 mm, although in recent years the rainfall has been much lower than expected. The majority of the population earns its livelihood from the cultivation of millet and the herding of sheep, goats, and cattle. The relative percentages of rainfed and irrigated millet in this zone are unclear, and some participants questioned the validity of reports (cf. AID 1976) of unirrigated millet under such arid conditions.



Saudi Arabia

II. Western Slopes

IV. Intermediate Plateaus

V. Eastern Slopes

I. Tihama

Yaydi Shafi

COTTON

GRAIN

SHEEP & GOATS

SHEEP & GOATS

CAMELS

TOBACCO

PLAINS

GRAPES

VEGETABLES

COFFEE & QAT

SHEEP & GOATS

Red Sea

COTTON

II. Western Slopes

GRAIN, VEGETABLES & QAT

P. D. R. of Yemen

I. Tihama

III. Southern Slopes

P. D. R. of Yemen

In areas where the wadis (valleys) of the Western Slopes empty onto the coastal plains, the irrigated cultivation of cotton is possible and may be becoming more prevalent.

Given its climate, this zone has a surprisingly high population and contains numerous towns. The role played by access to the sea on the Tihama population and economy is unclear, although historically the Tihama has had extensive trading relations with other countries bordering the Red Sea and with East Africa. Also, it should be noted that much of the population is mobile, moving in yearly or longer cycles which allow them to take advantage of the dispersed natural resources and the economic opportunities of markets for their products and labor.

Historically, the Tihama has stood apart from the rest of Yemen both socially and politically. Tihamis have a darker skin color (reputed to be of African origin) than the rest of the Yemenis and have limited social and economic intercourse with the highlands. The Tihama has regionally experienced strong tribal organization. The major Tihami tribes are members of the 'Akk confederation and have in the past stood in opposition to the Bakil and Hashid confederacies of the highlands.

The Tihamis are also distinguished from their highland neighbors because they are Shafi'i Sunni Muslims while the highlanders are Zaydi Shi'ite Muslims.

Although the distinction between Shafi'i and Zaydi has historically been more important politically than theologically, the identities of Shafi'i and Zaydi are very real to the people who hold them and in fact constitute ethnic labels. However, one should note that ethnic allegiances

in Yemen are highly variable and are not hard and fast characterizations. An individual's place of origin, kin group, and economic status are often more important in social standing and interaction than religious affiliation. There is thus a cleavage between Tihamis based upon the incidence of tribal organization. Rural Tihamis residing north of Zabid in general belong to tribal groups. Southern Tihamis, by contrast, do not. This difference exists for various reasons, both social and historical. While both north and south are Shafi'i, the southern Tihama has for centuries been much more urban-oriented. This area contains the towns of Hudaydah, Bayt al'Faqih, Zabid, Hays, and Mocha. Moreover, the highland neighbors of the southernmost Tihamis do not display strong tribal organizations. The struggles of the northern Tihamis with their tribal Zaydi neighbors were not duplicated in the south, where Tihama Shafi'is reside alongside non-tribal Shafi'i highlanders.

Within the last fifteen years, there have been many YARG and foreign development activities in the coastal zone. Among these are the construction of modern port facilities at Hudaydah, a large cement plant at Bajil, the road connecting the towns of the southern Tihama, and numerous agricultural schemes focusing on the alluvial fans of the wadis, particularly Wadi Zabid and Wadi Mawr.

The Western Slopes, immediately east of the Tihama, is a zone of steeply rising mountain ridges and precipitous wadis which cross-cut the mountains from east to west. Rainfall here is much more abundant than in the Tihama, with yearly averages of between 400 and 600 mm. However, because of the steep slopes and rocky soil, the rain, which comes with the spring and

summer monsoons, runs quickly off the mountains and into the wadis below. To counter this run-off, the Yemenis living in this zone have constructed an elaborate and extensive system of terraces on the slopes and a sophisticated network of dams, weirs, and irrigation channels to divert the spate floods to fields in the wadi floors. In this zone sorghum is the subsistence crop, and coffee and qat are the primary cash crops.

The wadis, together with their surrounding mountain slopes, form rather discrete economic and social units. Villages are scattered both along the wadi floors, where they are wide enough, and along the marginal lands on the mountain slopes. Despite the high population density, there are few towns of any size, and economic activities are dispersed throughout each region with a minimal centralization.

The ethnic composition of this zone is mixed. The northern inhabitants are tribally organized Zaydis, while the southern population is predominantly non-tribal Shafi'is. Between these two groups and astride the Hudaydah-Sanaa highway reside Yemen's population of Isma'ili Shi'ite Muslims. This "tribe", the Bani Isma'il numbers approximately 125,000 and theologically, at least, is antagonistic to both the Zaydis and the Shafi'is. However, Ismail Poonawala reported that the Isma'ilis differ very little from their Zaydi and Shafi'i neighbors in terms of local organization, economic activities, and general style of life.

