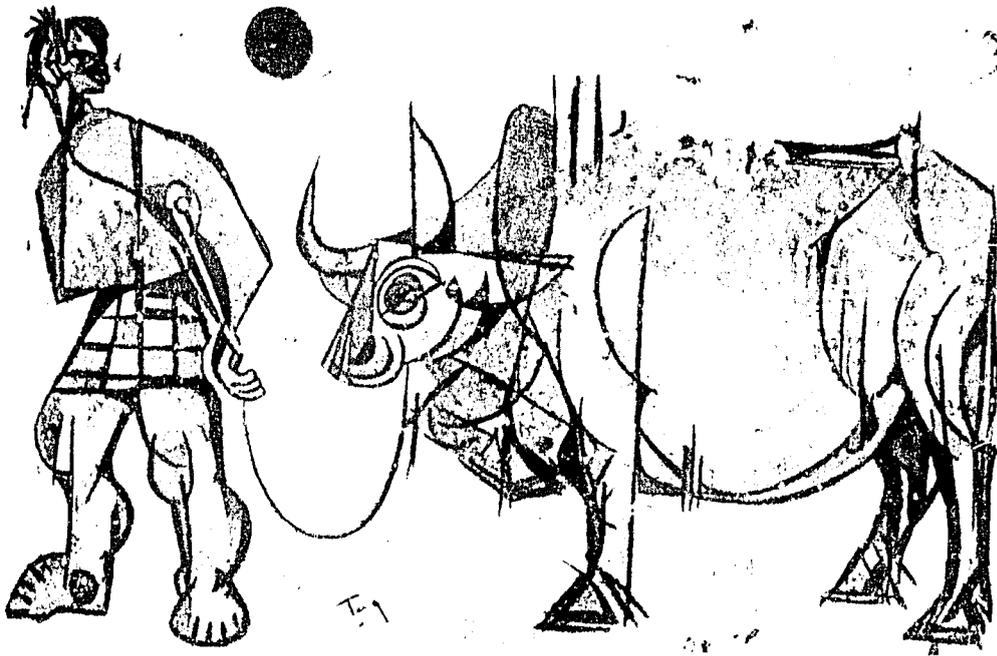


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Monograph Series

**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PARTICIPATION
IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:
SHORT-TERM IMPASSE & LONG-TERM CHANGE
IN SOUTH ASIA AND THE UNITED STATES
FROM THE 1950s TO THE 1970s**

Harry W. Blair

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Harry W. Blair

Department of Political Science,
Bucknell University
Center for International Studies,
Cornell University

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Published by the Rural Development Committee, Center for International Studies,
170 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853. August 1982
\$6.00

This study is for Emily Rebecca Blair

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for this study first arose in 1974, when I was working on a research project at Columbia University. It occurred to me that there were a great many similarities between poverty in New York City and in the areas of South Asia with which I was familiar—in its causes and its persistence, and in many of the attempts that had been made to deal with it through government programs. In the six years since then I have worked on and off between teaching and other research projects to compare the experiences of these two regions in fighting poverty.

Along the way I have been assisted by Bucknell University with two summer grants, and by the Center for International Studies at Cornell University, which supported me in 1979 and then again in 1980-81. The Social Science Research Council funded research at the University of Chicago in 1978 and then in Bangladesh in 1980, and the Fulbright program of the U.S. Office of Education supported field work in India in 1978. At various times I was also able to draw on help from the National Academy of Public Administration in Washington, the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex in England, the A. N. Sinha Institute for Social Studies in Patna, India, and the United States Educational Foundation in India (the Fulbright organization in that country) in New Delhi. I am greatly indebted to all of these institutions.

A large number of individuals took time and effort to help and advise me over the long course of this project. I would like in particular to thank the following: Charles Antholt (USAID mission, Dacca, Bangladesh); Stephen D. Biggs (University of East Anglia, England); R. K. Chopra (Green Medical Hall, Patna); Edward J. Clay (Institute of Development Studies, Sussex); Linda Danowsky (Bucknell); Ainslie T. Embree (School of International Studies, Columbia University); Milton J. Esman (Center for International Studies, Cornell); Martin Greeley (Institute for Development Studies, Sussex); Ralle Greenberg (Regis College); D. D. Guru (A. N. Sinha Institute); Azizul Haque (Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific, Comilla, Bangladesh); Steve Jones (University of Cambridge); Mary Katzenstein (Cornell); Erasmus Kloman (National Academy of Public Administration); A. Z. M. Obaidullah Khan (Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh); Porús D. Olpadwala (Center for International Studies, Cornell); Hugh S. Plunkett (USAID mission, Dacca); Pradhan H. Prasad (A. N. Sinha Institute); C. S. Radhakrishna (U.S. Educational Foundation in

India); Sachchidananda (A. N. Sinha Institute); Henry Saltzman (New York City); Bernard B. Shaffer (Institute of Development Studies, Sussex); and Geoffrey D. Wood (University of Bath, England). And for his advice, editing and timely reminders to get on with the job I would like especially to thank Norman T. Uphoff of the Center for International Studies at Cornell.

Harry W. Blair
May 1981

ABBREVIATIONS USED

ACIR	Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations (USA)
AFDC	Aid for Families with Dependent Children (USA)
BARC	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BD	Basic Democracies (Pakistan)
BDO	Block Development Officer (India)
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BO	Bangladesh Observer
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CAA	Community Action Agency (USA)
CAP	Community Action Program (USA)
CBO	Congressional Budget Office (USA)
CCAP	Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty (USA)
CD	Community Development (India)
CDA	City Demonstration Agency (USA)
CSP	Civil Service of Pakistan
EOA	Economic Opportunity Act (USA)
FWP	Food for Work Programme (Bangladesh)
GOB	Government of Bihar (India)
GOI	Government of India
GOP	Government of Pakistan
GPRB	Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development (USA)
HYV	High-Yielding Varieties
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programme (Bangladesh)
ILO	International Labour Office (Geneva, Switzerland)
MCA	Model Cities Agency (USA)
MFY	Mobilization for Youth (USA)
OEO	Office of Economic Opportunity (USA)
OMB	Office of Management and Budget (USA)

PARD	Pakistan Academy for Rural Development
PDP	Participatory Development Program (all regions)
PR	Panchayati Raj (India)
RBI	Reserve Bank of India
Rs	Rupees (India and Pakistan)
RWP	Rural Works Programme (Bangladesh)
TCCA	Thana Cooperative Credit Association (Bangladesh)
TIP	Thana Irrigation Programme (Bangladesh)
Tk	Taka (Bangladesh)
TWO	The Woodlawn Organization (Chicago, USA)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
Village-AID	Village Agricultural and Industrial Development (Pakistan)
VLW	Village Level Worker (India)
WP	War on Poverty (USA)

PREFATORY NOTE

As this monograph goes to print in mid-1982, the achievements it describes on the part of the antipoverty effort in the United States appear to be in grave danger. The new Reagan Administration has made one of the centerpieces of its domestic policy the rolling back of the antipoverty enterprise in significant measure. Cuts were made in many of the programs in the federal budget for fiscal 1982 and will in all probability be deepened when the budget for FY 1982 is finally passed.¹

At its outset, the Reagan Administration appeared, at least at some echelons, to be seriously concerned to cut down subsidies, tax benefits and the like for all groups -- the major corporations as well as the poor. In his spectacular efforts to bring the Congress to heel in the spring of 1981, Office of Management and Budget Director David Stockman bade fair to "spread the pain equally" between all interest groups. At first it looked as though he might succeed, but then as the more established and entrenched interest groups began to exercise their leverage, and Democrats and Republicans proceeded to outbid each other in devising tax packages to benefit the wealthy and large corporations, it became clear that it was primarily the lower income groups that were going to be squeezed. The wealthier interests just had too much power. As Stockman himself put it,

The power of these [corporate and wealthy] client groups turned out to be stronger than I realized. The client groups know how to make themselves heard. The problem is, unorganized groups can't play in this game.²

Does this mean, then, that the basic thrust of the analysis in this monograph is wrong, at least insofar as the United States is concerned? That is, should it be concluded that the poor are not an interest group in the American political system that has an undeniable place in the action, an irrefusable claim on a share of the system's

¹For a good account of the process, see Nick Kotz, "The War on the Poor," New Republic (24 March 1982), 18-23. For the main text of this monograph, all references will be found at the end, but for this prefatory note they are given directly.

²Stockman's experiences during his first year and his failure to "spread the pain equally" are brilliantly captured in William Greider, "The Education of David Stockman," Atlantic Monthly (December 1981), 27-54, from which the quotation is taken at page 52.

resources? I think not. The place of the poor has come under heavy attack, to be sure, by an administration that believes it can deny them that claim, but I do not think that the Reagan endeavor will succeed.

There is not space in a brief note to present an entire case defending the monograph's thesis against what may seem to be a telling assault, and besides, the evidence is far from all in on either side, as the drama continues to be played out in the Reagan Administration era. Two lines of interim evidence, then, will have to suffice for the nonce. First, on the theoretical level, there is the new essay by Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward,³ in which they argue that the period from the 1930s through the 1970s saw a fundamental change in how the poor and the working class saw themselves and their place in the American economic system. What has happened, the authors think, is very simply that with the failure of capitalism in the 1930s and the expansion of the welfare state in the 1960s and 1970s, the lower income strata in society have come to reject the laissez faire ideology of the late 19th century in favor of an almost pre-capitalist notion that the system owes a basic subsistence to its members. The welfare movements of the 1960s, they hold, were the final steps in a chain of developments that in effect transformed society from one in which the lower strata both had no real security at all and also accepted the laissez faire concept that they were owed no security by society to one with a new "moral economy of the welfare state," in which people have a political right to subsistence.

In sum, say Piven and Cloward (p. 121), the welfare programs for social security, income maintenance, child support and the like,

resulted in the establishment of a structure of agencies that is mandated to act on the rights of large population groups, that is more or less accessible to these groups, and that is ultimately dependent on them for survival. The result is not the well-organized and well-articulated interest group politics that characterizes the relations between business and government. But the result nevertheless is an institutionalized structure that tends to articulate and focus popular demands on state entities that are susceptible to these demands.

The lower income strata, in their view, are simply not going to accept any dismantling of the structure on which they depend.

³Francis Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, The New Class War: Reagan's Attack on the Welfare State and Its Consequences (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

The second line of interim evidence is furnished by events unfolding day by day in the Reagan Administration. A two week period in mid-July 1982 will illustrate. On the one hand, there was indication of the administration's continuing initiative in its offensive against the welfare state. On the 16th of July, the Housing and Urban Development Department defied a House committee by announcing a rent increase for federally subsidized housing from 25 to 30 percent of tenant income. On the same day the Labor Department proposed to ease child labor restrictions by expanding the hours and kinds of work that 14- and 15-year olds would be permitted to undertake.⁴

On the 9th of July, on the other hand, the Housing and Urban Development Department issued an urban policy report that, while it did aver that Washington should cut back its role in assisting cities, was quite muted in tone and substance from a draft of the same report that had been leaked a couple earlier. The earlier draft had caused a furor of protest from the United States Council of Mayors, which happened (not coincidentally, one presumes) to be meeting at the time. In a move reminiscent of the mayoral outrage at Lyndon Johnson's being too attentive to the needs of the urban poor back in 1965, the Council of Mayors called upon President Reagan to disavow the draft, which he did.⁵ Two other developments during these weeks were probably even more indicative. On the 19th of July the Census Bureau announced that 14 percent of Americans were below the poverty line in 1981, up from 13.2 percent the year before and the highest proportion since 1967. The next day the bureau reported that fully 20 percent of the work force had been unemployed at some time during 1981.⁶ These large and presumably (with the present recession) growing numbers of people in (and under threat of) unemployment and poverty are not, if the central thesis of this monograph is correct, going to sit by and allow themselves to be ignored by a federal government determined to restore the laissez faire economy and ideology of the 1920s. If they do indeed have a place at the table, we may expect them to use it to insist on their due.

⁴See Ruth Marcus, "HUD Orders Rent Rise for Poor: House Committee Defied," Washington Post (17 July 1982); and David Shribman, "Labor Dept. Seeks Eased Regulation of Child Workers," New York Times (17 July 1982).

⁵David Hoffman, "HUD Issues Sanitized Urban Policy Report," Washington Post (10 July 1982); also David Hoffman, "Mayors Attack Draft Urban Policy Sent to Reagan," ibid. (21 June 1982).

⁶Spencer Rich, "Buying Power of Families Off; Poverty Rises," Washington Post (20 July 1982); also Spencer Rich, "1 in 5 in U.S. Idled in '81, Agency Says," ibid. (21 July 1982).

Chapter I

A SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

During the three decades of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, major efforts were made in South Asia and the United States to put together and implement participatory development programs (PDPs) that focused on attacking poverty at the local level. It is the central argument of this essay that, despite the many obvious differences between these two regions, these programs were very much alike in three vitally important respects: their origins, their initial failures in the short run and the successes that they appear to have achieved in the longer term.

In Chapter 2 we see that these disparate efforts were quite similar in their beginnings. For politicians and planners, this resemblance went back even to the level of civic mythology, starting with the myth of the village republic in the subcontinent of Asia and the folklore of the New England town meeting in the American case. Less romantic social scientists who were involved with the programs offered differing justifications in the two settings and even tended to base themselves in differing disciplines, with the South Asian explanations grounded largely in economics and the American ones mainly in sociology and anthropology. As we will see, though, the older theories explaining poverty in these two regions were strikingly similar, and so were the newer theories that were offered to redress that poverty. The administrative approach in both experiences was similar as well, with all the major programs promising self-help, "boot-strap" development at low cost, to be assisted by the managerial efficiencies of decentralization.

Leaders at the national level made a personal commitment to their PDPs, and there is a good deal of evidence, much of it in their own words, that they saw these enterprises as their major contribution to their nations' futures. Particularly striking parallels can be seen in the visions and imagery of Jawaharlal Nehru and Lyndon Johnson. Motives of a more practical nature were also present, for in each of the cases national leaders found themselves with a need to reach out toward a new constituency, and PDPs seemed a very good way to help turn that constituency into a secure base of political support.

At a more intellectual level, the programs had a unique sort of appeal. Their emphasis on participation by the poor and neglected struck a responsive chord with the left, while at the same time they found approval on the right with their focus on the community as a traditional entity and as an island of stability in a sea of changing

social values. Lastly, there was among social scientists and social planners in both experiences a great positivistic confidence--and even arrogance--that led them to think that they could intervene in the social matrix with a fine and even microscopic precision that would produce the exact results desired.

In the short term, the record of all these PDPs was an unhappy one. Participation on the input side of decision-making and implementation seems to have been largely absent, as we see in Chapter 3, and on the output side the record was equally bleak so far as the programs were concerned.¹ This was so for both structural and bureaucratic reasons. On the structural side, program takeover by local elites was a regular pattern in all the programs, and indeed the constraints of socio-economic structure faced by the programs were such that it would have been amazing if any other outcome had emerged. The sine qua non for program success was some kind of redistribution of real power, but this was the one thing that those in dominant power positions would not willingly countenance.

On the bureaucratic side, tendencies toward elite dominance were exacerbated by administrative compulsions for overrapid program expansion and for quantitative measurement, as well as by the dilemma between autonomy and supervision. A spurious emphasis on "targets" and evaluative indicators distorted efforts and had the effect all too often, in contrast to what was intended, of reducing real impact. Further, program administrators were caught between the desire to decentralize--to get more participation but risk takeover by local elites--and to keep tight supervisory control--excluding the beneficiaries from responsibility while burdening an already overextended administration with yet more duties.

But in the longer term, as we observe in Chapter 4, there have been some notable changes that these PDPs have helped to bring about, changes it would not be inappropriate to call successes. In the United States, the War on Poverty was instrumental in building a constituency for the poor and the black which has given this group a position of power in the American political economy that it otherwise would not have had. This constituency of voluntary organizations, program administrators and staff, elected and appointed officials from among the poor, as well as the poor themselves enabled the poor to hold on to their share of the income distribution during the decade of the 1970s when the economy generally was in a state of stagnation and the polity was becoming steadily less interested in poverty-oriented policy. Perhaps

¹For participation on the output side, see Appendix A.

this should be called negative rather than positive success, but it is success all the same. This same approach can also be applied to municipal services, which, though they have not improved in poverty areas—indeed, they have probably deteriorated over the last 15 years—would surely have gotten a great deal worse during a decade of municipal retrenchment in every direction, had it not been for the new poverty constituency insisting that it preserve its share.

As this monograph goes to press, these assertions are being put to a severe test, for the new Reagan Administration in Washington is proposing to dismantle much of what was put together in the Great Society programs of Lyndon Johnson and the various successor efforts that continued under Nixon, Ford and Carter. There appears little doubt that these neoconservative efforts to cut back will succeed in some part, but if there is any truth to the ideas advanced here, the poor and the black are now in a position to defend themselves politically as they could not have done previously. Twenty or thirty years ago these groups would have had little if any defense against a White House wishing to cut off the few benefits they were then receiving; today coalitions of voluntary, special interest and professional groups have formed to fight the Reagan budget cuts.² The poor and the black, in short, have a voice and a place in the system that they did not have before, and in a very real way the federal antipoverty programs of the past two decades have been responsible for this development.

In India, Community Development (CD) and Panchayati Raj (PR) can be pointed to as major factors in bringing about the transformation of agrarian structures that has taken place in large parts of the country over the last two decades. Through these institutions a middle-level farmer class, poor by international standards, was able to get a political foothold in various state machineries to implement policies that started a flow of goods and services toward itself, thereby promoting its own advancement as a class. Following in its wake is the increasingly conscious and militant class of the truly poor—the landless laborers and marginally employed, mostly from the lowest and even untouchable castes—who are learning from the successes of the rising middle class how to use the weapons of political and economic action themselves to claim a place in the system. For Bangladesh the evidence is less clear, but there are indications that some of these same economic changes are taking place, at least in the experimental Comilla

²Evidence is, of course, fragmentary as of this writing (summer 1981), but see, for instance, Denton (1981a and 1981b), Donnelly (1981), Roberts (1981a and 1981b), Taylor (1981) and Weinraub (1981).

area and perhaps beyond as well. The potential for similar political evolution is certainly present.

Three conclusions emerge from consideration of these changes. First, they took a long time to unfold. In the cases taken up here, it is only after a decade and more that these transformations (perhaps incipient transformations would be a better description) have started to become apparent.

Second, the changes have occurred in unexpected ways. Few at the outset of the War on Poverty thought that it would be an economic failure but a political success, just as few expected CD and PR to ignore the rural poor but to help create a structural transformation among those middle groups which were somewhat better off. It could even be said that there was a certain paradox involved in the eventual successes of CD and PR, for it was the fundamental error in one of their most important premises--that of the village as a basically homogeneous and classless community--that made it possible for the successive entries of the middle and the lower rural strata into political activity to take place. If the founders of CD and PR had realized the extent to which rural India was and is divided into classes, they quite likely would not have undertaken the programs in the first place.

Third, the changes that have come about are very much intermediate or interim ones and clearly do not represent the attainment of final goals. The lower economic groups have a very long way to go in the American case before they can compete equally in the marketplace of political economy, while the best that can be said of the present rural scene in the Asian subcontinent is that there has been some progress on the supply side and that the stage is now set in some respects for making headway on the demand side. It is important, however, that a start has been made, for without such a start the situation of the poor and the black in the United States would be one essentially of despair and the position of the poor in South Asia would appear to be utterly beyond hope, but clearly there is much that remains to be done.

For politicians who want to stay in office and administrators who are under pressure to show results by next year, if not next month, these conclusions cannot be very reassuring. Nor can they be very encouraging for those among the poor who must invest their time, energy and emotional commitment in projects that will not have an immediate payoff. The real question, though, is whether there are any alternatives. Revolutions, social watersheds, or sudden shifts in the tectonic plates of political economy are all exceedingly rare. Most real social changes take decades and sometimes even centuries to occur, and even those that appear to be going on at a more

rapid rate tend in fact to be less speedy than supposed. Contemporary China offers a good example, as presently unfolding events there indicate that the creation of "socialist man" will take a great deal longer--perhaps many generations, if even then--than was believed just a few years ago in the glow of romance and optimism that surrounded the Maoist experiment.³

These conclusions are not intended to suggest that governments undertake to do the minimum in social programs with the rationale that these will take a long time to produce results anyway and that the results they do produce will probably be different from what was expected. Instead, I hope that my conclusions will be seen as reason to push ahead further and faster with more serious programs that address the constraints of social and bureaucratic structure more directly, for while success may be slow, unpredictable, intermediate and tenuous, it is possible and is in fact taking place. All the more reason, then, to press on with the job.

³On the fading of the optimism about the Maoist experiment among Western scholars, see Barker and Sinha (1979) and Eberstadt (1979). Considering that even this radical and seemingly dynamic social enterprise now appears to require a very lengthy period, the decade or two that our participatory development programs have taken to show some results is not so long after all.

Chapter 2

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

In the third quarter of the 20th century, South Asia and the United States saw major governmental efforts to implement participatory development programs that would reach out to groups not previously part of the national economic and political life. Despite the great and obvious differences between these two regions in their economies, cultures, politics and history, there were a large number of striking similarities between the programs: first, in their initial justification and purpose; second, in the widely held view that they were failures; and finally, in the longer term changes that these programs appear to have set into motion. The similarities appear to be so significant in fact that an analysis of these experiences offers good promise of producing some useful generalizations about participatory development programs and how they might be built for long run success.

In this monograph we shall examine participatory development programs (PDPs) in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, from which Bangladesh split off in 1971, as well as the United States. For the Indian case we will look mainly at the Community Development effort of the 1950s, the subsequent Panchayati Raj structure of the 1960s and also at some of the developments of the 1970s. Pakistan's Basic Democracies program of the 1960s will be our focus for that country, which at the time included Bangladesh. In post-liberation Bangladesh we will examine the Comilla experiment (which actually began a decade before liberation but which has continued down to the present day) and the Integrated Rural Development Programme that grew out of it. We will also look briefly at the Rural Works Programme of the 1960s, the Food for Work Programme of the late 1970s, and the Thana Irrigation Programme of the last two decades.

In the United States we will concentrate on the War on Poverty of the 1960s and within it on the Community Action Program of the Office of Economic Opportunity and to a lesser extent on the Model Cities Agency of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. There have been other programs since then in the community development field, such as revenue sharing, the Law Enforcement Assistance Agency, the Community Development Block Grant program and the Comprehensive Employment Training Act. But the War on Poverty has been the principal effort aimed at bringing historically non-participating groups into the economic and political mainstream of American life through a program that included participation in decision-making as a major component. This aspect of the War on Poverty also meant that it was the only

enterprise in which the question of redistributing any real power was seriously considered, even if only for a very short time. The more recent programs have served from their outset more directly to reinforce existing distributions.

We shall begin in Chapter 3 by looking at similarities in the initiation of these various programs, in the reasoning behind them, and in the political, economic and sociological theories marshalled on their behalf, as well as at the power relations that helped determine their beginnings. All of these programs appeared to fail in their early years, as we will see in Chapter 4. So utter did these failures seem, in fact, that by the end of each project's first five years or so there appeared little reason to think that any success would ever come. There were two sets of reasons for this failure. The first related directly to the socio-economic structure and was manifested in a reluctance on the part of those in positions of dominance to allow any redistribution of power and resources, while at the same time participatory development projects could succeed only if there were such a redistribution. The other set of reasons for failure had origins in the nature of bureaucracy and bureaucratic behavior--in other words, outside the realm of class structure. In Chapter 4 we will take up both sets of reasons in detail.

If we take a longer time perspective, however, the picture of failure is not so uniform. Indeed, if we look back over 15 or 20 years of experience we begin to see some ways in which these programs were relatively successful, and this is the focus of Chapter 5. In America the antipoverty programs of the 1960s were instrumental in building a constituency for the poor and black that was of material benefit during the recessionary decade of the 1970s. In South Asia there is good reason to think that the development programs of the 1950s and 1960s helped set into motion a series of events that cumulatively have produced an important transformation in the countryside that is now unfolding. There is also reason to think that this social change offers the poor rural majority a chance for inclusion in social, economic and political life that it would not have had otherwise.

In both regions these developments have been slow, and their direction was certainly not anticipated by most of the initiators of the programs. Moreover, these outcomes are at best very intermediate. They have not in any sense represented the realization of final goals for the people involved. Poverty and exclusion from the mainstream of life are still very much evident in both regions. But tentative and intermediate achievement is a long way from the failure that was so widely regarded to have been the fate of these programs initially. It meant that the great effort that

went into them has accomplished something worthwhile and that there is good reason to press on with further development efforts both in South Asia and in the United States. These conclusions form the substance of Chapter 5.

The chapter on program failure, it will be noted, is considerably longer than the one on program success. This disparity is not due to some penchant on my part for dwelling on failure or to author fatigue by the time Chapter 5 was reached. Rather the difference reflects the thrust of the immense literature on the subject of PDPs, especially the more rigorous analyses within that body of material. For both regions the literature of failure is larger and better documented than the literature of success.

There are several reasons for this emphasis in the literature. First, failures are more interesting than successes, particularly to the academic mind, which is the source of most of the available analyses of development. Demolishing myths, puncturing bureaucratic balloons, attacking self-serving political puffery--these tasks are what academics seem best at. Second, if one is to be rigorous in one's writing, proving failure is easier than proving success; arguing that something did not happen or is not true is generally simpler than making a case that it did or is, particularly when the topic at hand is a broad and complex social program. An analogy may be made here to statistics, where evidence showing that no significant relationship exists between variables is always more convincing than evidence indicating that a relationship does exist. And even if the relationship does appear to exist, there is only a statistical probability that it exists in fact; there is no absolute certainty. In the case of the PDPs, the failures and their causes are relatively straightforward, as we shall see, whereas the successes, as I have indicated already, tend to be elusive and fragmentary, as we shall also see. Third, there is the plain fact that in PDPs to date, there has been a good deal more failure than success. To say that there has been more--even considerably more--failure than success, however, is not to say that this success has been unimportant. Far from it, the successes that have been achieved have been significant ones, because they have come "against the grain." That they have been registered under contrary conditions is more than enough to justify continuing on with the task of promoting participatory development.

The reader may ask, as a great many of my acquaintances both in the United States and in South Asia have asked, what was the point in trying to compare such totally divergent experiences? One set of programs emerged in a wealthy country and was directed at an urban environment and intended largely for a racial minority that was "poor" only in relation to the wealthier strata but very well off compared to the

Third World poor. The other programs were set in a very poor region of the world, aimed at a distinctly rural environment and projected to take in the vast majority of the national population. Indeed the differences could scarcely be greater, as the indicators in Table 1 will demonstrate.

But these differences are exactly the point. My first purpose in this essay is to show that despite the many glaringly obvious differences between the two environments socially, economically and politically, PDPs began for essentially the same reasons, and then failed for essentially the same reasons. These reverses, though, were in both settings failures of the short term. In other, longer term ways these efforts have attained some notable successes. My second purpose is to distill some generalizable truths from these experiences that could be useful for future efforts at promoting development through greater participation, whether in the developing or the developed world, for if there is any merit in this exercise, one happy result should be the opportunity for the First and Third Worlds each to learn from the other.

As one would expect, the literature on participation in the American context is huge. It is much larger on participation in the voting process than on participation in policy-making, in program implementation and in governance generally, but still it is intimidatingly large in these latter areas which are the focus of our interest. Some students of participation (e.g., Alinsky, 1969 and 1972; Kotler, 1969) think that there can never be too much participation at the local level, while others (e.g., Moynihan, 1970; Huntington, 1975) hold that great danger lies in having too much of it and that the War on Poverty in its participatory aspects was precisely the kind of thing that policy makers should avoid. The parallels of course are not precise in analyses of the Third World, but there are similar contrasts; some observers such as Montgomery (1972)¹ and Uphoff and Esman (1974) have found that participation in developmental institutions is a key factor for success, while others like Huntington (1968; also Huntington and Nelson, 1976) foresee anything more than the most modest level of popular participation in the developmental process leading to instability and even collapse.

Within the First World and Third World spheres there has been considerable interest in intraregional comparative study in these matters, but little in cross-regional comparison. Greenstone and Peterson (1973) have analyzed community participation in the War on Poverty in the five largest American cities, while Kramer (1969) has essayed

¹Montgomery has modified his earlier views on this somewhat, though he has not moved over as far as the Huntington/Nelson position; see his more recent essay (1979).

Table 1: Basic Indicators for South Asia and the United States

	<u>Bangladesh</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>Pakistan</u>	<u>United States</u>
<u>Population</u>				
Population (1978) million	85	644	77	222
Crude birth rate (1978)/thousand	46	35	45	9
Crude death rate (1978)/thousand	18	14	15	9
Annual population growth (1960-78) %	2.7	2.0	3.1	0.8
<u>Rural Sector</u>				
Urban population (1960) %	5	18	22	67
Urban population (1980) %	11	22	28	73
Work force in agriculture (1960) %	87	74	61	7
Work force in agriculture (1978) %	84	74	58	2
GDP from agriculture (1960) %	61	50	46	4
GDP from agriculture (1978) %	57	40	32	3
<u>Economy</u>				
GNP (1978) \$ per capita	90	180	230	9590
GNP per capita growth (1960-1978) % per annum	-0.4	1.4	2.8	2.4
<u>Social Welfare</u>				
Adult literacy (1960) %	22	28	15	98
Adult literacy (1975) %	26	36	21	99
Life expectancy at birth (1960)	40	43	44	70
Life expectancy at birth (1978)	47	51	52	73
Portion of caloric requirement met (1977) %	78	91	99	135

(Source: World Bank, 1980)

a similar task for a number of California communities. Strange (1972a and 1972b) has undertaken a comparative study of the two programs that we shall focus on in this essay, the Community Action Program and the Model Cities Agency. Employing a much larger canvas, Piven and Cloward (1977) have compared four poor people's movements over a forty-year period from the Great Depression to the 1970s, while Taylor and Potter (1978) have compared participation in the War on Poverty and in the environmental movement. In a truly prodigious labor the Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR, 1979) has compiled an inventory of over 150 federal programs that incorporate some degree of popular participation. On the international level within the developed world, there has been some analysis comparing poverty programs in the United States and Britain (Higgins, 1978), but little else. As for the Third World, although most of the studies have been confined to one country, there have been the Cornell Rural Development Committee studies (Uphoff and Esman, 1974; Cohen and Uphoff, 1977; Uphoff, Cohen and Goldsmith, 1979) and Montgomery's two essays (1972 and 1979) on participation in land reform.

In view of this considerable interest in participation, it is more than a little strange that there has been almost no effort devoted to comparing experiences in the First and Third Worlds. There have been studies like the Almond and Verba classic (1963) on participation and civic culture in four developed countries plus Mexico and then more recently the Verba, Nie and Kim comparison (1978) of participation in seven nations, of which two (India and Nigeria) are developing. Neither of these studies, though, is much concerned with the development process. It is surprising that Huntington, who has devoted much effort to interpreting the role of participation in policy making and implementation in the LDCs (1968; also Huntington and Nelson, 1976) as well as the United States (1975), has shown no inclination thus far to compare the two.²

The field for comparison, then, is both large and unexplored. In this study I hope to show that it can be fruitfully exploited. Before setting out on this effort, however, there are two issues that need to be addressed: first, what is meant by participatory development programs; and second, how the programs that will be discussed have developed chronologically.

²There are some references to the American War on Poverty in Huntington and Nelson (1976), but they are quite peripheral to the main argument of the book.

Participatory Development Programs Defined

In its two comprehensive studies of participation in the Third World context, the Cornell group (Cohen and Uphoff, 1977; Uphoff, Cohen and Goldsmith, 1979; for a shorter version, see Cohen and Uphoff, 1980), drawing on developmental literature from the First and Third Worlds, has put together a classification in which participation as a general phenomenon can be broken down into four main types: participation in decision-making, implementation, benefits and evaluation. The primary focus of this essay will be on the decision-making and implementation aspects. Conceptually, it would make good sense to include evaluation as well, inasmuch as it provides a kind of feedback loop connecting the outcomes of participation with future inputs. But apart from the Cornell formulation, the subject has yet to be explicitly explored in terms of any research relating to our areas of interest, and so we will have to omit it. Participation in benefits, on the contrary, has received so much attention that a whole monograph at least the size of this one could be written on it. Accordingly, a brief look at participation in benefits is in order, and I have put together a short comparative discussion of the topic as Appendix A.

To return to our two major subjects of interest, while it is reasonable to distinguish between decision-making and implementation analytically, it is rare that such a division appears in the literature. So for the most part they will be treated as a combined mode of participation. For our purposes it seems more fruitful to distinguish between levels rather than kinds of participation.

Verba and Nie (1972: passim, but esp. 76-80) in their ambitious and thorough survey of political participation in America found their respondents to fall into six mutually exclusive categories, or levels of activity, as shown in Table 2. As might be expected, the poor tended to be very much underrepresented in the top three groups of Table 2 and correspondingly overrepresented in the last three. Milbrath and Goel in their comprehensive survey of participation (1978: esp. 10ff.) devise a similar typology, with the addition of "protestors" at the extreme activist end of their scale, while Langton (1978:21-24) develops a similar but shorter classification. Huntington and Nelson (1976:172ff) have put together yet another similar typology in their analysis of political participation by the poor in the developing areas, while Eldersveld and Ahmed (1978) have devised one for the Indian context.

Our concern, though, is not really with complete taxonomies of all types of participation, but with participation in development-oriented programs, primarily at the community level. In some developing countries such as India or Sri Lanka, elections,

Table 2: The Verba-Nie Typology of Citizen Participation in Politics

<u>Category</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Percentage of Sample</u>
Complete activists	Everything	11
Campaigners	Work in election campaigns	15
Communalists	Local community activities	20
Parochials	Contact with local officials on specific matters	4
Voting specialists	Voting only	21
<u>Inactives</u>	None	<u>22</u>
Total		93 ^a

^aSome 7% of the total sample were unclassifiable

(Source: Verba and Nie, 1972:79)

parties and mass movements may be important modes of participation (and perhaps even decisive in determining public policy in an overall sense). But in general in most Third World nations these activities are connected to the development process only remotely if at all.

Essentially our interest is in what Verba and Nie (1972:78) call "communal activity," what Langton (1978:21-22) calls "citizen action," and what Huntington and Nelson (1976:134-147) call "small-scale special interest associations."

The most elaborate taxonomy of participation is undoubtedly that devised by the ACIR study (1979: chapter 3), in which a 248-cell matrix of participation is constructed, with categories ranging from citizen groups altering the power structure to informational surveys. But this is far more complex than we can or need to deal with. To put it all more simply, we could say that our concern is with what Schaffer (1977:21) calls "access," by which he means "getting entry to the [administrative] system, getting attended to, and getting a good or service" that one needs at a cost that one can afford.

Given that the communal action dimension is our focus, then, is it possible to delineate this mode of participation further? In his study of the Community Action

Program and Model Cities Agency, Strange (1972a:460-461) speaks of participation in the decision-making structure of programs in advisory panels (which might be involved in various levels of advice-giving), in lobbying through other community organizations, and in employment in the programs. The latter would seem to be participation in benefits, but depending on the positions being filled--varying from custodial staff up to program director---it can provide participation in decision-making as well.

Arnstein (1969) has gone perhaps the furthest in developing a hierarchical typology of citizen participation which she very aptly calls a "ladder." Her ladder is reproduced in Figure 1. Though it might be better to have more or fewer rungs in the ladder, and though the distinction between one rung and the next might not be clear in all cases, the metaphor is a most useful one. For instance, Strange's categories just mentioned (decision-making, advising, lobbying and employment) might fit onto rungs 8, 4, 5 and 2 (or perhaps 6, depending on the nature of the jobs held) respectively of the Arnstein ladder.

What is the optimal rung on the ladder? Where should a program strive to be? Arnstein herself thought that programs should be as high as possible, and left her position as chief staff adviser on participation in the Model Cities Agency in 1968 when her views on the matter were not heeded (Frieden and Kaplan, 1975:73-78). Huntington (1975), on the other hand, probably would have thought that the "consultation" rung was risky and the "placation" rung downright dangerous, even though Arnstein herself placed both these rungs in the "tokenism" category.

The metaphor is also useful in analyzing the successes and failures of past programs. Piven and Cloward (1972 and 1977), for example, probably would have said that the highest level achieved by any of the activities during the War on Poverty period was the "placation" rung, but that this level is never high enough; if an organization or program cannot get higher, it inevitably falls back to a lower rung. Arnstein herself (1972), in reporting the history of the North Philadelphia Area Wide Council (as its members told it to her) in its relations with the Model Cities Agency, certainly hints that the program there wound up on the first rung of the ladder (see also [Unsigned], 1972; and Kloman, 1972).

Of all the concepts of participation, the Arnstein ladder, with rungs added or subtracted to fit the local situation, would appear the most useful in looking at programs in developing countries. The Community Development program in India, for instance, could be seen as having initially imagined itself to be on rung 6, but in fact never getting beyond rung 4 and soon winding up on rung 3 or even 2 (cf. Mayer, 1958).

Figure 1: The Arnstein Ladder of Citizen Participation

<u>Section of Rungs</u>	<u>Rung Number</u>	<u>Rung Name</u>
Citizen power	8	Citizen control
	7	Delegated power
	6	Partnership
Tokenism	5	Placation
	4	Consultation
	3	Informing
Nonparticipation	2	Therapy
	1	Manipulation

(Source: Arnstein, 1969:217)

Participatory Development Programs in Four Countries

India. The Community Development (CD) program in India began officially in 1952, but its actual origins go back a number of years before to the Etawah Project in Uttar Pradesh, which began and flourished under the leadership of Albert Mayer, a well-known town and regional planner from the United States. During several years of trial and error mixed with theory, Mayer and his team developed a model for rural development that was in essence an elaborate extension system. At the local level, a trained Village Level Worker (VLW) would determine the "felt needs" in the several villages under his aegis and serve as a multipurpose extension agent in meeting those needs. There would be backup support from the next higher administrative level, where a team of specialists in education, public health, agronomy, irrigation and other fields stood ready to help him.

The focus of the program was on the VLW level, where outside expertise could be tailored to meet the needs of specific villages and individual villagers--needs that would

be articulated by the villagers themselves. The higher administrative unit was called the "block," an area of 60,000 to 80,000 people under a Block Development Officer (BDO), who supervised the VLWs and the team of technical specialists as well. The program spread rapidly after 1952 until within about ten years the entire country had been divided up and organized into some 5,000 development blocks.³

The CD program did not live up to its expectations either for increasing production or for involving people. After a considerable reappraisal, the Indian Government decided to complement the Community Development scheme with a local representative structure it called Panchayati Raj (PR), which means "rule of panchayats," i.e., by locally elected councils. Though it differed quite a bit in its particulars from state to state in India, PR in general was an attempt to decentralize the planning administration of development through a hierarchical system of elected bodies, beginning with a panchayat at village level (sometimes a panchayat covered several "natural" villages). The elected heads of all the village panchayats in each block formed a panchayat samiti, which was to supervise and direct the BDO and his officials in the block. The heads of these samitis in turn became the members of the zila parishad at district level (with a population of one to several million). PR directed the district government in rather the same fashion that a school board supervises the running of a school district in the United States. Just as a school board decides educational policy, budget size, local taxation and monetary allotments in the United States, subject to state regulation and policy determinations, so PR in India was supposed to formulate and implement local policy in India. By the early 1960s the various states had for the most part set up panchayati raj schemes.⁴

Panchayati Raj has been subjected to a great deal of criticism over its almost 20 years of existence, especially complaints of corruption and domination by local elites, but the system has remained to this day as the government's major vehicle for securing local participation in the development process. Various ways to improve it have been suggested over its two decades, most recently in the form of a high-level committee

³ A thorough account of the Community Development program's genesis and early years is given in Mayer (1958); see Sussman (1980) for a concise history and analysis of CD.