The Isma'ilis, like the other inhabitants of the Western Slopes, live in small, remote village communities which are barely accessible from the outside. Perhaps due to this inaccessibility and the almost total lack of development activities in this zone, very little is known of its economic

and social conditions. This is surprising, because of the region's high agricultural potential and dense population. Nevertheless, participants in the Workshop could offer no examples of research in the area or informed characterizations of its social and economic landscape.

The Southern Uplands, a small zone south of the town of Yarim and just east of the Western Slopes, is truly the "Arabia Felix" of Yemen. The zone is characterized by mountain ridges interspersed with small plains, and it receives more rain than any other zone -- a yearly average of between 400 and 1,000 mm. As a consequence of these topographical and climatic conditions, the Southern Uplands is the garden spot of the YAR, producing not only the ubiquitous sorghum, but also coffee, qat, wheat, and a large variety of fruits and vegetables. Like mountain agriculture in the Western Slopes, the slopes in the Southern Uplands are extensively terraced with frequent irrigation networks to carry run-off to the fields below.

The Southern Uplands is densely populated and contains many large and medium sized towns, most notably Yarim, Ibb, and Ta'iz. Historically, this zone has had close commercial relations with South Yemen, and Ta'iz until recently served as the principal entrepot for the flow of goods between Yemen and the outside world via Aden. Today, Ta'iz remains a major commercial center for the YAR, and many of the country's development activities are situated there.

Like their neighbors in the mountains to the west, the people of the Southern Uplands are non-tribally organized Shafi'is. Historically, the people of this zone have been the most exposed to non-Yemeni and Western influences. More than any other zone, the people of the Southern Uplands

have a long history of outmigration. During the days of British occupation in the South, many people left the area to work in Aden as port workers, merchants, and employees in the service sector. Others traveled further afield and founded or worked in family enterprises in East Africa, South Asia, or Indonesia. Upon their return from abroad, these entrepreneurs used their expertise and savings to expand greatly the marketing system and the economic integration of the zone.

The Southern Uplands is perhaps the most accessible and certainly the best known of the regions of Yemen. The three anthropologists who had recently returned from Yemen and participated in the Workshop had all conducted their research in the Southern Uplands. As a cautionary note, many of the statements about agriculture and social conditions in Yemen contained in this report are drawn from work originating in this zone; they should not uncritically be generalized to the whole country.

The Intermontaine Plains, a zone running north of the Southern Uplands and east of the Western Slopes, is the primary grain growing area of Yemen. With average yearly rainfalls between 300 and 500 mm, this zone produces sorghum, millet, barley, and wheat. Fruits and vegetables, particularly potatoes, are grown, along with a considerable amount of coffee and qat in the northern part of the zone. Around the town of Sa'dah in the more arid north, animal husbandry becomes particularly important.

Like the other geographical zones in Yemen, the most obvious division in land use and agricultural productivity is between those lands irrigated from mountain run-off and those lands where agriculture depends on the rainfall alone. In the small, sheltered wadis just north of Sanaa, for

example, intensive vegetable gardening is possible. Outside the wadis on the plains, extensive grain production takes place, and on the terraced slopes of the mountains there is intensive cultivation of coffee and qat.

The ethnic character of the zone is extremely complex. In terms of religious affiliation, Zaydis dominate the countryside, although there are scattered groups of Shafi'is. In the city of Sana'a, the Shafi'is constitute a majority. This zone, like the northern half of the country as a whole, displays strong tribal identities. While the majority of the tribal groups are Zaydi, there are many alliances and antagonisms among individual tribes. Most tribes in the zone belong to one of three major confederations (the Bakil, the Hashid, or the Madhhij), and these confederations also contain some Shafi'i tribes. As in other parts of Yemen which have strong rural tribal structures, there are often social antagonisms between the city and the rural areas. Tribesmen complain, for example, that city dwellers are refugees without roots or status in kin groups, while city folk maintain that tribesmen are uncivilized and follow local custom rather than Islamic law.

Government and foreign donor development activities have been concentrated in the city of Sana'a itself and upon roads and agricultural schemes south of Sana'a. Within Sana'a and Dhamar governorates, James W. Green reported very active Local Development Associations (LDA's) which are engaged in basic infrastructural projects such as digging wells and cisterns for drinking water, building roads and jeepable trails, and constructing schools and clinics (cf. Green 1975). However, recently the YARG has shown a strong interest in development programs geared to the northern part of the zone around the town of Sa'dah. Despite this activity, however, there has been

very little systematic sociological research outside Sana'a. This is particularly true in the north, which has a different social and economic landscape from areas where research has been done.