⁴ For an account of Panchayati Raj, see Nicholson (1973); also Shiviah et al (1976). There are a multitude of other writings as well.

report (GOI, 1978a) advocating a restructuring in favor of more decentralization.⁵ The essential format, however, has remained the same.

In the early 1970s, as the developmental thoughts of the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development moved toward equity, small farmers and the "bottom 40 percent" of the income distribution, India put together a Small Farmer Development Agency and a Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers program intended to administer to and work with these target groups. But these programs were largely "top-down" administrative efforts rather than genuine participatory programs and so will be omitted from our analysis here.

In the mid-1970s during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Emergency, participation in the sense that we are using the term here was firmly discouraged. Panchayat elections were postponed indefinitely, for example, and incumbents had their terms extended. But with the restoration of parliamentary government that came with the election of 1977, the new Janata ministry in New Delhi gave a renewed emphasis to popular participation at all levels of public life. The development programs that the Janata government mounted, however, such as the Integrated Rural Development project (combining the old Small Farmers Development Agency and some other organizations) and the Antyodaya program for aiding the five poorest families in each panchayat,⁶ were also essentially top-down schemes and will not be treated here either.

Pakistan and Bangladesh. At about the same time that India was beginning its Community Development program, Pakistan--the other successor state to the British Indian Empire--was setting up its own rural development effort in the form of the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development program (called Village-AID). Then about the same time that India turned to PR, Pakistan set up its own participatory Basic Democracies (BD) program.

Under this system, Union Councils (whose members were called Basic Democrats) were directly elected by popular franchise for each Union (generally an area of several villages). The heads of the Union Councils formed the membership of a Thana Council, roughly comparable to the Panchayat Samiti in India, and the representational process went on up to the provincial level (East Pakistan was one of the country's provinces, West Pakistan the other), two tiers higher than in India.

⁵ This report has come to be known as the Asoka Mehta Report.

⁶ Concerning the Integrated Rural Development project, see GOI (1978b); on the Antyodaya program, see GOB (1978); also Bhaumik (1978).

As with CD and PR in India, the BD setup in Pakistan was intended to serve as the main vehicle for mobilizing popular participation and as the main linkage between government and citizen. It also served as an electoral college and as a substitute for a legislature during the Ayub Khan era (1958-1969).⁷ The system suffered many of the same ills of corruption and elite dominance that PR succumbed to in India, and was scrapped along with its major backer President Ayub Khan, when he was overthrown by a military coup in 1969.

On a much smaller scale, another participatory development program also began in Pakistan at the outset of the 1960s, at the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARD) located at Comilla. Here the focus was on small farmer cooperatives. Under the very able leadership provided by its director Akhter Hameed Khan, the effort was recognized within only a few years as a definite success and became a model widely praised in the international development community. The Comilla program ran into problems as it expanded into the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) in the later 1960s, but it survived the break with Pakistan in 1971 as Bangladesh became independent. PARD was turned into the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), and the Comilla program still serves as a national model for rural development.⁸

Participation in the Comilla program was not based on directly elected local governmental units as with Panchayati Raj and Basic Democracies, but was rather more specialized, incorporated within the cooperative structure that was the hallmark of the Comilla approach. Cultivators were organized into cooperative groups, within which they elected managers and "model farmers," who would receive and retransmit weekly lessons on improved farm practices. Participation in the form of self-criticism was encouraged at all levels, and the whole project was frequently modified in response to this self-examination. Participation on the policy output side was a very strong component of the Comilla approach, moreover, with its emphasis on small farmers.

Independent Bangladesh also developed an analogue to Panchayati Raj, in the form of its elected union level governmental organization (average 18,000 population), along

⁷ On Basic Democracies in general, see Jahan (1972).

⁸ The successes as well as the problems of the Comilla program have been explored at some length elsewhere; (Blair, 1974, 1978). The Comilla experiment continues to be of great interest to those in the development field; see for example, A. R. Khan (1979), Jones (1979), Wood (1980b)

with a tier-system of higher level bodies built upwards from the base level. First there were the Union Panchayats of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's era, for which elections were held in 1973. Then, after Sheikh Mujib's departure from the scene in 1975, came President Ziaur Rahman's Union Parishad system, which held its elections in 1977. Both sets of local governmental bodies were supposed to plan and administer the government's development programs at the local level and act as the main linkage between government and citizen in the same fashion as in India (and in Pakistan as well, at least during the Basic Democracies period).⁹

There are two other PDPs we shall be examining in Bangladesh also. The Rural Works Programme (RWP) began in the early 1960s as a massive public works operation, run through the BD system. During the 1960s this province-wide program in East Pakistan provided several hundred million days of employment during the off-season.¹⁰ It continued after independence, though in the later 1970s it was eclipsed by the Food for Work Programme (FWP), which was at first primarily an administratively-run relief enterprise, but then was to be turned over to the new Union Parishads after they had gotten properly organized enough to accept it (GPRB, 1977:52; also Stepanek, 1979).

The Thana Irrigation Programme (TIP) began in the mid-1960s as an effort to promote the use of low-lift pumps that would lift river water for agricultural use during the dry season. An offshoot of the Comilla experiment, the TIP differed in that it used low-lift pumps rather than tube-wells. More importantly, the TIP quickly spread very thinly all over East Pakistan instead of concentrating in one small area as did Comilla. Like the RWP, the TIP also continued after independence and by the late 1970s had grown to about 40,000 groups (World Bank, 1979:97).¹¹

United States. In the United States, participatory development programs were in large part an urban phenomenon, but then an urban focus made sense in a country that was over 70 percent urbanized by the mid-Sixties, just as a rural emphasis was

⁹Local governmental organizations in the post-independence period have not been thoroughly analyzed, largely no doubt because Sheikh Mujib's system never really got into operation before his death, and President Zia's system has not been functioning long enough for any studies to have come into print. Rashiduzzaman does have an analysis of the 1977 Union Parishad elections forthcoming. For an overall consideration of the issues involving local self-government in Bangladesh, see Islam (1978:79-84). For a discussion in detail, see Ahmed (1979).

¹⁰The RWP during the Pakistan period is well analyzed in Thomas (1971).

¹¹On the TIP generally, see World Bank (1979:29-32); also Blair (1974:68-74).

appropriate in the South Asian context, where the position was almost the reverse. In 1961, India was only 18 percent urban, and Pakistan was just over 13 percent urban in that same year.

The American program, launched by the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964, was the centerpiece of the Johnson Administration's "War on Poverty" (WP). The Act called for the "maximum feasible participation of the residents of the areas and the members of the groups" involved in the programs that were to be set up at the local level.¹² The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) administered these Community Action Agencies (CAAs) under its Community Action Program (CAP), which quickly ran into massive opposition from many directions in the cities where they were begun and were modified accordingly to diminish the participative content. In a somewhat altered form, the Office of Economic Opportunity continued the CAP as a major component of the Johnson Administration's Great Society enterprise. The Nixon Administration deemphasized and then eventually dismantled the CAP after coming into office in 1969.¹³

Our interest in this essay will concentrate on the CAP's genesis in the early 1960s in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, its birth in 1964, its flourishing in the mid-1960s and its decline in the later 1960s. This withering accelerated in the Nixon years, but it actually had begun in the middle of the Johnson Administration. To be sure, the CAP started with a burst of energy when the EOA was passed by Congress in November 1964. CAAs were quickly organized and funded directly from Washington in a large number of cities. Almost immediately the poor did begin to participate in these organizations, and where they were not participating, the federal government put pressure on local authorities (even up to the point of withholding federal funds) to allow the poor into decision-making roles in the local programs.

In a small number of cases, participation by the poor led to local protest movements demanding more services for poor areas and directed largely against the city authorities. These movements aroused intense antagonism from the mayors, who almost at once began to press Washington to curb what they saw as a threat to their

¹²The origins of the "maximum feasible participation" phrase, its meaning and the act of Congress that incorporated it, as well as the programs that followed it, are covered in Moynihan (1970).

¹³There are a large number of accounts of the War on Poverty and on the CAPs from many differing perspectives. Perhaps the most comprehensive are Marris and Rein (1973) and Donovan (1973).

authority. In response to this pressure, the White House began even in 1965 to tone down the independence of the CAAs and bring them under the control of the city halls. By 1967 this reining in was made official with the Green Amendment to the EOA of that year, which explicitly gave the mayors the prerogative to take over CAAs in their cities if they wished to do so.

The Model Cities Agency (MCA) was set up in 1966 by the Demonstration City and Metropolitan Development Act of that year to be an agency under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Relative to the CAP experience, much more serious thought went into the citizen participation component of MCA, and its provisions were considerably narrower. There was a requirement for "widespread citizen participation in the program," but this was only one of 30 requirements to be met before a program could be accepted (Strange, 1972a:463-464). When a program was accepted, a City Demonstration Agency (CDA) was set up, which would then proceed to rehabilitate target neighborhoods, working on the physical environment rather than the human side of things like the CAP.

With the CAP, the basic idea had been to organize the poor to act as a pressure group in city politics, to achieve transformation of slum life through conflict resolution, though this approach soon became modified toward less conflict and more cooperation. In the MCA case, on the other hand, cooperative activity was emphasized from the very beginning.¹⁴ In the current terminology, while both programs involved citizen participation, the CAP was more "bottom-up," while the MCA was more "top-down."

The CAP was more widespread than the MCA. There were as many as 1,000 CAAs in operation, whereas the MCA began with 66 model cities (originally the intention had been for 36, but Congressional pressure expanded the group to 66) and even at its height, it included only 150 cities of varying sizes. Budgets for the programs never went over \$700 million for CAP and \$600 million for MCA, both rather small operations in a total anti-poverty spending program that involved over \$100 billion of federal money by fiscal 1968 (Plotnick and Skidmore, 1975).

When the Nixon Administration came into office at the beginning of 1969, it deemphasized citizen participation in the two programs even further, making it clear that local elected officials were to be the people making important decisions, not members of the target populations. The Nixon programs (and later those of the Ford

¹⁴Frieden and Kaplan (1975:82-85) offer a comparative analysis of the CAP and MCA. On restraining citizen participation in both programs see Strange (1972b:656-657).

and Carter administrations),¹⁵ such as General Revenue Sharing and Community Development Block Grants, thus were very much like development programs in many Third World countries, in which participation is largely pro forma, while the major purpose is to build local patronage ties. Despite the change in emphasis with the incoming Nixon White House, though, the programs hung on for some years, in large part because of the constituency that they had built up during the Johnson period, a theme that will be taken up in Chapter 5. The CAP was finally transformed into a Community Services Administration in 1974 and melted into the Department of Health, Education and Welfare; the MCA was terminated altogether in 1975. Our interest in this study will focus on both programs during the Johnson years, when their citizen participation component was at its height.

¹⁵For a summary of the Nixon-Ford programs in the anti-poverty area, see Van Horn (1979).

Chapter 3

WHY THE PROGRAMS STARTED

There are at least nine significant similarities in the genesis of the programs under study here. They range from a common (though fictitious) mythology of a participatory past to a very future-oriented (though equally unrealistic) positivism which commanded a widespread allegiance both among social scientists (a good number of whom were involved in the management of PDPs) and among administrators themselves—a common faith that not only was it possible to understand the forces of social causation but also it was possible to plan government programs accordingly so as to eliminate poverty through participation.

1. The myth of a participatory past. In South Asia there is the enduring idea of the "village republic" that is widely believed to have existed for centuries if not millenia before the British came to establish the colonial yoke of the Raj in the eighteenth century. In this idyllic past, villages were essentially autonomous, their only real connection to a central authority being the payment of a very modest land tax and the enjoyment in return of protection from invasion and brigandage. Decisions were made by a council of wise elders, often called a panchayat, who conscientiously took into account all the interests of the village before arriving at a consensus decision that benefited everyone. The British destroyed all this with their autocratic and exploitative colonial rule, it was thought, but participatory development programs after independence would restore it (among some of the Hindu thinkers in India, the destruction of village participation was associated with the onset of Muslim rule several hundred years before the arrival of the British, but the interpretation of both the idealized past and the hope of restoration were the same among Hindus and Muslims).¹

In the United States we have our own idyllic past at the local level—the New England Town Meeting. Here, according to the myth, a sturdy and independent yeomanry debated the important issues before the village, everyone who wished to had

¹For a good example of this evocation of the past, see Dey (1962; esp. 3-14); more generally on this topic, see Jain (1967:77-162), Mathur et al. (1969), Bendix (1969:257-275). The "village republics" phrase is believed to have originated with Charles Metcalfe in the early 19th century (Panigrahi, 1968:88ff.). The thinking in Pakistan on Basic Democracies went back to the same roots (see Tepper, 1966), and in independent Bangladesh the same line of thought continues (see deVylder and Asplund, 1979:173-174; and Haq, 1980).

his say, the matter was then put to a vote, and all cheerfully joined ranks behind the policy that emerged.²

There are some differences here between the South Asian and American versions as to who should directly participate and who indirectly, how much importance should be attached to voting, and whether a common interest was to be uncovered (the Asian view) or whether differing interests were to be synthesized into one (the American version). But what is important are the similarities: the village is for all practical political purposes an independent entity; all views are to be articulated and considered; the village ultimately has a single common interest as a community; and all will benefit from implementing that interest.

As far as is known, there is no good reason to believe that either myth ever had much historical foundation in fact—local affairs in both cultures have traditionally been decided by local men of substance, largely (if not completely) in their own interest, an interest generally presented as being the interest of the whole community.³ What is important here, though, is not the accuracy of the myth so much as its continuing power as a standard for judging performance. In South Asia villagers are invariably apologetic when talking to outsiders (be they foreigners or fellow citizens) about faction, conflict, caste tension, dominance by the rich, corruption and all the similar phenomena that characterize local life in South Asia. So too in the United States the reality of conflicting interests, inequitable local property taxation, methods for granting zoning variances, selective enforcement of local ordinances, procedures for letting public contracting, property acquisition for public purposes and the like are almost universally thought by those who know about them to be unsuitable topics for the eyes or ears of the local media, civic organizations, the young or inquiring academics. When these realities for one reason or another come into view, people feel somehow guilty that their community has fallen short of the standard--the New England Town Meeting.

Both models make the basic assumption that the citizenry actually has a common interest and that through standard procedures this common interest can be discovered

²An excellent account of the development of American ideas of local government is given in Syed (1966); another version, with a more explicit focus on participation, can be found in ACIR (1979: ch. 2). For an enthusiastic assessment of the hope for a restoration of the town meeting approach through the community development effort in the United States, see Kotler (1969). The idea still retains its power, even at the end of the decade of disillusionment that has been the 1970s (e.g., Knight, 1979).

³The point, of course, is disputed by those of the pluralist school. See Chapter 4, Section 2, for a discussion of this issue.

and implemented. People in both regions are reluctant indeed to concede that the community may not have a unity of interest or that there cannot be any way to determine what that interest is. They want fervently to believe in the idea of a single community interest, and the wish to believe is father to the thought that in fact there is such an interest. The notion that local affairs should be conducted by the high standards of a town meeting or a legendary village republic is a compelling one, and the hope that new programs can restore a lost golden age of self-reliant local management of affairs is very powerful.

2. Poverty as a self-perpetuating cycle. The view of economic development that acquired currency after World War II included the fundamental notion that poverty is a self-reinforcing condition that keeps on creating obstacles to its own amelioration. Though superficially the mass poverty of the Third World and the "pockets" of poverty in the United States were greatly different, the theories that emerged to explain their causes and continuation displayed striking similarities.

For the Third World, one variant or another of the "low-level equilibrium trap" was the starting point for most explanations of underdevelopment. The essence of the idea is that a poor country (or a poor region or even a poor village within such a country) consumes virtually all that it produces within any given year and so has nothing to save. Because there is no saving, there is no investment and thus no addition to the productive capacity of the system. Consequently the total production for each succeeding year will be the same as for the previous year, and the process will go on at this low-level equilibrium indefinitely. Population growth makes the trap much worse, for even if a system is able to save a small portion of its product and invest it to increase overall production, additions to the population will consume the increment, so on a per capita basis things remain the same. If an economy, whether at village or national level, is unable to save and invest even this small amount, then population growth will mean a declining standard of living, as more and more people share the same product.⁴

The analogous concept in the United States was the "culture of poverty" theory. According to this notion, the poor were in a self-perpetuating trap in which poverty was both cause and effect. Poverty had a culture of its own, the theory held, characterized by low achievement, functional illiteracy and frustration. In such an environment, without any confidence in or support for the instrumental value of education, children were bound to do poorly in school, become frustrated, drop out at an early age, and find

⁴See Higgins (1968:330-331) for a good account of the theory.

themselves unable to participate in the labor market except in the most menial and low-paying jobs. They would grow up to be replicas of their parents and passing on the same culture in turn to their own children.⁵ In the American case, as opposed to the South Asian one, the cycle was perhaps more one of social psychology than one of economics, and the state's welfare machinery kept most of the citizenry from outright starvation, but the effects were much the same: the poverty pattern contained the necessary elements of its own continuation.

To characterize the problem of poverty metaphorically as an endless cycle almost automatically makes one think also in metaphorical terms of breaking the cycle, and this was in fact the approach pursued for some time. The way to break out of the low-level equilibrium trap was through an infusion of capital that would get the process of economic development moving. Adding to the productive capacity of the system would generate more output, which would provide more scope for saving and hence investment, and in turn the greater investment would be channeled back into production. The next year the output would be even larger and so would the savings and investment and so on and on. Soon the system would be ready for the economic "take-off" into a self-sustaining growth that would replace the self-sustaining poverty of the low-level equilibrium.⁶

In India this was in fact the strategy pursued. The major focus of economic development in the 1950s and 1960s was on the industrial sector, which was seen by the planners as the major engine of growth for the economy as a whole. In the five-year plans of those decades, agricultural development was rather less emphasized.⁷ Later on, as the Green Revolution began to make headway and as spokesmen for the rural sector began forcefully to articulate their feelings of being neglected in favor of industry, there came to be a much greater demand for investment in agriculture, (e.g.,

⁵Marris and Rein (1973:38ff) give a good summation of the concept. See also Lewis (1969). For a thorough treatment, see Leacock (1971).

⁶The process is described at length in Rostow (1960). In the 1960s the book became, as its subtitle hopefully implied, a manifesto for the Western international development community.

⁷On the diversion of investment capital to the industrial sector, see Mellor (1966, 1976), also Lipton (1977). In Pakistan the debate over investment in industry vs. agriculture became tangled up with the East Wing vs. West Wing issue, as most of the industrial capacity was in the West. Most of the investment during the first three five-year plans (1955-1970) was also in the western and industrial part of the country (Haq, 1963; Griffin and Rahman, 1972).

Charan Singh, 1964; 1978) a demand translated at least partially into reality in the sixth plan for 1978-83 (GOI, 1978b).

The change in emphasis from the industrial to the rural sector was made possible by two developments. One, the more obvious, was the gradual shift in the makeup of the Indian Parliament, from a body of MPs heavily weighted toward the professions to one in which a larger number of the members thought of themselves as agriculturalists (Franda, 1979:3). Allied with this change in the occupational orientation of the members was the coming into power of the Janata Party after the elections of 1977, for the leadership of the new party saw its major constituency as the rural areas of the country. Naturally such a group was more disposed toward a rural development planning approach, as the Sixth Plan demonstrated.⁸

The other change was more subtle, but probably equally influential in bringing about a more favorable attitude toward the possibilities of growth in the rural sector. This was the shift in the view held by development theorists and practitioners concerning the Third World farmer, a change that made an "agriculture first" strategy intellectually respectable. In the 1950s people like Albert Mayer might insist that the Indian farmer really was a good investment risk (1958:283-287), but for the most part their words fell on deaf ears, because the prevailing wisdom of the time was in the opposite direction. The industrial and urban sectors were thought by most to be the proper loci of development efforts, not the countryside.