The Eastern Slopes form the eastern third of the YAR. This zone, which descends from the high plateaux into the Rub al-Khali and Ramlat as-Sab'atayn deserts, is extremely arid and receives only marginal rainfall. The population density is extremely low, and perhaps only five percent of Yemen's population lives in the Eastern Slopes. Animal husbandry is the most important economic activity, and some of the people are engaged in "classic" Arabian camel nomadism. Some millet is grown under these unfavorable conditions, although agriculture is at best only a supplemental economic activity for much of the population.

Strangely enough, the Eastern Slopes contain the historical centers of the two pre-Islamic kingdoms of Ma'in and Saba, and evidence of ancient irrigation works and settlements dot the area. Of particular interest are the ruins of the ancient dam (barrage) at Ma'rib and its attendant canal network.

Not surprisingly, very little is known about the ethnic characteristics of this zone. Maps of the area show tribal groups of Shafi'i, Saydi, and even Isma'ili affiliation, and weak ties to both the Madhhij and Bakil confederations. In relation to Yemenis in general, the people of this area are perhaps also socially identified as nomads or bedouin.

Apart from a road between Sanaa and Ma'rib, there have been almost no development projects in the Eastern Slopes. Similarly, there has been no sociological research.

During the Workshop discussion of Yemen's geographical zones, it was stressed that the delineation of the zones does not mark rigid political, economic, social, or cultural boundaries. While historically there occurred political and military struggles between, say, Tihamis and highlanders, neither the Tihama nor the highlands were ever themselves identifiable political units. As participant Robert Stookey pointed out, Yemen as a whole has been characterized by the localization of administration and the de-centralization of power. This, to a great extent, remains so today. James W. Green remarked that such circumstances may greatly facilitate local decision-making and action in rural development. However, in many recently organized Local Development Associations over-centralization of authority and lack of power to decide matters of local consequence have proven to be great obstacles to rural development at the local government and community levels.

The variables identified in each region -- ecological, political, ethnic, religious, etc. -- are likely to prove highly relevant to the success of specific programs of change. A clear conclusion of the Workshop is the need for project-generating and project-related social science inquiry to expose the connections between change and local conditions.

Economically, each area displays the dichotomy between rain-fed and irrigated agriculture, and each zone produces both subsistence and commercial crops (in the Eastern Slopes, animal products constitute the primary "cash crop"). Regional economic units often cross-cut ecological boundaries. For example, Martha Mundy has reported that in Wadi Mawr there is a great deal of short-term migration of agricultural workers between the Tihama and the Western Slopes. Tihamis go into the mountains to work in the harvests and highlanders come down into the wadi and surrounding areas to work in the

fields there. The wadi as an economic unit spans both areas of the Tihama and the mountains. Finally, the market system has integrated the zones through the mechanisms of merchant and exchange activities. Ron Hart, a Workshop participant, reported that during his fieldwork near Ibb, he followed a merchant during the course of a day in which the merchant bought a bundle of qat from a villager near Ibb and traveled along the roads, making various stops, until he eventually arrived in Zabid where he sold the qat at a much higher price than available in the Southern Uplands.

Sociologically, the nuclear or extended family unit appears to be the dominant economic units, and relations between units are governed for the most part by kinship ties. Social organization varies within each geographical zone, and, although there is very little information on the subject, it seems as though there are recognizable types of local-level organization which exist throughout Yemen.

Culturally, each zone is just about as diverse as the whole of Yemen. Although the Southern Uplands and the Tihama are relatively homogeneous religiously, the other zones are not, and the Zaydi-Shafi'i division cross-cuts them. Similarly, tribal identity and affiliation also cross-cut geographical zones, and the incidence of tribal organization more nearly approaches a north-south cleavage which cross-cuts categories based on ecology and on religion.

Both historical circumstances and general ecological factors have combined to produce differences in economic activities and the options of life-styles in the various regions. The very nature of wadi irrigation is different and entails different organization and activities than the

terrace agriculture of the highlands. In discussing this point in the Workshop, Brinkley Messick reported a great diversity of ecological, political, agricultural, and historical circumstances all within a fifteen-mile radius of the town of Ibb. Thus on one side of the town the rural areas contain strong, egalitarian villages with a prevalence of small holdings producing subsistence crops such as sorghum. The other side displays a dominant shaykh (landlord) system with large-scale land ownership and the production of cash crops such as qat by tenants and sharecroppers. Both Green and Steinberg reported that the LDA's they visited each display unique and distinct characteristics, whether or not they are in the same geographical zone. Even within the small area encompassed by one village community, general statements as to cropping patterns are difficult to make. Jon Swanson stated that in the villages he studied near Ta'iz the micro-environmental factors of soil conditions and frost frequency in each field are the best indicators of cropping patterns. It should be noted, however, that the altitude, topography, and rainfall of the mountainous areas, particularly in the Western Slopes and the Southern Uplands, combine to produce agricultural conditions that are much more varied than those of the Tihama, wadis, Intermontaine Plains, or Eastern Slopes. However, since no detailed research has been conducted in all these areas, it is premature to state what degree of variance in cropping patterns actually exists in these different regions. Moreover, there has been no comprehensive study of the agricultural and social implications of the different kinds of irrigation systems, such as those found in the different sized wadis and along the terraced mountain slopes. Clearly, different systems of water delivery and allocation have direct implications for the design, implementation, and success of economic development projects aimed at