The reasons for this bias no doubt go back as far in human history as the earliest beginnings of urban settlements, but in modern times they found their roots both in reality and in development theory. The economic history of the West over the previous century had been in large part a movement from country to city, from farm to industry, and much the same could be said, though to a lesser extent, for the communist bloc as well. It made sense that backward countries should take the same path as their more successful brethren. Even such terms as "backward" or "underdeveloped" implied that if the poor countries emulated the rich ones they would become "advanced" and "developed." The leadership of many of the newly independent nations felt this way and greatly resented suggestions from the West that they concentrate on agriculture. Such advice, they felt, would doom their countries to permanent backwardness.⁹

⁸Franda (1979a and 1979b) gives a good description and analysis of this change.

⁹On this issue in general, see Lipton (1977:79-81). On India in particular, see Nehru (1960:300, cited in Lipton, 1977:30).

On the intellectual side, the conceptual systems of social science theoreticians like Tonnies, Redfield and Parsons distinguished between archetypes of "traditional," rural, peasant community and "modern," urban, industrialized society.¹⁰ Translated into terms of economic development, these schema became models like Riggs' "Agraria and Industria," with "Agraria" clearly the traditional polar type in the comparison (Riggs:1957). For South Asia in particular, Max Weber's view of Indians as an other-worldly and non-materialistic people was generally accepted, at least insofar as rural folk were concerned.¹¹

In the 1960s a counterargument developed and gained momentum, led by Theodore Schultz and others, who asserted that far from being otherworldly and spiritual, Third World peasants are in fact a model of rational economic behavior, that their farming systems reflect a high degree of efficiency in terms of the available level of technology and that farmers respond well to any chance for increasing their returns.¹² For India in particular, John Mellor (1966, 1976) argued the case with vigor and eloquence.

Breaking out of the low-level equilibrium trap, then, was no longer viewed by development theorists as being necessarily a policy which placed industry first, and agriculture second. Investment directly in the rural sector made sound practical sense. This change in perspective came too late to help Community Development in India, of course, but did form a cornerstone for the intellectual edifice of later rural development programs there and in Bangladesh as well.¹³

In the United States there was also a change in the theoretical understanding of poverty that proved of major importance in fighting the War on Poverty. The "culture of poverty" theory held that intervention at any point of the process would help to shake loose the cycle from its moorings, though education seemed to offer the best prospects (Marris and Rein, 1973). In our terms, investment in education, or "human

¹⁰For a succinct treatment of these concepts, see Hoselitz (1968) and Miner (1968).

¹¹Weber (1959). Nair (1962 and 1979) gives a more updated version of the argument.

¹²Schultz (1964). Owens and Shaw (1972) give a good synopsis of the approach. On non-economic aspects, see Huntington (1971) for a critique of the tradition/modernity theory.

¹³See, for instance, the Asoka Mehta Report (GOI, 1978a: esp. ch. 2), which puts great stress on the growth potential of agriculture as a justification for strengthening Panchayati Raj.

capital," is quite similar in concept to capital investment in South Asia, with its hope of providing future returns in the way of growth. One could even think that education of a sufficient portion of a whole age cohort of the poor could in effect provide the preconditions for a "take-off" into self-sustaining upward mobility toward a place in the lower middle class.

A different approach to the matter came with the "opportunity deprivation" thesis of Cloward and Ohlin, developed as part of the Mobilization for Youth (MFY) program for gang delinquents in New York City's Lower East Side at the beginning of the 1960s. Put very simply, the Cloward-Ohlin thesis was that the poor engage in anti-social behavior not because they are acting out the values of their "culture of poverty," but because they have absorbed the achievement-oriented, materialistic culture of middle class America. They want to participate in the middle class lifestyle as much as anyone else, and it is because they are deprived of this opportunity that they become delinquents and anti-social in their relations with the wider culture. Remove the obstacles and allow the poor a chance to take part in the wider economy, so the reasoning went, and they would take full advantage of it (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). Permit and encourage the poor to participate in improving themselves, in other words, and they would do so with enthusiasm. This approach seemed to show some success in the MFY project, and it became one of the major theoretical underpinnings of the War on Poverty.¹⁴ It also had the advantage of slicing through the "nature vs. nurture" debate over whether poverty behavior was primarily determined genetically or environmentally by asserting that the whole argument is irrelevant--both factors contribute to the desire for middle class lifestyle in the "opportunity deprivation" view.

As commander-in-chief of the War on Poverty, Lyndon Johnson appears to have subscribed to both the "culture of poverty" thesis and the newer "opportunity deprivation" approach. In his memoirs, Johnson spoke of "the poverty cycle" in which a poor man was

poor all his life and was destined to die poor. His children could look forward to the same hopeless cycle, from a deprived youth to a bleak and despairing old age. To defeat poverty meant breaking this cruel pattern. (Johnson, 1971:73)

¹⁴On the role of the MFY in the beginning of the War on Poverty, see Moynihan (1970: esp. ch. 2 and 6); also Marris and Rein (1973). The essays in Weissman (1969) provide an account and an evaluation of the various MFY projects that provided inspiration and models for the WP.

But then two pages further on, Johnson seemed to be pointing to the newer theory in describing his own experience in teaching school in Texas in the 1930s when he discovered that Mexican-American parents "had about the same hopes for their children that bankers do" (ibid:75).

In both cases, then, we find the explanation of poverty initially to be one of circular causation or self-reinforcement, a cycle best broken by exogenous investment in physical (South Asia) or human (America) capital. In both cases, too, a new theory came into widespread acceptance, holding that the nature of poverty was much simpler than had previously been believed.¹⁵ It was not a holistic culture that prevented the appearance of any motivation for achievement in the individual; quite the opposite, so the new thinking went, poor people in both regions were in fact highly motivated toward self improvement ab initio. The obstacle standing in the way of realizing their goals was not the whole weight of past culture, a tradition "baked hard in the cake of custom" in Barbara Ward's phrase (Ward, 1961:109), but rather the simple lack of knowledge of new technology in the South Asia case and the lack of opportunity for self-advancement in the American one.

Clearly, the solution was to remove the constraints, to provide knowledge to the South Asian farmer,¹⁶ and to provide opportunity to the American ghetto resident. The governmental support required, of course, was not only the provision of extension agents and employment counsellors. Much more in the way of physical inputs for South Asian farmers and program organization for American cities was seen to be imperative. Still, the relatively low cost of the programs was seen as one of their chief attractions, a theme we shall explore in the next section.

3. The promise of a low-cost program. The War on Poverty was under constant attack as being ineffective and unsupportably expensive, a dangerous growth that threatened grave harm to the body politic if not excised (e.g., Scheibla, 1968; U.S. House, 1972). Indeed, in the eyes of some, the WP simply produced "welfare bums," social parasites who fed on poverty program handouts. The words of Richard Nixon, one

¹⁵Interestingly, the "culture of poverty" theory seems to have regained the ascendancy in the United States today (see Barden, 1981).

¹⁶Understandably, extension ideas fit in well here, and the diffusion theories of Everett Rogers were highly regarded in the development field. See Saint and Coward (1977). The latest version of the extension approach is the "Training and Visit" system, currently much in vogue at the World Bank (Benor and Harrison, 1977; also Rowen, 1978). "T & V" appears to represent a kind of throwback to an earlier day, when lack of knowledge was thought to be the only real constraint on agricultural development.

of the major beneficiaries of popular "backlash" against the WP, reflect what was certainly a widely held view at the time:

...the fatal flaw of the Great Society was precisely its inclination to establish massive federal programs....Johnson had fallen into the trap that snares so many believers in big government; he was promising far more than ever could be achieved....His Great Society programs spawned a new constituency of government dependents who would always demand more than he could give (Nixon, 1978:267).

Nixon suggests that the total spending on welfare during the Johnson Administration was massive. If this is so, as seen in Table 3, ironically, welfare spending became even more massive in Nixon's own administration. Table 3 is largely drawn from the very careful attempt of Plotnick and Skidmore (1975) to sift out for three representative years just exactly how much money the government did invest in anti-poverty efforts. Altogether, in fiscal 1965, the first year of the WP, the federal government spent almost \$38 billion on social welfare (Table 3, line 4), a sum that increased to over \$58 billion in fiscal 1968 and \$105 billion four years later (that is, in the middle of the Nixon presidency). If we add in state and local spending on social welfare (line 9), the total swells from \$74 billion for 1965 (line 15) to \$109 billion for 1968, over 38 percent of all government social welfare spending in both those years, and rising to just under \$185 billion, or 46 percent of all such government spending in 1972. If we take only those programs or parts of programs aimed at low-income recipients, as Plotnick and Skidmore did in their study, subtracting out most of the spending on education, social security, medicare and the like, we come up with a rather more modest figure of 5 to 10 percent of federal spending (line 2), 3 to 5] percent of state and local expenditures (line 7) and 4 to 8 percent overall (line 13) being devoted to low income groups. As for the community level programs, they amounted to about four-tenths of one percent of federal spending (lines 1a and 1b) at their peak and about half of that if overall spending is considered (line 12). Social welfare spending did increase greatly, even astronomically, in the later 1960s and early 1970s, and even that portion of welfare spending benefiting low income groups rose a great deal. But spending on the CAP and MCA never consumed more than a tiny fraction of government outlays.¹⁷

¹⁷ Actually, it was thought that this tiny fraction would soon become even tinier, for the mid-1960s were the heady days of the "fiscal dividend" mentality in Washington, when it was believed that rising real income would automatically produce more federal

**Table 3: United States: Social Welfare and Total Government Expenditures
At All Levels, 1965, 1968 and 1972
(figures in millions of dollars for fiscal years)**

	1965		1968		1972	
	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%
<u>Federal</u>						
1a. OEO--Community Action Only	4	0.003	426	0.2	458	0.2
1b. Model Cities Agency	0	0.0	4	0.002	500	0.2
2. Other Low-Income Programs	6,350	5.4	11,579	6.5	23,696	10.2
3. Other Social Welfare	<u>31,240</u>	<u>26.5</u>	<u>46,563</u>	<u>26.0</u>	<u>80,362</u>	<u>34.7</u>
4. Total Federal Social Welfare	37,774	31.9	58,572	32.8	105,016	45.3
5. All Other Federal Spending	<u>80,656</u>	<u>68.1</u>	<u>120,261</u>	<u>67.2</u>	<u>126,860</u>	<u>54.7</u>
6. Total Overall Federal Spending	118,430	100.0	178,833	100.0	231,876	100.0
<u>State and Local</u>						
7. Low-Income Programs	2,503	3.3	4,379	4.3	9,149	5.5
8. Other Social Welfare	<u>34,205</u>	<u>45.9</u>	<u>46,273</u>	<u>45.2</u>	<u>70,707</u>	<u>42.4</u>
9. Total S & L Social Welfare	36,708	49.2	50,652	49.5	79,856	47.9
10. All Other S & L Spending	<u>37,838</u>	<u>50.8</u>	<u>51,759</u>	<u>50.5</u>	<u>87,217</u>	<u>52.1</u>
11. Total Overall S & L Spending	74,546	100.0	102,411	100.0	166,873	100.0
<u>Combined</u>						
12. Community Action and Model Cities	4	0.002	430	0.2	958	0.2
13. Other Low-Income Programs	8,853	4.6	15,958	5.7	37,845	8.3
14. Other Social Welfare	<u>65,625</u>	<u>34.0</u>	<u>92,836</u>	<u>33.0</u>	<u>151,069</u>	<u>37.9</u>
15. Total Social Welfare	74,482	38.6	109,224	38.8	154,872	46.4
16. All Other Spending	<u>118,494</u>	<u>61.4</u>	<u>172,020</u>	<u>61.2</u>	<u>213,877</u>	<u>53.6</u>
17. Total Overall Spending	192,976	100.0	281,244	100.0	398,749	100.0

- Sources: 1. Figures on social welfare spending at all levels: Plotnick and Skidmore, 1975:10 and 52-57.
2. Figures on total spending at all levels: U.S. President, 1975:325-326 and 331.

For India no one has duplicated the painstaking work of Plotnick and Skidmore, but we can get some idea of the government's monetary commitment to CD and PR by looking at data from the five-year plans, in which an attempt was mounted to chart a plan for all government spending for development at both national and state levels. The plan figures are for "developmental" projects only and thus do not include the entire government budget.¹⁸ So we cannot compare the Indian data directly with the American, but we can get some idea of the order of priority of the CD and PR efforts from Table 4. Here we see that even during its halcyon days in the first three five-year plans CD never got more than about four percent of developmental allocations, and the panchayat programs never even approached one percent.¹⁹ By way of comparison, transportation and communications received an average of 24.3 percent of plan allocations, industry got an average of 14.6 percent, power 10.9 percent and large scale irrigation (dams and canal projects) 10.5 percent (data derived from Mellor, 1976: 298). As the government's overall development hopes grew more ambitious in the two fourth plans, and then the fifth and sixth plans, CD and PR outlays steadily shrunk both in absolute and relative terms, to about a fifth of one percent in the sixth plan. As far as actual spending went, it was invariably less than the original projection, as we see on the bottom row of Table 4.

In the Pakistan case changes in the government's rural development programs over the years have rendered it difficult to make comparisons, but Table 5 gives the basic outline. Here we find Village-AID similar in order of magnitude to the CD program in India, accounting for between 3 and 4 percent of projected outlays in the first two plans, and BDs were about on a par with PR in India.²⁰

tax money in the future, to the extent that by 1970 it was expected that \$7-10 billion extra would be available for domestic programs (Donovan, 1973:116; Moynihan, 1970: 28-29; Frieden and Kaplan, 1975: 48). For a contemporary account, see Walinsky (1966).

¹⁸Government spending in India is divided into "developmental" (i.e., five-year plan expenditures) and "non-developmental" (that is, defense, police, debt interest, general administration, food subsidies, etc.) categories, with the developmental side running at about 60 percent of the total in recent years (GOI, 1977: 73-74).

¹⁹The figures for "Panchayati Raj" in the first two plans in Table 4 actually represent outlay planned for those panchayat schemes that preceded PR, all of which were at state level only.

²⁰The Village-AID program in Pakistan (1953-61) was similar to Indian CD, but was even more "top-down" in its implementation. For a brief review of the program, see Braibanti (1966a: 202-203).

**Table 4: India: Government Outlays Allocated for Community Development
And Panchayati Raj in the Five-Year Plans, 1951-1983 [figures in billions of rupees (=Rs)]**

	<u>FIRST</u> 1951-52		<u>SECOND</u> 1956-57		<u>THIRD</u> 1961-62		<u>FOURTH Da</u> 1966-67		<u>FOURTH Pb</u> 1967-70		<u>FIFTH</u> 1974-75		<u>SIXTHc</u> 1978-79	
	to 1955-56 Rs	%	to 1960-61 Rs	%	to 1965-66 Rs	%	to 1971-72 Rs	%	to 1973-74 Rs	%	to 1978-79 Rs	%	to 1982-83 Rs	%
Community Development	0.90	3.8	2.00	4.1	2.94	3.6					1.02	0.3		
Panchayati Raj ^e	<u>0.26</u>	1.1	<u>0.27</u>	0.6	<u>0.29</u>	0.4	<u>2.60^d</u>	1.6	<u>1.16^d</u>	0.7	<u>0.26</u>	0.1	<u>1.50^d</u>	0.2
Total Government Outlay	23.56		48.00		80.99		160.00		159.02		372.50		693.80	
Actual Government Apending ^f	.46		1.87		2.67				1.21					

Notes: ^aFourth Draft Plan.

^bFourth Plan; the Fourth Plan had been intended to follow the Third, but instead there was an interim of three years between the two. Hence, the data here for both draft and actual plans.

^cThe incoming Janata government in 1977 wanted its own plan, and so cut off the Fifth Plan one year early.

^dFor these plans only a combined figure for both categories was given.

^eThis figure represents planned outlay for local panchayats only for the first two plans.

^fThis figure represents actual government expenditure for CD and PR as reported subsequently.

- Sources:
1. For the first three plans, Mellor, 1976:298.
 2. For the Fourth Plan Draft, GOI, 1966b:43, 72.
 3. For the Fourth Plan, GOI, 1970?:65.
 4. For the Fifth Plan, GOI, 1973:I, 83; and II, 60.
 5. For the Sixth Plan, GOI, 1978b:18, 20.
 6. For actual expenditures for the first three plans, GOI, 1970:269.
 7. For actual expenditures for the Fourth Plan, GOI, 1971:297; GOI, 1975a:185; GOI, 1976:210.

Table 5: Pakistan: Planned Outlays for Rural Development Programs in the Five Year Plans, 1955-1975
[figures in millions of rupees (=Rs)]

<u>Category</u>	First Plan 1955-60		Second Plan 1960-65		Third Plan 1965-70		Fourth Plan ⁴ 1970-75	
	<u>Rs</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Rs</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Rs</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Rs</u>	<u>%</u>
Village-AID and Rural Development	298	3.2	411	3.6	---	---	---	---
Basic Democracies	---	---	73	0.6	18	0.06	---	---
Community Development (incl. urban)	---	---	---	---	---	---	33	0.07
Total for Plan	9,352		11,500		31,000		49,000	

^aBecause of the secession of East Pakistan to become Bangladesh in 1971, the Fourth Plan was not implemented.

- Sources: 1. For First Plan, GOP, 1957:15.
2. For Second Plan, GOP, 1960:393-396.
3. For Third Plan, GOP, 1967:Part 2, 15-17.
4. For Fourth Plan, GOP, 1970.

Bangladesh has thus far produced two five-year plans with one two-year plan in between them (GPRB, 1973b, 1978 and 1980a), as well as annual plans (e.g., GPRB, 1973a, 1974). Although the rural institutions line in Table 6 is much more inclusive (including a good deal of capital investment in irrigation equipment and the like) than similar categories for India and Pakistan and hence not really comparable, the table does give some idea of the government's efforts thus far in the rural development field. As with the other South Asian countries, the levels here are also low (for more discussion, see Stepanek, 1979).

To sum up Tables 3 through 6, we find that in both the American and South Asian experiences, PDP expenditures were substantial in absolute terms but in a relative sense were a very small part of total government activity. Another way to look at the matter is to note that in 1965 some 40.8 million persons were reckoned to be poor in the United States. Of the total of \$75 billion in American social welfare expenditures in that year (Table 3, line 15), Plotnick and Skidmore (1975: 59) found that \$31.1 billion

Table 6: Bangladesh: Government Outlays for Rural Institutions in the First Three Plans, 1973-1985
[figures in billions of taka (=Tk)]

	FIRST PLAN 1973-1978		2-YR PLAN 1978-1980		SECOND PLAN 1980-1985	
	<u>Tk</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Tk</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Tk</u>	<u>%</u>
Agricultural Sector Total (incl. rural institutions)	10.4	26.3	9.0	27.6	65.0	32.0
Rural Institutions Only	1.6	4.1	1.5	4.6	8.0	4.0
Total Government Outlay	39.5	100.0	32.6	100.0	201.3	100.0

(Sources: GPRB, 1973b; GPRB, 1978; GPRB, 1980a)

went to these 40.8 million, for an average of \$762 per head, an amount that was to increase to \$1997 by 1972 (ibid.: 59, 112), a huge sum indeed.²¹ But OEO spending on the CAP was on the order of 10¢ per poor person in 1965, a sum that rose to about \$12 in 1968 and then dropped to about \$11.50 in 1972, not an entirely negligible sum, but by American standards definitely a low priority effort in a monetary sense.

In India, if we take the rural population in the mid-1950s as being roughly 330 million and in the mid-1960s as about 400 million, we see with a quick look at Table 3 that total CD and PR spending never amounted to as much as one rupee (around 20¢) per person, and even this was spread over the five years of a plan. Pakistan had a rural population of about 60 million in 1961, which meant that its rural development spending was rather more generous than India's--about Rs 5 per capita (slightly over \$1 at the official rate of exchange) over the five years of the first plan and Rs 8 over the second

²¹It should be remembered that Plotnick and Skidmore include all social security, medicare, education, veterans and employee retirement expenditures as well as direct assistance to the poor in their analysis. The definition of who is poor has proven especially difficult, but Plotnick and Skidmore have done at least as well as anyone else in putting together a reasonable definition.

plan.²² For Bangladesh, even with the more inclusive definition of rural development institutions that occurs in Table 6, the rate of expenditure will only reach around Ts 100 (\$7) per capita spread over the entire period of the Second Five-year Plan.

In short, the expenditures were never very great. But then neither the WP nor its South Asian counterparts were ever portrayed by their sponsors as an expensive enterprise. On the contrary, all these efforts were seen as essentially pump-priming operations, where the major part of the resources would eventually be furnished by the beneficiaries. The modestly financed national component would become self-liquidating as each local project gained its feet and moved off under its own power. With a little outside help at organizing and with a little investment money to start things moving, the poor would mobilize their own self-help programs. In America the CAAs were to help the poor help themselves, not to give handouts. President Johnson saw the effort as "an investment" that would "return its cost manifold to our entire economy" (Johnson, 1964: 5287). As Sargent Shriver, Director of the OEO, put it, "The community action program, which is at the heart of the antipoverty effort . . . (is) embodying the self-help principle of involving the poor themselves to the maximum extent feasible" (US Senate, 1965: 19). Or in the words of the OEO itself, "Under the Community Action philosophy, communities must develop their own programs to eliminate poverty, rather than depend on outside help" (OEO, 1966: 11).²³

In South Asia the story was the same. Right from the beginning, Nehru (1963: 20) and Mayer (1958: 24, 218-221) saw CD as an undertaking that would soon be self-propelled. In the words of one careful student of the Indian development process, A.H. Hanson, "(CD's) ultimate objective is a self-liquidating one, to be achieved when the process of development becomes self-generating and self-sustaining" (1966: 420).

²²It is, of course, dangerous (and in the example that follows, perhaps foolish as well) to make comparisons between the economic value of things between advanced and Third World countries. But if we take the per capita allocation of Pakistan's first five-year plan at Rs 5, or Rs 1 per year, calculate this as the equivalent of about 22 American cents, then note that per capita income in the US was at that time something like 47 times that of Pakistan, and finally multiply the Pakistan figure by 47, we get a bit over \$10, not far from the per capita expenditure of \$11 or \$12 for the CAP reported above in the text.

²³Even today this same view prevails of poverty program funding as "seed money" to be phased out at some future time (e.g., Herbers, 1979). Whether this is more because we still see poverty as a condition that truly can be eliminated or because those in political positions are more cautious than ever of seeming to be coddling undeserving "welfare chiselers" is not clear.

The idea of self-liquidation was built into the CD program at the start with each block taken up in the scheme to receive a set grant for a specific number of years to be followed by a definite cutoff. After some experimentation, the formula finally hit upon was Rs 1.2 million over the first five years, then Rs 500,000 for a second five-year period, and finally a severely reduced budget for a couple of years more (GOI 1960:213). Over this time CD was to inculcate the developmental spirit plus a knowledge of how to organize and manage that spirit, so that villagers would continue the effort on their own. Indeed, the first two five-year plans recommended that the village level be given the responsibility for all development in the countryside, with CD serving mainly to start the process along (Frankel, 1978: 102-106, 137).

In Pakistan, Ayub Khan spoke of one of the two major missions of BD being to "organize the people to take care of the problems of their areas and to inculcate in them the spirit of self-help" (1967: 207).²⁴

It was in Bangladesh that the idea of self-help and limited outside funding was most explicitly expressed. The authors of the 1973-78 five-year plan found that previous efforts at rural self-development had tended to degenerate into patronage institutions (GPRB, 1973b: 155), and determined that in the new IRDP things would be better managed. The new institutions, they asserted, would be "capable of being self-managed and self-financed within a specified period of time . . . under no circumstances the government grant to a TCCA [Thana Central Cooperative Agency, the administrative body at the block level for the IRDP] will be continued after five years" (ibid.: 156, 159).

At one level all the rhetoric of self-help may seem hypocritical and cynical--the whole participation idea can be seen as a way for governments to pass off the burden of what they should be doing themselves if they were serious about eliminating poverty and improving the lot of the poor--"an elaborate confidence trick perpetrated by all levels of government," in the words of one observer (Higgins, 1978, 124). And indeed there was probably more than a little self-serving quality (however unconscious it may have been) in the pious advice that affluent political leaders and civil servants have given the poor about pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps.

But practically speaking, where else was the effort going to come from except from the poor themselves, if there was to be any real amelioration of their condition?

²⁴The other objective of BD was to serve as an electoral college, a task unnecessary in India, where there was direct universal suffrage.

In South Asia as a whole, over 80 percent of the population lived in the countryside, and of those that were in the cities, at least half lived in conditions scarcely better than what could be found in the villages.²⁵ Could the remainder, less than 10 percent of the total population, finance the development of the 80+ percent? Assuredly, no. The impetus for development, then, has to come from the mofussil,²⁶ for there is nowhere else for it to come from. In a very real sense rural South Asia must develop itself, just like rural China without significant help from the urban sector. The Bangladesh Planning Commission put the matter directly in its First Five-Year Plan:

There is an implicit assumption in the Plan that the resources made available by the National Government through the annual development plan will be augmented by the community with its own resources. The community participation and financial contributions will be realized only if the local governments can show in their plans the kind of work they will undertake out of their own resources. If a community finds that it is not only expected to implement a programme but also draw it up and where necessary and feasible make a contribution to the effort by using their own resources, they will gain confidence in their own abilities and also be more enthusiastic about the work. (GPRB, 1973b: 80; see also GPRB, 1977: 54).

The hope expressed here may have proven to be utopian thus far, but, unless it is realized at some point, sustained rural development simply will never occur.

In the United States the proportions are very different, with perhaps 25 percent of the population poor in the mid-1960s.²⁷ But the possibility of remedying the situation of the poor by resources from the non-poor appears about the same as in South Asia. The large-scale programs and massive transfers of income revealed in Table 3, which gave roughly \$2000 of social welfare expenditure to each poor person in the United States by 1972 (Plotnick and Skidmore, 1975) still did not eradicate poverty. Perhaps much greater provision of welfare services and much higher income transfers would substantially ameliorate or even eliminate poverty in America, though this is a dubious

²⁵ But nevertheless at least slightly better, for otherwise the migration to the cities would not have taken place.

²⁶ After all, we might note, most of the capital for urban/industrial development has traditionally come from the countryside (Lipton, 1977).

²⁷ Depending, of course, on how one defines that elusive category (Plotnick and Skidmore, 1975).

proposition (Plotnick and Smeeding, 1979). What is clear is that higher levels of expenditure than those shown in Table 3 would have been politically impossible. True, welfare spending did increase greatly over the period shown in Table 3, even after the "backlash" against the Great Society, the rise of conservative politicians like Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan and the subsequent conservative posturings of such formerly liberal politicians as Nelson Rockefeller. But still further increases would have been necessary to make a serious impact on poverty, and these further increases were clearly not available, for the public would not have tolerated them.

In the end, then, beyond a certain level of government aid, the poor were on their own to find any real and lasting improvement in their socioeconomic condition. While "self-help" was to some extent a self-serving excuse by a society unwilling to part with more than a certain percentage of its wealth, it was also, given the political reality of the American scene, the only solution.

4. The efficiencies of decentralization. If, as we have just seen, people at the local level were to be made responsible for their own development plans, it would be not only unreasonable but downright impossible to expect these plans to proceed in lockstep according to some detailed design laid out in the capital city. Decentralization was essential.

Accordingly, decentralization, or "flexibility" as it was often called in the American context, was considered to be of utmost importance. When President Johnson introduced the WP to Congress in March 1964 he stressed flexibility as one of the CAP's most significant aspects:

These are not plans prepared in Washington and imposed upon hundreds of different situations. They are based on the fact that local citizens best understand their own problems and know best how to deal with these problems (Johnson, 1964: 5288).

Johnson's chief poverty warrior, Sargent Shriver, put it much the same way:

Some people say we should always require certain things in each one of these community action programs. We took exactly the opposite point of view. We said that this particular part of our program was community action and that the action therefore should be run at the local level....We have not tried to establish a rigid format here in Washington which every city in the United States had to comply with. What we are trying to do is to get local community action. In

Minneapolis it is completely different from the way it is, let us say, in Baltimore. That does not make it good or bad. It just is different (US Senate, 1965: 88, 105).²⁸

Or as the OEO itself put the matter:

Each community action agency is a local unit, not an arm of the federal government. Local citizens plan these agencies and local people operate them, deciding for themselves which programs will best help their own poor (OEO, 1966: 11).

Furthermore, it was thought that decentralization would be more efficient economically than a centrally determined program blueprint. There were, after all, great differences from one community to another, between the Minneapolis and the Baltimores in the passage just quoted from Sargent Shriver, and a single plan for them all would mean a great deal of waste and needless duplication.²⁹

On the negative side, the independence of the CAP at the local level conflicted with the thrust of comprehensive long-term planning, not just across cities, but also within them, for the needs reflected in one neighborhood's program might be very different from the needs of another community, and the different local programs would make any overall plan a good deal more difficult to manage. But this could be considered a virtue rather than a defect, in view of the deleterious consequences of city planning, particularly urban renewal and thruway construction in minority neighborhoods (Altshuler, 1970: 45ff). In the mid-1960s, it will be remembered, the slogan "Urban renewal means Negro removal" touched a sore nerve in black urban communities.

There was also an administrative efficiency expected in decentralization, for it held out the promise that as each new CAA got started and could take off, a large operation could be put into the field with very few federal field workers, a matter of great appeal in the American political system where there is continuous Congressional (and media) scrutiny and criticism of bureaucratic bloat and surplus personnel.

²⁸Cf. the similar views of big city mayors on this need for decentralization, for instance, Richard J. Daley of Chicago (U.S. Senate, 1967a:4117) and Jerome Cavanaugh of Detroit (ibid:107-108 and 119-120). These mayors were actually some of the major beneficiaries of decentralization, as it put the programs under their control, a point to be taken up later on in Chapter 4.

²⁹For a thorough analytical treatment of decentralization in theory and practice in the context of the War on Poverty, see Yates (1973).

The South Asian supporters of PDPs were very fond of decentralization as a cornerstone of the whole development enterprise. The very concept of building programs around the "felt needs" of the villagers that was so central to CD necessarily implied decentralization, for the needs felt in one village were sure to be different from those felt in other villages, perhaps even those next door. Curiously, in retrospect, there is no indication at all in the early CD literature that there might be any differences within villages as to what the "felt needs" of different groups might be; the village was considered in effect as a homogeneous unit (we shall return to this point again in Chapter 4). But between villages it was realized from the outset that needs would be quite dissimilar.

Again, as in the United States, decentralization held out the promise of economic efficiency in permitting the tackling of each village's most important priorities, rather than forcing all villages into the same set of projects, whether they were needed or not. And decentralization also held the same appeal of administrative efficiency, though for a somewhat different reason than in the American case. Whereas in the United States the danger was in building up too large a bureaucracy, in India it was in overextending the demands on the bureaucracy already in place. As so many analyses in the Indian journals and monographs have pointed out,³⁰ after independence the elite civil service cadres, which had been concerned in the colonial period primarily with administering law, order and land revenue collection in the countryside, were now given all the tasks of promoting economic and social development as well. For a bureaucracy like India's that was so dependent upon direction by a small cadre like the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the additional task was a heavy one indeed. The IAS numbered only about 1500 for all of India in the 1950s,³¹ and with these few people it staffed most of the district commissionerships, a post which meant directing all governmental activity in an area (i.e., the district) of one to two million inhabitants. There were lower levels of administrations, such as the subdivision (two or three per district) and the thana (several per subdivision). These were generally headed up by a member of the state civil service cadre, who had charge of all governmental activity within his area. To expect these officers to handle CD and then PR as well as their traditional duties was

³⁰In particular, the Indian Journal of Public Administration, the official journal of the Indian Institute of Public Administration in New Delhi and the most prestigious one in its field in India.

³¹Even by the mid-1960s the IAS had grown to only about 2000 (Braibanti, 1966 b: 647).

simply too much to ask for. Thus, the project that decentralization would pass a major part of the managerial load onto the beneficiaries was a godsend (Maddick, 1962: 206).

It was foreseen that decentralization would probably bring some inefficiencies and corruption in its wake, at least in the short run, as inexperienced villagers took over the direction of the new programs. But in the long run it was believed that the democratic polity would root out and banish these evils in India (GOI, 1957: I, 7-8), just as it had supposedly done in the West. Further, how would the Indian citizenry get the experience necessary to act as masters of their parliamentary democracy unless they could practice democracy at the local level?³²

Finally, there was the Gandhian precept that India should build on its villages, that the ancestral village was the fount of all that was good in Indian civilization, and that the village was the place to start constructing the new India after independence. Some thought this kind of thinking was the worst kind of obscurantism. The Untouchable leader, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, for example, in the constitutional assembly debates just after independence, denounced the village as barbaric:

I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India....
What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism? (cited by Tinker, 1963: 97)³³

Nehru the socialist was less than enamoured of the idea of the village as focus for development. But the concept was a powerful one, and most Indian leaders of the 1950s felt an obligation to support it, even if somewhat half-heartedly, just as the issues of prohibition and cowslaughter prevention--two more of Mahatma Gandhi's ideals--were to compel reluctant support from Westernized political leaders in the late 1970s.³⁴

Decentralization was a key concept in the RD program also. Pakistan had the same trouble with overloading its Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) as India had with its

³²This idea of mastering the art of democracy through experience with decentralized local self-government is the main theme of the Mehta Report (GOI, 1957). The major substantive chapter of that report is entitled, interestingly, "Democratic Decentralization" (ibid.: I, ch. 2).

³³Note that the term "communalism" in India does not refer to some highly regarded quality of the community but to hatred and violence between the different religious communities of the country, primarily Hindus and Muslims.

³⁴For an excellent analysis of the controversy over the proper place of the village in the Indian constitution, see Austin (1966: 26-49).

IAS, and similarly a transfer of some of the managerial load to the people made a great deal of sense. And there was also the idea of finding local solutions to local problems. As President Ayub Khan, founder of the new system, put it:

BD should become the nerve center of their area, where all local problems of development and civic responsibility could be studied at close range and their solutions discovered and applied with concentrated attention (Ayub Khan, 1967: 209).

In Bangladesh the same themes on decentralization were repeated, though the machinery of implementation was to be the new union councils and the cooperatives of the IRDP, not the discredited BD of the Pakistan era (GPRB, 1973b: 79-80; see also GPRB, 1977: 54,100; Islam, 1978: 79-84).

5. Linking citizen and government. It was hoped that one counterpart of democratic decentralization and its concomitant popular participation would be an integration of the participants with their government, a linkage between government and people. Whole populations that had been little more than subjects of governmental administration were to be turned into enthusiastic citizens, integrated into the body politic to become part of a "civic culture."³⁵

The idea of "nation building" was an important one in the 1960s and the subject of considerable social science interest.³⁶ The new nations that became independent after World War II almost all had difficulties with cross-cutting social cleavages of language, religion, regional identity, social organization, and so on and on. For countries as large and diverse as India and Pakistan, the problems of integrating these various communities into a single body politic were immense. How was a peasant in what had been the princely state of Hyderabad or a Baluchi tribesman going to be transformed into a vigorous participant in the new enterprise that was India or Pakistan?

Simply to declare a new suzerainty over these various groupings, keep them at peace, or even collect taxes from them was obviously not enough--somehow people had to be convinced to give willing support to the new polity, if it was going to endure and flourish. If this change were not brought about, the alternative could well be not just stagnation, but even fragmentation of the state into separate geographical units. In

³⁵The phrase, of course, is that of Almond and Verba (1963).

³⁶In the 1960s a sizeable literature on the topic developed. See, for instance, Deutsch and Foltz (1963), Weiner (1965), as well as Almond and Verba (1963).

India such "fissiparous tendencies" were frequently noticed and nervously denounced, but nonetheless greatly feared.³⁷ That such fears were far from groundless is apparent from what eventually happened to Pakistan, as its eastern wing split off to form Bangladesh in 1971.

Integrating people into the new polity, then, was a very important item on the national agenda in South Asia. Ayub Khan was very pleased with the accomplishments of his BD in promoting national integration, observing with much self-satisfaction that

...through the system of Basic Democracies we have been able to awaken and organize the masses into taking intimate and practical interest in their collective affairs and having a deep sense of self-help and participation. The gulf between the officials and the masses has been narrowed (Ayub Khan, 1967: 210; see also Wheeler, 1970: 155-156).

In India also, CD was seen as integrating people with officials at the local level (Mayer, 1958: 26-27; Maddick, 1962: 205; and Bendix, 1969: 291-297). Later on, PR was viewed as an even better way to link citizens and administrators, for as the system was set up, government officials and elected representatives (or "non-officials" in the Indian term) were to sit together on block and district level PR bodies. As Balwantrav Mehta, the chairman of the commission that most influenced the establishment of PR, said:

The Government, as is envisaged [in the PR system], will run at the Centre, State, district, taluka [similar to the thana] and village levels. In a country covering lakhs [1 lakh = 100,000] of square miles and with a population of crores [1 crore = 10 million] of people and faced with gigantic and complex problems, what better system can there be than Panchayati Raj which ensures the democratic functioning of the administration at various levels? Not only will this create local leadership and provide incentives to the common man, but at the same time strengthen the roots of democracy (Mehta, 1964: 412).

The Bangladesh planners as well were much concerned with the need to involve the people with their government through local development activities (GPRB, 1973b: 79-80). Building up these people-government links through increased popular representation on thana and district level councils (in a manner actually rather

³⁷ At the time, Harrison's book (1960) seemed to sum up the dangers and the reasons for them.

reminiscent of Ayub's BF) was also a major part of Shiekh Mujib's ill-fated proposals of March 1975, about which more will be said in the next section.

For the United States, the essential problem was not the danger of separatism, for there was obviously no way for the poor to separate and secede from the rest of the country in the same way that Tamil Nadu might possibly leave India or the North-West Frontier Province might desert Pakistan if not sufficiently integrated into the country. Even to the extent that "the poor" meant "the black" to many Americans, there was (despite some black rhetoric to the contrary during the 1960s) no serious possibility of separatism, even in the economic sphere. Blacks were already a part of the economy and the society; the problem was how to upgrade their role to one of equality in both these spheres. Thus the poor were not a separate community in the literal sense, but in the metaphorical sense they were another "nation," the "other America" in Michael Harrington's book (1962) of the same title. The book was held to be a major factor in getting Washington officials interested in the WP, most notably President Kennedy (Schlesinger, 1965: 1010). If America were to live up to its promise of being a polity in which all people participated equally, and if the economy were to go on expanding as it had so successfully in the early 1960s, the poor had to be brought into the system. Both idealistically (cf. Humphrey, 1968: 154-158) and realistically they could not be kept out. This "underdeveloped nation" in our midst (Donovan, 1973: 46-47) had to be integrated with the rest of the United States.

Another reason for bringing the poor into full participation was that they might cause trouble if they continued to be left out. Piven and Cloward (1972) in their analysis of the WP assert that the threat of black militancy provided a major motivation for OEO programs bringing them into the system as participants (ch. 9, esp. 271-276). The strength of this assertion is somewhat mitigated by recalling that almost all of the major urban riots of the 1960s occurred after the OEO and its community action activities were brought into being in 1964, though when cities are examined individually, there is some riot/relief connection (Jennings, 1980). Still, their more subtle point is a good one, that the CAP provided an excellent way to channel black aspirations and demands into suitable political activities and away from a focus on urban renewal, entry into white neighborhoods, membership in white unions, and other politically volatile issues (Piven and Cloward, 1972: 241-243, 276-277). Or as another team of observers put it, participation in the pluralistic system would not stop change, or even the demand for change, but rather would slow down the pace of change.