agriculture; not to mention how these programs will affect the rural poor.

The Workshop felt as a group that a greater effort was called for to collect systematically information on the general cropping patterns, irrigation practices, regional economic integration, and primary socio-political structures (tribal and/or community and central governmental) which are geographically based. A review of the studies conducted so far indicates concentration of effort in the Southern Uplands area together with a minimum of work in the alluvial fans of the Tihama. There has been practically no research inquiry on the Western Slopes, the northern Intermontaine Plains, or the Eastern Slopes.

Once the research has been undertaken, analytical models showing the relationship of various environmental, economic, and social variables can be constructed. During the Workshop Ron Hart and Jon Swanson each outlined schemes for describing agricultural conditions in their respective areas of fieldwork in the Southern Uplands. Based primarily on agriculture and settlement on well-watered mountain slopes, these models allowed predictions concerning future trends in cropping patterns, migration, and economic relations among producers, landowners, and the market. Likewise, a similar model can be constructed from Martha Mundy's study of Wadi Mawr (Mundy 1975). While not making claims about the general applicability of these few models outside their particular ecological and social contexts, once a sufficient number of cases have been examined, this approach does allow for the construction of a typology for describing and analyzing the rural social landscape of Yemen and the general pattern of social and economic changes that are taking place.

The Workshop participants were in general agreement that there have been principal factors underlying social change in Yemen during the past fifteen years: (1) the expansion of the cash sector and the general increase of market-oriented relations in the rural areas; (2) the dramatically increasing rates of wage-labor emigration from the rural areas; and (3) the establishment of a central government seeking to develop a modern administrative system and promoting economic development. These factors cause significant effects in agricultural production, economic activities, social differentiation, and sex roles.

III. Conditions of Agricultural Production

In agriculture the twin demands for cash and labor have contributed to what may be viewed as a transition from a largely subsistence economy to a primarily money economy. The increasing availability of money, either through labor migration or the cultivation of profitable crops such as qat and potatoes, together with the ability to purchase imported foodstuffs in local markets, has led to a noticeable decline in the cultivation of the traditional subsistence crops sorghum and millet. Investments in labor are in general shifting from the subsistence sector to the cash sector and to migration abroad. Moreover, as cash flows increase, there seems to be an "escalation of taste" phenomenon. People prefer to eat imported wheat products rather than millet, and Aurelius Morgner reported dramatic increases in the consumption of manufactured biscuits and candies.

The needs of the producers have shifted from growing simply what they consume with a small surplus for exchange to growing both crops they consume and crops which can be converted into cash to purchase imported foodstuffs and manufactured consumer items. However, it should be noted that the development of this pattern is uneven, and varies from region to region in Yemen. For example, Swanson and Hart both spoke of a decline in sorghum production in their areas and increasing shortages of labor combined with inflation in prices for food, livestock, and labor. They reinforced Michael Dow's report of the decline of terraced agriculture (Dow 1975). Such observations in the highlands, however, stand in contrast to Mundy's report on conditions in Wadi Mawr (Mundy 1975). Here in the Tihama, it seems as though there is no shortage of labor and, if anything, there is a decline in the cultivation of cotton! Millet and sorghum remain the subsistence bases of this population.

It must be recognized, then, that the discussion of agricultural dynamics which follows may in fact apply only to the Southern Uplands zone and to the highland terraced areas within that zone.

Cropping patterns should be viewed as a result of the operation of a number of variables, some of which are environmental (climate, altitude, water, soil conditions, frost frequency) and some of which are economic and social (needs of producer, labor power, land tenure, access to market and credit, customary planting history of field). These variables may be expected to differ between the different geographical zones, within different regions, and even with individual cultivators. Moreover, relations among the variables are not stable. For example, Hart observed a direct relation between the price of qat in the market and the wages paid to workers in qat fields. As the selling price of qat goes up, so does the wage paid, with the result that agricultural laborers are drawn away from lower paying employment in sorghum and millet production. A laborer in a qat field receives 25 YR^{*} a day; in a millet field only 8 YR a day. The implication is that people work in qat fields to receive a higher wage, and, in a labor scarce situation, there will be no labor to cultivate sorghum and millet. If land cannot produce qat, but only sorghum, it tends to go out of production. Swanson reported just such a pattern in the high emigration area around Ta'iz, with the remoter and less productive terraces on hill tops and the less watered lands going out of production even though millet and sorghum could be grown there.

Following this general line of argument concerning the seller's market for labor and the emphasis on cash crop cultivation, Swanson also

* 4.5 YR = \$1.00

reported changes in landlord-sharecropper contracts. As previous cultivators emigrated, land was left behind, and the value of labor rose; contracts which had previously divided the harvest one-third to the tenant and two-thirds to the landlord evolved into present contracts of a fifty-fifty division with the landlord paying the 10 percent zakat tax.

Despite the occurrence of these changes in Swanson's area, it should be noted that much is unknown about landlord-tenant relationships, or even what percentage of the agricultural lands in each geographical zone are under tenant or sharecropper cultivation. It appears that these arrangements vary widely according to the nature of production (whether rainfed or irrigated), what is produced, and the prevailing customs of the area. Most observers feel that productivity is the key to whether or not land will be held in small plots and cultivated by its owners or owned by landlords who contract to tenant cultivators. Mundy reported smallholdings in the more marginal areas of the Wadi Mawr system and the rainfed lands of the Tihama and Western Slopes bordering the wadi. Presumably, rainfed fields, being less productive than irrigated zones, have a higher incidence of smallholdings, but this is to a large extent conjecture. Moreover, there exists no general study of the trends in land prices, how land is acquired, or even whether or not there is a substantial cash market in land holdings. Needless to say, capitalization in land exists and large-scale landholdings occur throughout Yemen, but the effect of changes in land values and labor availability on landholdings is not known.

The subsistence sphere of the rural economy, although shrinking in recent years, remains omnipresent in Yemen. Sorghum and millet are

are ubiquitous in all the geographical zones of the country, and even where qat predominates sorghum is grown between qat rows. The subsistence base of the agriculturalists is highly integrated with sorghum and millet providing not only minimal nutritional requirements, but also fodder for livestock. The livestock, in turn, provide milk products, manure for the fields and domestic fuel, and traction for plowing. Sorghum stalks are used in house construction and domestic fuel in addition to fodder. This "cow and sorghum" subsistence base, as Swanson termed it, is supplemented by a small amount of leguminous vegetables, often grown between the rows of sorghum, which add important nutrients to the soil. Despite the low level of technology and the relatively low yield of present-day sorghum and millet agriculture, Yemeni farmers practice a labor intensive and sophisticated agricultural regime which displays a minimization of waste and a high awareness of conservation measures.

The key to viewing sorghum and millet agriculture as distinct from qat, coffee, cotton, or potatoes is that sorghum and millet are not grown primarily for the market or the acquisition of cash, despite the fact that these two crops produce around 70 percent of the total per capita daily food intake of the average village consumer. Sorghum and millet stand with some independence from the crops grown for cash, but as sorghum and millet production declines, a market in the crops is appearing in non-sorghum and millet producing areas. Hart reported that some sorghum grain is being sold in the markets near Ibb, and sorghum stalks are also sold. However, in general the cash value of sorghum and millet is not equivalent to its production costs. Foreign imported foodstuffs are becoming readily

available, and probably their competition will keep demand in the market low for sorghum and millet. People raise sorghum and millet to eat, not to sell, and those with cash purchase wheat, potatoes, and canned goods, not sorghum and millet.

The subsistence sphere is vulnerable to penetration of the cash nexus as more and more items become freely exchangeable in the market place and the farmer's needs and desires for cash increase. Swanson reported that the prices of oxen and cattle, essential means of production in the subsistence sphere, have skyrocketed. Cattle are becoming valuable commodities unlike sorghum and millet. Moreover, traditional reciprocal mechanisms for mobilizing labor may be becoming less common due to the draw of high wages in qat production and labor emigration. Subsistence farmers may be finding themselves unable to compete with the cash sphere, and their needs require that they too become involved in cash cropping, either as producers themselves or as wage laborers. It should be noted that the most spectacular incidence of cash cropping involves qat production, but coffee, cotton, and potatoes are also grown for sale in the market. Nevertheless, qat, being a year-round producer of light weight and high value, is perhaps the most highly and rapidly remunerative of these crops.

Participants in the workshop, not surprisingly, spent a great deal of time discussing the nature of the qat trade and its implications, and their comments are briefly summarized here. Although the production and use of qat are not new in Yemen, in recent years there has been a dramatic rise in both land cultivated in qat and people engaged in the qat market.