Demands for immediate change could be transformed into pluralist bargaining for incremental change (Greenstone and Peterson, 1973: 102-103).

To sum up, the purpose behind establishing citizen-to-government linkages through PDPs differed between South Asia and the United States. In South Asia the need was to change de jure citizens and potential secessionists into de facto participants of and supporters of the new country, while in the United States the need was to forestall discontent and to include the "other America"--the poor and the black--in the success that America thought it had created by the mid-1960s. The solution to both needs was to link citizens and government together through PDPs.

6. Personal commitment of national leaders. Nothing helps a new undertaking so much as the patronage and support of those at the top, a blessing which PDPs in both the United States and South Asia enjoyed at their beginnings. The personal commitment of the national leader to the program insured it not only of financial support, but also of media publicity and popular interest, of high morale in the program itself and of at least a modicum of administrative tolerance from other agencies already in place.

Lyndon Johnson left no doubt about his commitment as he fired off the opening salvo in the WP in his first message to the Congress on the subject in March 1964. He called for a "national war on poverty," in which the objective was to be "total victory." The campaign was "much more than a beginning," he asserted,

Rather it is a commitment. It is a total commitment by this President, and this Congress, and this Nation, to pursue victory over the most ancient of mankind's enemies (Johnson 1964: 5288).

Nor was the WP a project that Johnson would start and then relegate to the far reaches of the bureaucracy. On the contrary, he was going to keep the command post right next to the White House where he could give it his continuous personal attention. To manage the war he asked the Congress to create

in the Executive Office of the President, a new Office of Economic Opportunity. Its Director will be my personal chief of staff for the war against poverty. I intend to appoint Sargent Shriver to this post. He will be directly responsible for these new programs (ibid.: 5288).³⁸

³⁸Sargent Shriver was President Kennedy's brother-in-law and the Director of the Peace Corps, the showcase success of the Kennedy Administration. That Johnson chose him to lead the WP was intended (and was perceived by the public) as indicative of his seriousness about the WP effort.

As he told it later on in his memoirs, Johnson was interested in the WP right from the start of his term. On "the first day of my Presidency," he wrote, Walter Heller, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, came to him with a proposal for a poverty program.

The poverty program Heller described was my kind of undertaking. "I'm interested," I responded. "I'm sympathetic. Go ahead. Give it the highest priority. Push ahead full tilt." (Johnson, 1971: 71)

Both his major biographers thus far agree that Johnson really was committed to the WP (Goldman, 1969: 42-47, 183-184; Kearns, 1976: 210-250), but his commitment may have been somewhat selective. Moynihan, who was deeply involved in the early days of the WP and particularly in setting up the CAP, reported that Johnson's "attitude toward community action appears to have been one of instant suspicion and dislike" (1970: 143). At any rate, by the end of 1966, after the WP and especially the CAP had received a great deal of hostile criticism and his attention became increasingly absorbed by Vietnam, Johnson's support had virtually evaporated (Donovan, 1973: 91-92; Selover, 1969: 179-180).

Johnson's Vice President, Hubert Humphrey, was characteristically ebullient in his support of the WP (e.g., Humphrey, 1968: 155-156), although he also found himself helping to throw a wet blanket on the CAP by serving as Johnson's emissary to the big city mayors in 1965, when his mission was to placate their anger over what they saw as CAP-fomented rebellion in their cities.³⁹

President Johnson's support, then, may have had some qualifications, at least with regard to the CAP, but he did not mention them in the early days of the WP, when his backing was, so far as could be told at the time, total. Poverty, it seemed, was going to be his program, and the War on Poverty was going to be the centerpiece of what earned him his place in history.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a strong supporter of PDPs even before India attained independence. Back in 1946 he was in correspondence with Albert Mayer, encouraging him to set up his CD pilot project in Etawah (Mayer, 1958: 5-8), and his backing, at least in public, never wavered. Throughout the long period of Mayer's involvement with CD, he had the constant support of Prime Minister Nehru. When PR came along, Nehru

³⁹More on this theme in chapter 4, section 1.

gave that his enthusiastic backing as well. Over the 1950s and 1960s, Nehru gave countless speeches, pep talks and, when he could not appear personally, inspirational messages were sent to training sessions, anniversary celebrations,⁴⁰ and inaugurations of new projects in CD and PR (Nehru, 1963).

Support came from others in high places, as well. Mayer had the backing and constant concern of Uttar Pradesh's Chief Minister Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant during the pilot project days at Etawah, and so Mayer had in effect a direct link to the state capital at Lucknow, an invaluable asset to any fledgling enterprise (Mayer, 1958: 46 et passim). Later on, when Pant became Home Minister at the national level, he maintained his interest and support for CD, even to the extent of writing the forward to Mayer's book (ibid.: vii-ix).

Another important high level supporter was S.K. Dey, the Minister for CD (later for PR also) in New Delhi. An inveterate speech-giver and essay writer (e.g., Dey, 1960; 1961), he delighted in lacing his remarks with panegyric metaphors like the following:

The program of Community Development has started a new fire in the countryside—a fire that burns the sloth and filth that we have inherited over the centuries and purifies us for a pilgrimage to our new destination (Dey, 1955: 12).

Dey also underlined Nehru's concern for the movement:

The community project is being implemented under the direct control of the Prime Minister, with a single line organization down to the ground in the rural areas (Dey, 1960: II, 22-23).

In his memoirs Ayub Khan, like Lyndon Johnson, took personal credit for setting up his country's PDP and also for preserving it in the constitution put into effect in Pakistan in 1962. He wrote of overcoming opposition from the intellectuals, of whom "few have any real contact with the people and fewer still have given any serious thought to the problems of the people," unlike Ayub, who prided himself on going "down to the village level in the rural areas," where "one could get to know the people directly

⁴⁰ Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, for instance, the auspicious occasion for the launching of CD in 1952, was always the time for a Nehru speech (Nehru, 1963). The reference here is to a collection of his speeches and messages on CD and PR.

and intimately." Politicians and landlords also opposed the BD, he averred, "All these people would fight against any change in the electoral system which would make the common man master of his own will." But Ayub was undeterred by this phalanx of self-seeking resistance to his plans; "one must do the right thing by the country," he went on, "whatever the consequences" (Ayub Khan, 1967: 208-209; also more generally 207-216 and 228-229; in addition, Braibanti, 1966a: 204).

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's personal contribution to rural development in Bangladesh never materialized from the drawing board into reality, for it was cut short in the planning stage by his assassination in August 1975. This was his cooperative farming program, proclaimed with much publicity (e.g. GPRB, 1975a; 1975b) on independence day in March 1975. In this "Second Revolution," as he styled it, Mujib said he would introduce compulsory cooperative farming, in which land would be pooled (though not ownership he was careful to point out) and jointly farmed by all farmers and landless laborers, who would also share the proceeds (Mujibur Rahman, 1975b; Boucher, 1975; Bhaumik, 1975a and 1975c). Even the bunds or low retaining walls that divide the plots of land from one another in Bangladesh would be leveled in the cooperative agricultural effort (Stepanek, 1979: 162). Representative councils would also be set up to share in the administration of government activity at district and thana level (Mujibur Rahman, 1975b), an arrangement rather like that of Ayub's BD of the 1960s. Whether this ambitious and even radical reform would have succeeded was already becoming doubtful even before Mujib's death (Bhaumik, 1975b; Stepanek, 1979: 162), but after his demise the program disappeared completely, as if in final testimony that it was Mujib's personal affair.

7. Mobilization of a new vote base. If it is clear that PDPs had the backing and support of national leaders, why the programs had that backing is open to some dispute. Surely one reason was, as President Johnson put it, "because it is right" (1964: 5287) and in consonance with the national goals of each of the four countries under review here: maximizing economic development, providing each individual with the opportunity to make the most of his or her capabilities, allowing all citizens the widest possible chance to participate in decisions that affect their lives, and so on. The desire of strong national leaders to identify their contributions to history with a program of high moral purpose was almost certainly a second reason. But beyond that there is some controversy in the American case, and the questions that have pointedly come up in the United States can be asked of the South Asian programs as well.

Most of the controversy stems from Piven and Cloward's assertion that the WP had as one of its major motives the building of a crucial voting base for national elections (1971: ch. 9)⁴¹ Their analysis must be considered in some detail. The crux of their argument is that blacks suddenly became an important constituency in certain key areas by the 1960s. Migrating up from the South in the 1940s and 1950s, blacks concentrated in the major cities of the large northern states, states which counted heavily in the electoral college mechanism by which presidential elections are determined in the American political system.

These northern states with large populations had correspondingly large blocs of electoral votes to cast in the electoral college, and because of the "winner-take-all" system practiced with a state's electoral votes, all the votes of a state were cast for the candidate who won that state's popular vote, even if he won by only a few ballots. In other words, a few popular votes one way or the other could switch the 43 electoral votes that New York State had in the 1964 election (out of a total 535 in the country as a whole), or Pennsylvania's 29 votes, or Illinois' 26.⁴² All the populous northern states (as well as the newly populous California) were considered "swing states" in the politics of the 1960s, that is, they could easily go either Democratic or Republican in presidential elections. The black vote thus took on an importance that it never had in the old South, which almost always went Democratic anyway, whether blacks could vote or not. In short, in the 1960s the percentage of blacks who came out to the polls in the great northern cities and the extent of their loyalty to the Democratic Party could well determine who won the presidency.⁴³ Accordingly, it was a goal worth striving for to

⁴¹ Actually Donovan (1967:104-108) developed a similar idea somewhat earlier than Piven and Cloward, but they took the electoral strategy analysis much further.

⁴² In a popular text on voting published in 1970, Scammon and Wattenberg pointed out that it was possible for a Democratic candidate to put together a winning combination in the electoral college with what they called "Quadcali," consisting of a quadrangle of states in the northeastern quarter of the United States, bounded by Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., Illinois and Wisconsin, plus the state of California (Scammon and Wattenberg, 1970: 68-70). In this group of states, many of which were "swing states," black votes in big cities were pivotal.

⁴³ The election of Jimmy Carter in 1976, though a full decade after the time period of the present analysis, is a good example. Carter was believed to have received over 90 percent of the black vote, a crucial contribution to his very narrow victory over Gerald Ford. If blacks had turned out in only slightly higher numbers for Humphrey in 1968, he would have defeated Nixon for the White House (those who did come out voted over 92 percent for Humphrey; Axelrod, 1972).

build up this new black constituency for the Democratic camp, and this goal, in Piven and Cloward's analysis, was a major motivation for the Johnson Administration's launching the War on Poverty.

Richard Nixon readily subscribed to the notion that the Johnson WP was in large measure a way of reaching out and "securing the support of millions of voters" (1978: 353), but for others the evidence was less clear. In all the revelations about the Johnson Administration (or the Kennedy White House, for that matter) there is no indication that the construction of a black voter support base was the real motive for the WP, or even a motive of any kind. Not even Moynihan, the most knowledgeable insider to report on the WP, and certainly one of its most vociferous critics, has hinted at such a thing. In a word, there is simply no evidence for Piven and Cloward's case for a conscious attempt to mobilize a vote bloc among blacks (Greenstone and Peterson, 1977: 249-256; also Higgins, 1978: 15-19).

But actually, Piven and Cloward do not assert that there was a conscious conspiracy involved here; rather, they imply it was a matter of automatic compulsion in an electoral system put together the way that the American one is. They do not articulate this line of thinking in their analysis, but they imply it in saying:

Although little of this [effort to build up a black constituency] was mapped out in advance, neither was it accidental (1971: 267).

It could be argued that this effort was a systemic need, which influenced people to behave in certain ways perhaps unconsciously, just as a capitalist system needs unemployment in order to keep a downward pressure on wages, though individual corporate chieftains do not generally conspire to create pools of jobless workers.

Peterson and Greenstone come up with a different explanation that also suggests an unconscious systemic need. Speaking more specifically of the CAP, they conclude that its purpose was not to mobilize a vote base for the Democrats so much as to mobilize a clientele support base for itself as an agency. Just as the Extension Service of the US Department of Agriculture had its Farm Bureau Federation to give it support in the Congress and with the White House, so the OEO would benefit from its community action groups, which would become a lobby in its behalf (Greenstone and Peterson, 1977: 247-248). In other words, the OEO tried to put together an interest group, which would defend it against other interest groups in the pluralist political arena. But again, the question of conscious or unconscious behavior remains.

This approach can be applied to the South Asian scene as well. The context is quite different, to be sure, for the Johnson Administration was dealing with a distinct minority of the public, whether we speak of the black population (about 11 percent of the United States) or the poor population (perhaps 25 percent in the early 1960s). The CD and PR programs in India, on the other hand, were aimed at the 80+ percent of the public that was rural, and in Pakistan and Bangladesh the same order of magnitude obtained. There are, however, distinct similarities here also.

As a country that very self-consciously chose the path of parliamentary democracy, India expanded its electorate at a stroke from the few million property holders and graduates that the British had enfranchised to the entire adult population of the nation. How would this unimaginably vast and variegated mass of people, hardly any of whom had any experience with voting, be assimilated into the political system? The first parliamentary elections in 1951-52 went quite well, with the Congress party of Gandhi and Nehru winning 74 percent of the seats in the national parliament, and all the state assemblies by handsome margins as well. But this first election really amounted to a referendum on independence, and the electorate almost certainly voted for Congress as the party of the Freedom Movement at least as much as for Congress as the party it wanted to manage the nation's affairs. What would happen when the voters began to see themselves as having choices in real elections?

A major problem facing the Congress thus was how to build a serious organization that would reach down into every district and village in the country. What better way could there be than to provide a program out in the countryside around which a support base could be built? As with the United States, there is no direct evidence of a conscious design to employ CD and PR for building vote banks, and indeed it was decided from the outset that party politics had to be kept out of PR and that candidates could not run on party tickets. But there was, as also in the United States, a systematic need for an organization that would mobilize and nurture a crucial support base.⁴⁴ The

⁴⁴Candidates were prohibited from contesting on party labels, but as with "non-partisan" contests in many American municipalities, the candidates generally represented parties in their own minds and in the eyes of the voters (and those who won as genuine independents tended to move into one party or another almost immediately after their election). In the American case, the "non-partisan" election resulted from a wave of reforms around the turn of the century and was designed to keep the baneful effects of party politics from voters at the local level. But as in India, only the official election machinery has been taken in by the strategem; candidates and citizens all know full well the reality and behave accordingly. The whole issue has received much attention in India. See Mathur and Narain (1969: esp. 261-351), or Jain (1967: 339-355).

following quotations from a Nehru speech in 1955 gives a good example of the situation; there is no direct indication that he wanted to build a political support base for his government, but indirectly the inference is obvious:⁴⁵

When we became independent we established the rule of the people and every citizen of India was given the right of vote. You elected your representatives to the State Legislatures and to Lok Sabha. In a way it was a step in the right direction but still after electing the people's representatives, real democracy did not come into being. If the big officers consult the people now and then, it does not usher in the rule of the people. India will make real progress only when the people living in villages become politically conscious. More than 80 percent of the Indian population lives in villages and the progress of the country is bound up with the progress in our villages. Whenever our villages make progress, India will become a strong nation and nobody will be able to stop its onward march. (Nehru, 1963: 85).

In Pakistan things were rather more direct under the military rule of Ayub Khan, the creator of the BD, who saw their electoral college function as one of their main purposes, perhaps even their major purpose, to judge from his memoirs (1967: 207-216, 228-229). The 80,000 Basic Democrats (half in East Pakistan, half in West) were charged with electing the president and members of provincial and national assemblies in a setup that looked as though it had been designed in accord with Samuel Huntington's ideas (1968) of very restricted and carefully orchestrated democracy.⁴⁶ The Ayub government channeled virtually all its rural development efforts through the BD system,⁴⁷ and this lavish patronage (at least in a per capita sense--there were after all only 80,000 Basic Democrats in the whole country) ensured their loyalty. In the 1965 presidential election (the only one held under this arrangement, as it turned out) Ayub won a large majority, attributed by most observers to his careful nurturing of the Basic Democrats. Certainly his opponents identified the whole system as being Ayub's support base, and one of the first acts of his successor, General Yahya Khan, was to abolish the BD system altogether.

⁴⁵Kothari hints at a similar interpretation, but does not directly state it (1970: 127f).

⁴⁶In fact Huntington cited the Ayub arrangement with considerable approval (1968: 251-255).

⁴⁷For more on this topic, see Blair (1974: 98-106).

When Bangladesh became independent in 1971, the new government was immediately faced with the problem of establishing itself in the countryside. The old machinery and officials of the Pakistan administration were more or less carried over in place, but the management of this machinery at the local level was turned over to "Relief Committees" set up by the Awami League, Sheikh Mujib's party. The Relief Committees acted as a mechanism for funneling patronage down to the local level, and doubtless played a role in the overwhelming victory that the Awami League obtained in the parliamentary elections in March 1973 (73 percent of the vote, 291 out of the 300 seats at stake). To be sure, the poll, like the first Indian general election in 1951-52, was really more a referendum to celebrate independence from Pakistan and give Mujib a mandate to manage national affairs than an election of individual members of the new parliament, but it was none the less impressive for that.

Later on in 1973, a new system of local self-government was initiated, rather resembling the Indian three-tier PR structure (GPRB, 1973c). Elections were held in December of that year for Union Panchayats, the lowest level (there are about 4300 unions in Bangladesh, with an average population of 15-20 thousand). Available evidence indicates that the Awami League's hopes of building a patronage machine did not pan out, however, for a large proportion, perhaps even a majority, of the new Union Panchayat representatives were anti-Awami League in allegiance (Glaeser, 1976).⁴⁸ As it turned out, the upper tiers of the system were never inaugurated, perhaps because of fears at the top that there were too many Awami League opponents elected to the bottom tier.

At any rate, Sheikh Mujib was not satisfied with the system, for in 1975 he introduced an entirely new constitutional setup, what he called his "Second Revolution." In this he became president instead of prime minister; a single party apparatus was introduced with a ban on all other parties; and the new party would control local administration at district and lower levels (Mujibur Rahman, 1975a; Bhaumik, 1975b; Maniruzzaman, 1976). The new arrangement was unabashedly a scheme for mobilizing popular participation in support of Sheikh Mujib and his Awami League, now transformed into the Bangladesh Krishi Shramik (i.e., Peasants and Workers) Awami League. The new party soon began to organize its five "fronts" for peasants, workers,

⁴⁸As in India, the candidates did not run as party members (Jahan, 1974: 128). On the interest of the Union Panchayat members in patronage and corruption, see Wood (1976: 146-147).

women, youth, and students (BO, 1975a) but did not advance very far in taking over the administration of the country by the time of the coup in August of that same year, an event which ended the new party as well as Sheikh Mujib's life.

The government that finally emerged out of the aftermath of the coup and various counter-coups of 1975, that of General Ziaur Rahman, put together its own local government structure, a system of Union Parishads, for which elections were held in 1977. The leaders that emerged from these elections were rather more conservative in their views than had been expected (especially with the widespread belief that the countryside had been thoroughly radicalized in the 1971 civil war). A surprising number of winners surfaced who had had connections with the RD institutions of the Ayub period, but this unanticipated turn of events apparently caused General Zia no difficulty in using the new structure to build his support base (Rashiduzzaman, 1978: 127-128).

8. Simultaneous conservative and radical reform. One of the most arresting features of the PDP was the fact that it appealed both to conservatives and to radicals. American conservatives who wanted to repudiate big government and go back to a focus on community and community-oriented values found the CAP with its emphasis on autonomy and decentralization particularly attractive. The whole concept seemed to fit in exactly with the prescription for the ills of modern society that Robert Nisbet, perhaps the leading conservative political thinker of the 1950s and 1960s, delineated in his well-known book, The Quest for Community (1969, originally published in 1953).