Complex, sophisticated, and efficient marketing mechanisms for qat are everywhere, and link the remotest villages with the largest cities. It appears that many people profit from the qat trade. There is no immediately recognizable pattern in its production, and, where the climate is amenable, peasants grow and sell it on their own with very little specialization. Along with the penetration of the market, comes the need for people to acquire cash, and qat growing offers a ready source of cash. Although at present the qat market is a seller's market, some of the participants predicted a saturation threshold for the qat market, and they pointed out that in large regions of Yemen qat is not grown. In these regions other cash crops are appearing such as wheat, potatoes, vegetables, fruit, cotton, and coffee, the latter two principally for export. The determination of the value of these two crops rests primarily on prices in the world market as does their future viability in Yemen. If a saturation point for qat is indeed on the horizon, then there will most likely be market substitution of other cash crops, rather than a return to subsistence agriculture.

In summary, the social and economic characteristics of agricultural production in Yemen today appear to be the following: (1) a high rural demand for cash; (2) the penetration of market relations and circulation of commodities, both edible and otherwise; (3) increasing costs of labor; and (4) a dramatic rise in the cultivation of qat and other cash crops and a corresponding decline in the production of food staples like sorghum and millet. As a result of these factors, there may be a significant decline in land under cultivation, particularly where rates of emigration are high. An understanding of present-day trends in agricultural production and the factors contributing to these trends is imperative, given the

implications they hold for the feasibility and success of programs aimed at increasing cereals production.

It may also be noted that high agricultural wages and increasing employment opportunities are affecting the female population and the economic activities which women undertake. It was noted that women do the same jobs that men do, and they are doing them more and more frequently. The role of women in the market is increasing. As men emigrate or as farmers employ more wage laborers, women are becoming a significant factor in the work force. Perhaps this increased participation in the evolving market and cash economy of rural Yemen will differentiate the female population along the same lines as men. However, in certain activities women will almost certainly remain specialists; among which are childrearing, domestic maintenance, and handicraft production. Unfortunately, the role of women in the rural economy of Yemen has been little studied, and generalizations about women's activities and their contribution to economic and social organization remain little more than speculative, as do predictions of change in women's positions in Yemeni society.

Yemen presents a case in which the necessity for focusing programs on women is neither ideological nor rhetorical, but pragmatic. An understanding of the changing roles played by women is critical since the emigration of men and their absence from the work force may very well mean that women must be the target of development if there is to be any at all.

If programs in rural economic development or other projects aimed at increasing agricultural production are to be successful, their design and implementation must be integrated into existing patterns of agricultural

production and marketing. These patterns not only include the general characteristics and circumstances discussed above, but also the individual cropping decisions made by the actual producers. Due to limitations of time and lack of collected information, the Workshop participants were unable to work out an adequate picture of the evaluative matrix of decision-making in agriculture. The Workshop Co-Chairpersons raised a series of questions about who makes production decisions, the nature of producing units and their development cycle, the role and cost of labor, minimal cash requirements, and the division of labor in the family. Apart from the primary concern of food requirements, little generalization on these subjects could be made, and the circumstances of each appears to vary significantly from area to area.

To get at an understanding of the degree and patterns of these variances, Workshop participants were in general agreement that a number of coordinated studies in several different ecological and social areas of the country are needed. These studies would focus on the ecological, economic, and social conditions of agricultural production in Yemen. Among the topics researched would be the following:

- (1) Relative labor and time requirements for each crop and its cycle of production in each ecological region;
- (2) Structural characteristics of the present mode of production and the division of labor in rural producing and consuming units;
- (3) Market and consumption patterns within the rural areas as well as those which link the rural and urban sectors;
- (4) Incentives and constraints underlying present local-level decisions on crop distribution patterns and the prevalent economic strategies of the various sectors of the rural population;

- (5) Existing forms and functions of local cooperation for building rural infrastructure.

It was noted in the Workshop that, given the realities of time, funds, and personnel, research should initially be directed at geographical areas as yet unstudied, most notably the Western Slopes highland and wadi regions, the northern areas of the Intermontaine Plains, and the Eastern slopes. For the Tihama, reports generated by projects in Wadi Mawr and Wadi Zabid provide initial data. When available, the dissertations of Hart, Messick, and Swanson will provide economic and sociological information on town and village conditions in the Southern Uplands. In particular, Hart has data on household budgets, marketing patterns, and labor and capital investments and productivity of small garden plots. Messick has information on social organization, political structures, and rural-urban relations. Swanson has data on household budgets, agricultural practices and variability, and the effects of migration on social and economic patterns. Concerning the role of qat on Yemeni society, Dr. John G. Kennedy's report on his long-term research should be forthcoming soon.

Description and analysis of present and future trends in labor force development and forms of labor mobilization in the rural areas is of primary importance. The relative "pulls" and "pushes" of various economic sectors in Yemen and abroad have a direct influence on the parameters of agricultural development. Yemen, at least in the areas for which information is available, stands out in the underdeveloped world as a nation experiencing a labor shortage in agriculture. This is in large part due to international wage labor migration. However, migration has had

differential impact in Yemen. In Wadi Mawr, for example, no labor shortage is reported, but in the Southern Uplands productive land goes uncultivated for lack of labor power. Steinberg suggested that perhaps conventional approaches to rural development are unsuited due to emigration and large cash flows in the form of remittances from abroad.

Understanding the process and impact of migration is crucial to understanding rural development in Yemen. There exists only sketchy information on who actually migrates, how they migrate, and the relative frequency of migration. Moreover, there is very little available concerning internal migration in Yemen and the various reasons underlying that migration. In stressing the importance of the migration phenomena, Dr. Al-Iriani of the Central Planning Organization of the YARG has estimated a 25-50 percent decline in the rural population within the next generation. How this movement will affect agriculture, capital investments, and women's participation in the work force is not known, but the impact of these factors must be adequately assessed to evaluate the feasibility, spread effects, and social consequences of rural development programs. Above all, migration should not be dismissed as simply a drain on the potential workforce, but should be viewed as a systematic process in which relative opportunities for migration compete with incentives to stay. When migration does take place, the effects of remittances, investment opportunities, and changing work force must be analyzed.

IV. Target Populations and Delivery Mechanisms for Rural Development

Insofar as previous development projects have attempted to identify the "rural poor" of Yemen as target populations to receive technical and infrastructural assistance, this group has been considered as the undifferentiated rural masses. As discussions in the Workshops revealed, this is clearly not the case. The rural population is highly differentiated both in terms of income levels and ethnic identifications. Moreover, the economic activities of the population vary considerably from landless semi-migrant laborers, tenant farmers, and smallholders, to traveling merchants, village artisans, and landlords. Certainly agricultural laborers are part of the rural poor; but is a highly paid regular worker in qat production poor in relation to a subsistence sorghum farmer on marginal lands? "Objective" definitions of the rural poor are inadequate without knowledge of the existing distribution of economic and social benefit.

In seeking culturally-specific, "emic" definitions of Yemen's rural poor, the participants discussed the "caste-like" social hierarchy of occupations in the YAR. This was described as a ranking of more-or-less endogamous groups according to occupation. The Sayyids and Mansabs (aristocracy and landowners) are at the top and followed in order of status by the Gabail (cultivators, both owners and tenants), the Ba'ya (vendors and artisans), and finally the Akhdam (outcastes, sweepers, and performers of despised tasks). However, the relevance of these categories was challenged on the basis of the flexibility of categories and social mobility opportunities, particularly through the acquisition of wealth, education, and strategic marriage alliances. Moreover, the roles played and resources

controlled by these groups vary widely across the geographic zones of the country. Again, the conclusion as to the composition of the rural poor is that this group must be identified within the particular social landscape which is the location of any given development action.

The effectiveness of rural development programs and the evaluation of their impact was raised by Steinberg in terms of their replicability and delivery mechanisms. These issues were discussed by participants in regard to the most efficient and reliable institutions and organizational forms of distribution within the rural population. In particular, the roles of such "agents of change" as the YARG, Local Development Associations, military, ethnic groups, local leaders, and merchants were discussed.

The Yemen Arab Republic Government is committed to rural development. Specifically its goals are increasing the levels of agricultural production and raising the standard of living of the rural population. Previous government-sponsored projects have concentrated on the Southern Uplands and Tihama zones, but there now appears to be a policy shift in favor of projects situated in the northern parts of the Western Slopes and the Intermontaine Plains. However, the YARG does not have the funds, administrative capacity, or trained manpower adequately to serve as a delivery mechanism for rural development.

In contrast, the Local Development Associations, while varying in capacity, are indigenous organizations to the local areas. Participant James W. Green reported that the LDA's have a demonstrable capacity to produce positive results. Especially in terms of the mobilization of capital and labor, the LDA's may be the only viable organizations to serve as conduits

for development programs, especially in projects geared toward the construction of roads, water supplies, schools, clinics, etc. and the testing of promising new seed varieties and cultural practices in each of the microclimatic/soil conditions to be found within each LDA area.

Participants Anthony, Stookey, and Messick reported that while the military population is heterogenous and should not be considered as a distinct group, many officers have high motivation and are central to national and local development plans. Army recruitment is from both Zaydis and Shafi'is, and the cleavage between these two groups may sometimes be of political importance within the army. As yet, the military infrastructure is not routinized, and the military has no literacy or social action programs. Individual officers, however, are often very influential and serve as arbitrators and mediators of local disputes. Also, the army is often seen as protectors against the arbitrary power of landlords, though this of course varies with local conditions.