The idea of community action also held great fascination for the radicals of the 1960s, who rejected the New Deal faith in big government as a mechanism for social change, denouncing government for being primarily the buttress of a conservative status quo.⁴⁹ The only hope of real social change, many felt, was in small communities where true egalitarianism could be realized like the many experiments in communal living that flourished (and failed) in the 1960s (e.g., Bookchin, 1971). The CAP especially won the enthusiastic approval of this group.⁵⁰ Perhaps Lyndon Johnson best expressed this dual appeal of the CAP:

⁴⁹Richard Nixon, on the other hand, saw the whole Great Society not as a move to the left from the New Deal, but as a continuation of all the most left-leaning tendencies that were inherent in the New Deal. "The Great Society," he wrote, "was created by liberal academics and bureaucrats steeped in the myths of the New Deal (1978: 267).

⁵⁰Moynihan analyses this appeal of the CAP to both ends of the political spectrum in some detail (1970: 1-20).

Basically the idea was this: local organizations would be formed in the neighborhoods and communities where the poor people themselves lived, and programs to help the poor would be channeled through organizations on the scene. This plan had the sound of something brand new and even faintly radical. Actually, it was based on one of the oldest ideas of our democracy, as old as the New England town meeting--self-determination at the local level....I realized that a program as massive as the one we were contemplating might shake up many institutions, but I decided that some shaking up might be needed to get a bold new program moving. I thought that local governments had to be challenged to be awakened. The concept of community action became the first building block in our program to attack poverty (1971: 74-75).

Johnson even put this dual appeal to work in getting the WP through Congress by talking the ultraconservative Congressman Phil Landrum of Georgia (co-sponsor of the Landrum-Griffith Act to restrict the power of labor unions and a bete noir of liberals at the time) to sponsor the bill. As Johnson reported the success of his ploy, Landrum

did a masterful job of defending (the bill on the House floor). he called it "the most conservative bill I've ever seen," because it aimed at taking people off the welfare rolls and making them into "taxpayers instead of tax eaters" (ibid.: 80).

We have already looked at the historical background of the Indian village panchayat and at its Gandhian appeal in section 1 of this chapter. Local self-government in a sense promised to restore what was perceived to be the basis of the great civilization of ancient India. But there was also a radical appeal to the Indian PDPs, certainly in Jawaharlal Nehru's mind. In his speeches he continually invoked themes of revolution as he tried to exhort his countrymen to support CD and PR:

I think nothing has happened in any country in the world during the last few years so big in content and so revolutionary in design as the Community Projects in India. They are changing the face of rural India (1963: 38).

[T]he Community Development programme in India is by far the most revolutionary thing that we have undertaken and the results so far are truly astonishing (ibid.: 53; see also 23-24, 27, 34, 99).

As far as can be determined, Nehru was quite genuine in his feeling that CD and PR represented a revolutionary departure from previous experience. Certainly there was a

need to cast the PDPs in a perspective of social change, for socialism was held in very high esteem in his day, not only by academics, but by bureaucrats and the literate class generally. The Congress Party had declared its adherence to the ideal of socialism in its Avadi Resolution of 1955 (Kochanek, 1968: 175), and in the society generally there seemed a definite feeling that a humane kind of socialism could be achieved in the reasonably near future (Palmer, 1971: 112). At the heart of this socialist inclination was the notion of popular participation in a growing economy, so the CD and PR programs seemed at the time an excellent strategy to realize these objectives. Accordingly, there is every reason to believe that Nehru, Dey (the Minister for CD and later PR, and the other figures at the upper echelons of government were quite sincere in their revolutionary hopes for the PDPs.

Later on there was the evident cynicism of Indira Gandhi's government with its populist rhetoric on social reform while policies in fact favored the status quo, culminating in the Emergency, when the gap between socialist propaganda on the one hand and blatant favoritism toward corporate and landed interests on the other became a veritable chasm.⁵¹ But Nehru's was a more innocent age, when national political leaders tended to believe what they said.

Ayub Khan was definitely not a socialist, nor did he feel any sympathy at all for the intellectual class, which he felt to be the main opposition to all his good work (1967: 208-209). Thus he felt no need to present his RD strategy as a radical program--instead he tried to sell it as a practical and conservative approach that would provide for a very controlled participation.⁵² Basic Democracies, in a word, do not fit into our radical-and-conservative mold.

Unlike Ayub, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was at considerable pains to present himself as a socialist. Indeed one of his first acts after taking over in January 1972 was to nationalize all the banks in the country, and he soon developed his ideology of Mujibbad ("Mujibism") with its "four pillars" of nationalism, socialism, secularism and democracy. There were other commitments to socialism as well, some significant (a low ceiling for investment in new enterprises in the private sector), some symbolic (his naming the new nation the "People's Republic of Bangladesh") and some without either symbolic or real

⁵¹See Selbourne (1977) for an extensive and detailed treatment of this phenomenon. For a briefer consideration, see Blair (1980b).

⁵²It was during Ayub's regime that the Harvard Development Advisory Service was encouraged to formulate its laissez faire development strategies for Pakistan. See, e.g., Papanek (1967).

impact (proclaiming a strict land ceiling of 100 bighas or 33 acres--a size of holding exceeded by less than 0.5 percent of landowners, who held less than 4.5 percent of all agricultural land).⁵³

As time went on under Mujib's leadership, administrative inefficiency and more importantly corruption, particularly at the top, began to widen the gap between government programs and performance. The promise continued to be that of Mujibhad, while the performance was that of a government taken over by opportunistic elites at all levels, anxious to change the status quo only in the direction of their own enrichment. The Sheikh tried to turn things around with a series of radical reforms in the first half of 1975--the formation of a new party, the creation of compulsory cooperative farming for all, the mobilization of the entire populace into the five "fronts" of the new order--but the coup of August 1975 meant that the new strategies were never implemented.⁵⁴

Thus the abstract appeal of Ayub's and Mujib's PDP efforts was quite one-sided, Ayub's to the right and Mujib's to the left, although the reality of both was quite conservative. The programs in America and India (at least under Jawaharlal Nehru), however, appealed intellectually to both left and right, a factor which undoubtedly helped each a good deal at their beginnings.

9. Self-confidence in social science and liberal politics. In the history of the social sciences, the 1960s will probably be recorded as the high tide of positivism, as the time when theoreticians and practitioners were most confident of their ability both to understand the social universe and to formulate policies that would alter that universe in the direction of human betterment. Looking back from the present, a time when most social scientists and quite a few politicians are, if anything, too conscious of the limitations on their ability to understand things, to say nothing of changing them, the 1960s seem a time of incredible and complacent confidence. That neo-Keynesian economists thought they could "fine-tune" the economy or that political scientists of the behavioral persuasion believed there was a world of pluralism in the American

⁵³ These data are for landholdings of 25 acres and over and are from the 1967-68 Master Survey of Agriculture in East Pakistan (Islam, 1978: 98). The later survey by Jannuzi and Peach (1977) is probably more accurate, but the highest category in its classification is 15 acres, less than half of Mujib's ceiling.

⁵⁴ For a thorough examination of Bangladesh's development plans under Mujib, see Stepanek (1979).

political system strikes us now as misplaced hope.⁵⁵ And the notion that a well-intended liberal government could intervene in a massive way for the public good both domestically and abroad seems absurd in an era when people despair of policy because "nothing works any more"--or if it does work, the unintended evil consequences appear to far outweigh the beneficial results. But there was a widespread confidence in the 1960s among social scientists, politicians and administrators that it was possible to discover how society works, to formulate sound policies for intervention and to implement those policies.

The 1960s were also a time when social scientists had a prominent place in the councils of government, especially in determining policies to be used in the WP.⁵⁶ Piven and Cloward see this as a cooptation of social scientists (1972: 278-279), in which critics of the regime were turned into adulatory supporters. From a vantage point some ten years later, though, it seems more accurate to say that government wanted the advice and counsel of the social science community and that the community, seeing a chance to clothe its ideas with reality, jumped at the chance.

Of course it may be that the reason for the government's eagerness to get the advice was that the advice matched almost exactly what the government wanted to do anyway. Thus, instead of influencing policy, the social scientists served mainly to help legitimate a policy that was already decided upon. At the time, though, it appeared that they did have a good deal of influence. The OEO definitely looked at itself this way, particularly with regard to the CAP. "Community Action," it wrote in its second annual report, "is a merger of our past town meetings and citizen assemblies with the latest thinking of social scientists" (OEO, 1966: 11).

It even seemed to some that social scientists were taking over policymaking in the early days of the WP (Marris and Rein, 1973: 243-244; Levine, 1970: 86), a trend that Moynihan thought clearly dangerous (1970: 1v). Certainly the combination of positivistic social scientists, politicians and administrators proved to be dangerous abroad in the ill-fated Vietnam adventurism, but futile would probably be a better

⁵⁵The presidential addresses of Stigler (1965) and Deutsch (1971) to their respective academic associations--economics and political science--are excellent examples of what now seems positivist arrogance. Dahl's famous essay (1961a) on the triumph of behavioralism is another fine example. As a defense of this positivism against the attacks that came upon it later on, see Heller's presidential address (1975) to his fellow economists.

⁵⁶For a comprehensive analysis of this involvement, see Aaron (1978: esp. ch. 2 and ch. 7).

description of its WP policy at home. At any rate, the two major White House preoccupations of the mid-1960s--Vietnam and the War on Poverty--were part of a piece, as Lawrence Friedman points out:

The federal giant grew during wars and depressions. So did its confidence--or overconfidence. The Great Society was a daring concept--one might say arrogant. So was the war on poverty. So was the war in Vietnam...in a perverse way, the two "wars" were cut from the same cloth. They both represented mammoth interventionism and mammoth arrogance. The U.S. could obviously work its will on a small Asian country; indeed, it could throw its weight around everywhere in the world. We were, after all, the biggest and the best. Domestically, too, no problem was beyond us. It was a matter of money, skill, and will. We had built the atom bomb because we tried very hard; we were clearly about to put a man on the moon; most people felt that the cure for cancer was only a question of time and mobilization. We could conquer poverty, too. Effort was all (1977: 31-32).

In South Asia there was also a faith in the positivistic aspects of social science. Almost from the beginning, Mayer was concerned to have a sociologist on his team at Etawah, and he was continuously interested in sociology as a part of his rural development action programs. The long term significance of his CD work, Mayer thought, lay in the development of generalizable principles that could be used elsewhere. To work out these principles required combining social science research and public administration at the field level, or in Mayer's terms "research and action" (the title, incidently, of one of the chapters in his book: 1958). He was especially pleased when in 1954 the state government of Uttar Pradesh, where Etawah was located, set up the Planning Research and Action Institute at Lucknow. The Institute, Mayer said, was "the most important pioneering idea that has been introduced in rural development work since the Etawah project itself" (1958: 289; see also Mayer, 1953).

Certainly the Etawah project was highly regarded in the international development community in the 1950s as an example of how research could be combined with development to produce replicable models for promoting rural development (Jain, 1953; Zinkin, 1958: ch. 15; Murphy and Murphy, 1959a and 1959b; Holdcroft, 1978). Later on PR was also held up as a model for development that had widespread applicability, a view finding ardent support from the Minister for CD and PR, S.K. Dey, who announced with characteristic hyperbole that "Panchayati Raj institutions could

offer patterns before which Plato's Republic would pale into significance" (quoted in Hanson and Douglas, 1972: 189-190).

On the political side, the 1950s and early 1960s were the high water mark of Indian faith in the possibilities of transforming society through political intervention in the form of planning. This was the time when the five-year plans were viewed as the government's instrument for building the future--an instrument that would work. Later on, disillusionment set in,⁵⁷ just as in the United States. But in the heyday of CD and PR, few doubted the ability of a well-meaning government to improve rural life.

Social science research was a major component of the project at Comilla right from the beginning. The long stream of research publications emanating from the Academy's research section over the years has probably not been equalled by any Third World rural development project anywhere. Indeed, in the eyes of some, the project itself was more of a large-scale experimental laboratory for testing ideas than an endeavor to bring economic and social development to rural Bengal (e.g., Choldin, 1969).

The role of social science was always somewhat different at Comilla than in the United States or in India, however, for it had all along a self-critical aspect that was lacking in the other PDPs (though Mayer himself was a strong critic of his operation). Elsewhere the self-analysis was very upbeat, presenting past accomplishments and future prospects in glowing terms. The research group at Comilla, on the other hand, was just as eager to show shortcomings and lapses as to show success and achievement. This difference surely lay in the personality of the Comilla director, Akhter Hameed Khan, who felt sufficiently secure in his position and self-confident in the worth of the academy that he encouraged, in fact insisted upon, strong self-criticism at all times. In other PDPs, directors were less secure, budgets were less certain and the continued support of leaders at the national level was less assured. Hence self-appraisal tended to be positive, even enthusiastic, but definitely uncritical. In other words, the other PDPs resembled more nearly normal administrative behavior, whereas Comilla was the exception. This was not enough to make Comilla and its outgrowth, the IRDP, an apparent success in the 1970s, but it undoubtedly helped make the project work to the extent that it did work in the early 1960s. We shall return to this point in Chapter 5.

In Pakistan also there was a serious interest in research as a part of the rural development effort, and a number of analyses appeared over the years (e.g., Braibanti,

⁵⁷ A process analyzed in detail by Frankel (1978: esp. ch. 7 and ch. 8).

1966a: 209-212). However, there does not appear to have been the same ethos of "action research" found in the other three cases, where the projects almost seemed to be extensions of social science theory, with academics and administrators working in harness to transform a society into something better.⁵⁸

This effort to remake the poorer and more backward parts of society into something better ran into trouble and criticism virtually from the very beginning, as we will see in the next chapter.

⁵⁸The research tradition built up by Akhter Hameed Khan when he shifted over to the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development at Peshawar for a time in the mid-1970s may have changed this situation. Under his aegis and that of the then director, Shoaib Sultan Khan, an experiment in rural development was set up at Daudzai and carefully reported on in the Comilla tradition. See S.S. Khan (1980).

Chapter 4

WHY THE PROGRAMS FAILED IN THE SHORT TERM

A few neoconservatives have insisted that poverty had disappeared in the United States (e.g., Kristol, 1974; Schwartz, 1976; Anderson, 1978) and is even well on its way to vanishing in India, the only obstacle to its total liquidation there being an interfering government (Drucker, 1979). But most people perceive that there is still a great deal of deprivation in many areas of the United States and that in the Indian subcontinent widespread destitution is the rule rather than the exception.

The various PDPs that we have been looking at have not made much, if any, headway in defeating poverty; the American War on Poverty did not achieve victory on the field of battle, just as Mrs. Gandhi's 1971 campaign slogan, "Garibi hatao" (banish poverty) resulted in very few deportation proceedings. In the United States, much of the cruel irony of governmentally sponsored urban renewal programs was summed up in the slogan "Urban renewal means Negro removal"; likewise in India the sarcastic observation was frequently made that Mrs. Gandhi's election slogan really meant "Garib hatao" (banish the poor), a reference to the fact that her most successful program implementation was the rude uprooting of urban squatters and their rough removal beyond the outskirts of New Delhi.

Economically, there is some debate over whether the WP made any progress in ameliorating poverty. The argument is presented in some detail in Appendix A. But however one feels about the debate, the fact remains that there are certainly still a great many poor people in the United States, and it is probably safe to agree with Lowi (1979: 222-225) that the WP probably did not make much difference anyway, for whatever improvements did occur in the late 1960s or early 1970s were more likely due more to general economic growth than to government anti-poverty efforts.

In any event, the whole argument about income improvement or stagnation is largely irrelevant to our considerations here, since our concerns are essentially with the CAP and MCA, not with the massive social welfare programs of the period. For the CAP and MCA the evidence is more murky. There may be some reason to believe they had some positive benefits for individual blacks who became upwardly mobile through them, a topic we shall look at shortly. But there is little evidence, if any, showing CAP or MCA successes in mobilizing communities to transform themselves into areas of self-propelled economic growth in which citizens could develop their potential to the maximum both individually and collectively. The slums of the great American cities

are about the same as they were in the 1960s, perhaps a little better in some cases like the Woodlawn neighborhood in Chicago (Delaney, 1975), but surely quite a lot worse in many others, like the South Bronx in New York City, the locale of Jimmy Carter's well-publicized rediscovery of urban poverty in 1977 (Dembart, 1977; Severo, 1977). Much the same goes for the slums of lesser American cities and for rural poverty in general. The overall reality has been fundamentally unchanged.

President Ayub Khan (1967) thought BD to be a smashing success, the cornerstone of a brilliant plan to bring democracy to Pakistan from the bottom up. But his successors saw BD as at best a patronage operation and in any event, as no substitute for democracy. When they took over from Ayub in 1969, they abolished the whole structure as soon as possible.

The Comilla experiment was widely acclaimed as a great achievement in its early years, all the more so as it seemed at the time the only successful rural PDP in the entire Indian subcontinent. By the beginning of the 1970s, though, various observers were beginning to question its success (e.g., Lyman, 1971; Bose, 1974). By now it has surely received more criticism than it deserved, even to the extent that its genuine accomplishments in raising rice production quite significantly and in setting the foundation for development through cooperative institutions are ignored. Nowadays it is hard to find anyone in the international development community (or in Bangladesh, for that matter) who has many good words to say about Comilla. Likewise, the RWP and TIP find few defenders today. The IRDP that grew out of Comilla is only now being systematically evaluated, but as will be seen in the following pages, it appears to be suffering from the same problems that beset the original Comilla project.

For India there has been a plethora of criticism of CD and PR, both from within the country and from outside it, since Indians, like Americans, have little difficulty in taking themselves as well as others to task. Even the government has gotten involved. The most influential criticism of CD has been the Mehta Report (GOI, 1957), and the most influential criticism of PR will probably prove to be the Asoka Mehta Report (GOI, 1978a). The relevant specifics of both reports will be taken up later, but it will suffice for now to say that they, along with the huge volume of extragovernmental criticism, concluded that neither CD nor PR were effective in promoting participatory rural development. Nor has there been rural development of any other sort in India that has reached the rural poor in any real way. The best evidence seems to be that there was a larger portion of the population in rural India below subsistence in 1970 than there was in 1960 (again, see Appendix A for a consideration of this issue),

and there is no reason to think that there has been any significant change in this pattern during the 1970s.

The reasons for the failures of these participatory development programs will be taken up in this chapter. As with the reasons for initiating the programs, there is a marked pattern of similarity to be found in all of them. The first two reasons for failure--elite takeover and structural contradictions--relate to constraints imposed by the social and class structure of the systems within which the PDPs attempted to operate. Accordingly, our approach will be to look at the hierarchy and dynamics of that class structure. The remaining three reasons for failure--overrapid expansion, the compulsion for quantification and the supervision/autonomy dilemma--all appear to have occurred independently of social or class structure. Instead, they seem to be tendencies inherent within the very bureaucratic and political processes themselves. Our approach here will be along Weberian rather than Marxian lines.

1. Takeover by local elites. The most damaging criticism of the PDPs, and the one most frequently found in the literature, was that the programs tended to be taken over and dominated by various elites in their own interest, which was basically contrary to that of the poor. This meant that the original purpose of the programs to provide structures in which the poor would participate in their own interest was subverted.

Evidence that village elites in India, generally the landowning class and moneylenders (who were often the same people), quickly took over CD and PR is so overwhelming as to be undeniable. The unanimous findings of Hanson (1966: ch. 11), Rosen (1967: 92-101), Myrdal (1968: 887-891, 1339-1346), Bendix (1969: 338-356), Nicholson (1973) and Frankel (1978: 189-190, 201, 213), all of whom combed the relevant studies and analyses carefully, leave no doubt. This finding is consistent with what is known of the social anthropology of "dominant caste"--the widespread pattern in Indian villages whereby one caste tends to dominate the socioeconomic life of the village through some combination of numbers, ritual status in the Hindu hierarchy, political maneuver and landholding, with the latter usually being most important.¹ It was to be expected, then, that those who dominated everything else to their own benefit would soon dominate CD and PR as well.