Ethnicity factors, as Ismail Poonawala pointed out, though perhaps important at the national level, appear not to be important at the local level. This may perhaps be due to spatial separation of the groups, but there are examples, such as Wadi Mawr, where members of different groups are engaged in complementary economic activities. Messick argued that proclivities toward innovation are not the result of ethnicity, but rather of historical circumstances. Thus the rate of change in the Southern Uplands is not because the population is Shafi'i, but because of the economic opportunities there and the infusion of entrepreneurial talent from returning migrants. Moreover, the prevalence of tribal organization

may be more significant than religious affiliation per se. Thus a possible "gut" hostility to change may exist in the north because of implied challenges to traditional, or status quo, social structure, although participants could cite no clear cases of such a reaction. However, such reactions will probably always occur where development is perceived as a threat to vested interests. In terms of economic and social mobility, there seems to be a general discrimination against Tihamis in the highlands and the Akhdam class of laborers throughout Yemen. However, the actual impact or effectiveness of such discrimination is not known.

Both social scientists and officers of development agencies report a general willingness to innovate among the rural population, if the innovation is demonstrably profitable and of not unreasonable risk. Certainly local leaders, be they government officials, landlords, or influential farmers, have often served as examples to their neighbors. The problem of delivery, if the change is advantageous to the local population and does not require substantial long-term capital investment, is not one of convincing people to change their ways so much as one of dispensing information. In this regard, the participants identified various social roles as the "information specialists" in rural Yemen who could serve as conduits for development programs. Specifically, the potential contribution of shaykhs (landlords, village and tribal leaders) and traveling merchants were discussed. Also women appear to act as information specialists, although their role was not discussed in any detail. However, it has been reported by Mundy and others that women engage in activities which bring them into social contact with a great variety of people, including members

of other households, agricultural workers, and market traders and purchasers. In other areas of the Middle East, the literature on information flow among women is voluminous, and, popular belief notwithstanding, their influence is felt in almost every aspect of rural life.

The participants discussed the German "model" of using merchants as the delivery mechanism for new strains of potatoes in northern Yemen. The rationale for this approach is that merchants not only are willing to use entrepreneurial talents, but also possess the capital to invest in innovative techniques. By the nature of their activities, the use of merchants should have a multiplier effect among the local population. This approach was challenged by Steinberg, Carapico, and others on the grounds that the benefits of development programs will not be equally distributed if the potential to accumulate capital is delivered to those who already, in the existing system, are the principal loci of capital accumulation.

Nevertheless, the problem of delivery systems is a very real one in Yemen. The scarcity of institutional resources and the low level of basic social infrastructural development, pose critical problems for extension activities. Moreover, the ecological and social diversity of the country dictates that agricultural development programs must be tailored to local conditions and thus cannot be easily generalized and applied across the board to other areas of Yemen. To insure the effectiveness and most equitable distribution of benefits of development programs, a thorough knowledge of the social and economic landscape of each subject region and how it is integrated with the whole of Yemeni society is mandatory.

V. Conclusion

It should be taken as a rule of thumb that the apparent equilibrium and equally apparent absence of internal dynamism in traditional societies are illusory. The discussions that took place during the Workshop and reported here have attempted to outline the general economic and social characteristics of rural Yemen and show the general patterns of change within the agricultural sector. Clearly, the social and economic landscape is changing, although the patterns of change are variable in different areas. Where gaps in information exist (and they are many), they have been pointed out, and recommendations for systematic research have been suggested. The Workshop showed that in many ways the conditions and patterns of change in Yemen are unique and that conventional approaches to rural development are inappropriate.

Until quite recently, development projects in Yemen have been for the most part conceived, designed, and executed by engineers, economists, and agricultural technicians. In view of the predominantly rural and small-scale nature of Yemeni society, it seems indispensable to allow a greater place for specialists in the social sciences in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of rural development projects. A continued integration of social science efforts is especially necessary in projects aimed at the rural poor, since these projects must be undertaken with an understanding of the likely reactions of the target population and their opportunities within existing economic and social landscape.

Development actions must be integrated within the local social milieu. This involves not only joining with the local people to identify and define

the work and new tasks to be assumed, but also evaluating the ways in which the changes will be perceived and acted upon by them. It is false to believe that the inhabitants of underdeveloped areas are hopelessly mired in tradition or custom. They must be understood as individuals operating within a highly specific social framework who perceive very real opportunities and risks as they seek to find solutions to life's problems.

This Workshop on rural development in Yemen has been an encouraging start in what we hope will be a continuing dialogue and cooperation between social scientists involved in the description and analysis of Yemeni society and culture and those engaged in furthering Yemen's social and economic development.

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FOOTNOTE: The Library of Congress method for transliteration
was followed.