¹The literature on dominant caste is extensive. For a very brief analysis of the concept, see Blair (1979: 1-6). The term itself was originated and elaborated by the Indian anthropologist, M.N. Srinivas (1955, 1959).

Hints began to appear almost immediately in the CD program that participation was not equal among all the villagers. One of the Pilot Project officials associated with Mayer in the Etawah experiment observed in 1952 that

The VLWs often contact a few individuals of the middle or upper middle class peasantry, get indents from them, keep implements with them, and confine their work to this class, which is hardly 20 percent of the village population. They no longer hold public meetings, nor do they explain their functions to the people in general (Mayer, 1958: 111, from report by Baij Nath Singh in 1952; see also Frankel, 1978: 198).

Nevertheless, this same official observed at about the same time that winning over village leaders was a good strategy for promoting village development (ibid.: 207-210), and elsewhere in his book on the Etawah pilot project, Mayer expressed the thought that it was good to work with the "natural leaders" of the village (ibid.: 46). Mayer gave no sign that he even considered that there might be some connection between working with "natural leaders" and Baij Nath Singh's complaint quoted above that the VLWs tended to "contact a few individuals of the middle or upper middle class peasantry."

In retrospect it is astounding that there was such innocence about rural reality in India in the basic (though unstated) assumption of Mayer and the CD people that the village was a homogeneous community. Though Mayer and his colleagues knew full well that there were landless agricultural workers, sharecroppers and artisans, as well as smaller and larger landholders, they apparently thought that the economic interest of all these groups was essentially similar. A project that would be of interest to the "natural leaders" of a village was assumed to be one that would automatically benefit all the villagers. There was no consideration of the possibility that different groups might well have different and even at times conflicting, group interests. In short, there was no awareness of class.² We shall return to this theme in the next section.

The CD leaders were not alone in their failure to attach any importance to class structure in rural India. The Mehta commission, which was so influential in initiating the PR program likewise paid little attention to class differences in its comprehensive

²There were many other analysts of the Indian scene who did not appear to notice the existence of class either, for example the Wisers, the anthropologist couple whose study Behind Mud Walls (1970) is a classic work with many valuable insights into other aspects of Indian life. One could greatly extend the list but few of those who would be on it were trying to change village India in a massive way as was Mayer.

examination of CD, though it worried somewhat over inefficiency and corruption at village level! (GOI, 1957: I, 7-8).

The idea of requiring unanimity in choosing local leaders also helped to perpetuate elite dominance. The problem began with the Mehta Report, which gave its qualified approval to unanimity in village panchayat elections as a good way to assure the backing of the whole village for the new system (ibid.: I, 20-21). When PR actually began, some of the states like the Punjab even gave extra grants in aid to panchayats in which the sarpanch (head) was chosen unanimously (Tinker, 1963: 126-127).³

The revered political leader and sage Jayaprakash Narayan also pushed the unanimity concept, though he claimed to be fully aware of the divisive reality of village life.⁴ His approach was that somehow the village had to find a unity if any real development were to take place:

In regard to elections to village panchayats, it is my emphatic view that they should be held without contest. This view has been severely criticized in some quarters. In others, opinion seems to have veered around it. For myself, the more have I thought over this question, the more have I discussed it with others, and the more have I learnt of the working of village panchayats, the more convinced have I become that if Panchayati Raj is to succeed, contests in elections to village panchayats must be avoided. There are caste and class differences; there are family and other factions. There is no collective will in the village. On the other hand, the tasks that the villages face can never be tackled unless there is united and collective effort.

A community spirit must be created before there could be proper community development. To introduce electoral contests into the village is to throw a monkey-wrench into the works. Let the people understand that the condition of their enjoying self-rule is that they

³ Actually, it may not have made a great deal of difference whether or not unanimity was observed in panchayat elections, for in either case the winners were those in the dominant class who could muster the most support from among their clients, tenants, field laborers, debtors and servants. A contested election would bring all this manipulation out into the open, whereas a "unanimous" one would keep it underground, with the weaker contestants surrendering to the stronger before the formal election took place. In any event it is clear that subdominant groups can never peacefully win power at the village level with "unanimous" elections. If they are to have meaningful representation, it must come through election contests.

⁴ Jayaprakash Narayan was the founder of Sarvodaya, a voluntary service organization, and leader of the "JP Movement" of 1974-75. He was jailed during the Emergency of 1975-77 and served as arbitrator in choosing the Janata Prime Minister in 1977.

agree to work together for the common good; not because any dictator wishes to impose his will upon them, but because that is the imperative condition on which they can rule over themselves and advance both their personal and common interests (Narayan, 1961: 80-81).

Naturally, imposing an institution that could only work in a homogeneous society on one that was almost invariably heterogeneous in the extreme added to the chance of the failure that in fact occurred. By assuming the village had only one interest and then encouraging it to act that way, the administrators of CD and PR helped mightily to ensure that one interest was realized—that of the dominant stratum.

The Basic Democracies in Pakistan suffered the same fate, though in a somewhat different manner. Those elected as Basic Democrats in the first elections in 1959 tended to be the better-off villagers; in fact it would have been surprising if they were not, but initially their possession of office did not give them any more control over things than they had previously enjoyed. Soon, however, the Ayub Khan government began to funnel virtually all its rural development money through the BDs, particularly the province-wide Rural Works programme in East Pakistan, beginning in 1962-63.⁵ Then the office did begin to mean something. When elections were held again in 1964, the local gentry won most of the posts. In his study of BD in East Pakistan, Rashiduzzaman conducted a survey of members returned in the second election, in which he found the differences between the landholdings of Basic Democrats and the average rural resident to be glaring. Almost 20 percent of the Basic Democrats held more than 25 acres, as against about one-half percent of the population, and over 63 percent of the office holders had over 7.5 acres of land, while less than 8 percent of households in general were as well off. A similar pattern was found in West Pakistan as well (Jahan, 1972: 119-120, citing Burki, 1969).⁶

In the Comilla project the unanimity theme was also introduced in the choosing of the leadership of many cooperatives by "consensus."⁷ Whether the consensus approach

⁵On the role of the RWP in West Pakistan, see Burki (1971).

⁶Jahan (1972: 110-126) presents an excellent analysis of the BD in general and on the socioeconomic characteristics of the Basic Democrats in particular.

⁷As reported to the author during field research in 1973. The consensus method of election has received official approval in the new Gram Sarkar (village government) structure put into operation in 1980 (GPRB, 1980b). Similar results may be expected, at least in the short run. For more on the longer run possibilities, see Chapter 5.

was used or the leaders were chosen by election, the results were the same: domination of the cooperatives by local elites (Lyman, 1971; Haque, 1973: 30-31; Khan, 1974). This pattern also extended to the IRDP, as the Planning Commission itself observed (GPRB, 1973b: 155; GPRB, 1977: 19).

For the Thana Irrigation Programme (TIP) in Bangladesh, the evidence of elite dominance is especially well documented, due to the careful yearly surveys of the program done by the BARD research staff. The intent of the TIP was to foster irrigated rice cultivation during the boro (dry winter) season by setting up cooperative groups for using government-supplied low-lift pumps (which are employed to lift water from rivers and streams onto adjacent land). The method pursued was to organize a group, supply it a pump (with a 100 percent capital subsidy),⁸ start up its operation and then endeavor to convert the pump group to a primary credit society that could be melded into the IRDP as the latter gradually spread around the country.

The BARD research team found in its 1974-75 study of 390 groups (out of about 35,000 in Bangladesh altogether at that time) that the managers averaged 6.45 acres of land, whereas the group members held only 3.23 acres on the average (Manjur-ul-Alam and Chowdhury, 1977).⁹ As the BARD team put it,

It was thought that small farmers for their interest would join the group and would select or elect [the] manager and other members of the managing committee from among themselves. But actually managers and other members of the committee were selected or elected from among the bigger farmers (ibid.: 34).

Part of this tendency for big farmers to hold management positions in the TIP groups may have been due to the fact that in 49 percent of the groups the managing committee was chosen by consensus (ibid.: 38). Further evidence of elite control comes from reading in the 1974-75 report that only 11 percent of the groups held their "compulsory" weekly meetings, while 67 percent met "conveniently" (apparently less than once a month) and 7 percent not at all. On asking why these were not having

⁸Recently, this subsidy is supposed to have been reduced to 50 percent (World Bank, 1979: 31).

⁹This 3.23 average is almost a full acre higher than the 2.28 acres found to be the national average landholding for households owning land other than homesite land by Jannuzi and Peach in their 1977 survey (1977: xxi). Thus, presuming the BARD sample was a valid one, the TIP members were themselves better off than the average peasant farmer. The total estimate of 35,000 pump groups is from the World Bank (1979: 97).

weekly meetings, the BARD team found that for fully 60 percent of the groups it was because "managers did not think it necessary" (ibid.: 39-40). Only 64 percent of the groups had taken the step of conversion into IRDP-style cooperatives, and only 26 percent of the members of those groups had become cooperative members as well, who could build up share deposits and obtain loans (ibid.: 41). In other words, even in the groups that had become cooperatives, almost three-quarters of the members were not eligible for low interest agricultural loans.¹⁰

The implication of this information is fairly clear: larger farmers organized the groups with members who did not participate and perhaps did not even exist, and steered most of the benefits of the programs to themselves. One of the reasons that they were able to do this was that the TIP expanded so rapidly in the late 1960s and early 1970s that it was impossible for the administrators in the program to keep track of what was going on, a consequence that will be examined more fully in section 3 of this chapter.

For the Union Panchayats elected in 1973 (analogous to village panchayats in India), the position was even more pronounced than with the TIP. A BARD survey of 324 Union Panchayat chairmen elected in Comilla District¹¹ showed them to be a great deal better off than the average peasant both in farm size and wealth (Manzur-ul-Alam, 1976). There were even some indications that the previously discredited Basic Democrats re-emerged in large numbers as winners in the 1973 elections (Glaeser, 1976). Perhaps because of this BD taint, Sheikh Mujib never followed through on his plan to set up a multi-tiered local government in the PR fashion, and in any event the Union Panchayat system perished with him in 1975.

A new Union Parishad scheme succeeded the Panchayats, and although no studies have yet appeared describing those elected in the 1977 poll,¹² it is hardly likely that the new members will be any closer in socioeconomic status to the average rural Bengali than was the case in previous systems of rural local government.

¹⁰The five previous BARD surveys of the TIP all reported similar findings. See, for example, Manjur-ul-Alam and Chowdhury (1976).

¹¹An area about 20 times the size of the Kotwali Thana in Comilla District that was the BARD experimental "laboratory."

¹²M. Rashiduzzaman, who analyzed the Basic Democrats elected in 1964 (Rashiduzzaman, 1968), has such a study forthcoming on the 1977 Union Parishad members.

It does not follow, of course, that just because wealthy and powerful men get elected to local office, they will necessarily subvert the structure of local government to their own interest and that they will harm or even merely neglect the interests of the lower strata in the village. Such elites could conceivably manage things in the public interest, even at the expense of their own. But the evidence that local elites have in fact perverted representative structures to their own benefit is so overwhelming that it cannot be denied (for Bangladesh, see Blair, 1974 and 1978; de Vylder and Asplund, 1979; for India, Hanson, 1966; Rosen, 1967; Myrdal, 1968; Bendix, 1969).

There is some doubt as to whether the War on Poverty was originally meant to be a participatory program at all in the sense that we have been using the term "participation." The operative clause on participation in the legislation establishing the WP was in Title II of the EOA of 1964, which set up the CAP. It specified among other things that CAAs would be "developed, conducted and administered with the maximum feasible participation of the groups served" (Moynihan, 1970: 89-90). As Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who was intimately involved in the drafting of the original legislation, tells it, the "maximum feasible participation" phrase was not originally intended to mean anything like participation by the poor in decision-making. That was a distinct change of direction that came later on after the act became law. In Moynihan's words,

...the record, such as can be had, and recollection indicate that it was intended to do no more than ensure that persons excluded from the political process in the South and elsewhere would nonetheless participate in the benefits of the community action programs of the new legislation (Moynihan, 1970: 87; emphasis in the original).

At the time the act was passed, Moynihan goes on, neither the Johnson Administration nor the Congress had any idea that the poor would be called upon to determine policy in the CAP: "[N]o one in authority at either end of Pennsylvania Avenue regarded the participation clause as noteworthy" (ibid.: 91).

There is some debate about who originated the broad interpretation of "maximum feasible participation." Moynihan (ibid.: 95-97) points to Jack Conway, a labor union official on temporary assignment as a political appointee in the Johnson Administration, as the one who changed the meaning of the phrase to denote participation in decision-making, though later on Lyndon Johnson was to claim responsibility for giving the poor this role of "self determination at the local level" (1971: 74-75). In a very different

view, Richard Boone (1972: 446-447), who was another of the architects of the WP, thinks that there was a very conscious effort right from the start to include participation in decision-making as an integral part of the EOA.

At any rate, whoever was responsible, by the time the CAP got into action, it was expected that the poor would have a genuinely participatory role, and the CAAs were set up accordingly. One of the very first activities that these autonomous CAAs set about doing was vociferously demanding more attention to the needs of poor neighborhoods from their city halls, demands which were widely reported as amounting to assaults on established local authority. In the climate of hysteria that ensued (a topic to be taken up in section 2), it was not long before a powerful demand arose, particularly from the big city mayors, to bring the CAAs under control.

Assurances from the Johnson Administration were soon forthcoming that things would not get out of hand. OEO Director Shriver insisted at the Senate authorization hearings in June 1965 that participation by the poor did not at all mean "control" (US Senate, 1965: 41). Two months later Vice President Humphrey attempted as Johnson's emissary to placate the big city mayors at the National League of Cities conference. Humphrey, who had been mayor of Minneapolis earlier in his political career, tried to soothe them by saying

I can tell you now that your important role is assured in this program
....I'm your built-in Special Agent to make sure that you are
represented in this program twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.
I've been hired for you (Selover, 1969: 181; see also Donovan, 1973:
56-57).

The mayors were not satisfied with Humphrey on the job for them, however, and pressed for more direct control over the programs in their cities. They lobbied the Congress vigorously, with the result that an amendment to the OEO bill in 1967 sponsored by Congresswoman Edith Green of Oregon was passed, giving mayors the right, if they wished, to take over the CAAs in their cities (Selover, 1969: 177-178; also Marris and Rein, 1973: 253). After the Green Amendment, CAAs were pretty definitely under the control of the mayors and city bureaucracies, which, as might be expected, used them to further their own patronage interests (Lowi, 1979: 221). Lyndon Johnson justified the Green Amendment on grounds of practical political expediency, but also noted, as if the expediency argument was insufficient, that mayoral involvement actually improved the programs anyhow:

We knew that our tacit acceptance of (the Green Amendment) would be considered a sellout by the liberals. But we knew for a fact that in many cases locally elected officials were already participating and, where they were, community action got the best results. More important, we knew that with this amendment we could win the support of Democrats from big cities who were under pressure for tighter local control (Johnson, 1971: 83).

Whether the Green Amendment was really necessary to get the bill passed seems dubious, in view of the final vote on it in the House of Representatives, a 283 to 129 victory that "surprised everyone." (Selover, 1969:178) It would seem that "solidifying" the northern big city Democratic electoral vote was probably more important than winning over reluctant southern Democratic Congressmen to vote for the bill, a piece of evidence favoring the Piven and Cloward interpretation (1971) of the WP as an electoral vote mobilization drive.¹³ We will take up other aspects of the Green Amendment in the next section.

In the end one more federal program wound up adding to the power base of local municipal elites rather than effecting any social change in the direction of participation for the poor, although to some extent the OEO rhetoric of community control and participation by the poor continued (e.g., OEO, 1968: 9ff; OEO, 1969: 9ff). As Greenstone and Peterson observed, the facade of community action served to provide "these established local elites, political, economic and bureaucratic . . . with a federal mandate for shaping the program to their own needs (which are not necessarily the same as those of the poor)" (1973: 5).

With the MCA there was also a heavy rhetoric of involving the community in drawing up the programs, and in fact there was substantial participation by the poor in program planning. But as Strange (1972a and 1972b) has pointed out, this participation was carefully controlled right from the beginning. Evidence of citizen participation was insisted upon, but it was just one of 30 bureaucratic requirements that had to be met before a CDA could be established, and the participation called for was definitely to be advisory, not controlling (Mogulof, 1969, did find, however that citizens' advisory groups in some cities did have a veto power over programs--a kind of negative control). There was no question, however, that locally elected officials were to manage the CDAs. In terms of the Arnstein ladder presented in Figure 1 (page 15), the CDAs got perhaps as high as the fourth rung of "placation," whereas the CAAs may have ascended

¹³Their argument was considered in Chapter 3, section 7.

as far as the sixth rung ("partnership") or even the seventh ("delegated power") during their prime days of 1964-65.

As a case study of community participation efforts, the Public Administration Review published in 1972 a set of three essays that give some fascinating insights into the establishment of the Philadelphia CDA (Arnstein, 1972; Kloman, 1972; (Unsigned), 1972). Here a black community group organized itself to take up the citizen participation aspects of the prospective CDA under the impression that it would really have some meaningful input; a struggle with city hall soon erupted over program control, in which the latter was able to draw on considerable support from MCA and its parent agency HUD in Washington to emerge victorious. In the end, only a very modest advisory role (at most the third rung of the Arnstein ladder, but more like the first or second level) was open to the neighborhood organization.

The decentralization that was deemed a central part of the WP remained after this change, but now it was a different kind of decentralization, in which not community action groups made up of the poor, but local city halls were to control the programs. Theodore Lowi sees this as part of a pattern of fragmentation of centralized federal authority that has meant, in the title of his book (1979), "the end of liberalism." At the core of this fragmentation, he thinks, is the replacement of policies federally determined by the Congress and implemented in accord with strict regulations set out in Washington (e.g., Social Security, the Veterans' Administration, the Interstate Highway program) by policies that allow maximum discretion to state and local authorities in implementation and policy formulation as well (e.g., revenue sharing, Medicaid, Aid for Dependent Children). This discretion, in his view, is simply a handing over of things to local elites--"[D]ecentralization," as he puts it, "is only carte blanche for vested interests" (Lowi, 1979:259). In the case of the CAP, this meant that the whole operation turned into a patronage channel for local bureaucratic interests (ibid.: 221). He could have said the same of the MCA.

In the end, then, the CAP and MCA fell into the hands of local elites, but in the United States the elites turned out to be mayors and the bureaucracies instead of being the major property holders as in South Asia,

But there were large numbers of the poor who did participate, even after the Green Amendment put the programs under the control of the mayors, for there was another amendment that had been sponsored by Congressman Albert Quie of Minnesota and adopted into the 1966 EOA. It specified that at least one-third of the boards managing each CAA had to be representatives of the poor. Thus the poor did continue

to have some role in the program. And before the Green Amendment passed in 1967, it was estimated that about 80 percent of the more than 1,000 CAAs in operation were being run independently of city hall control (Selover, 1969: 177-178). So the poor did have some chance to run things before 1967 and an opportunity to influence them afterwards.

What kind of people participated in the management of the CAAs? Were they really representative of the poor, or were they more likely to be upwardly mobile people using the CAAs opportunistically in their own interest? When the CAP began, definite attempts were made to find local leaders who really were poor. But as Moynihan pointed out at the time, an endeavor to find those who had been left behind at every step and to get them to lead organizations involved a certain contradiction in OEO thinking. Addressing a conference on poverty in 1965, Moynihan took strong issue with the Mobilization for Youth program in New York City, which was trying to avoid those who were upwardly mobile in its search for neighborhood leaders in order to find people who truly reflected lower class values. In the MFY view, as reflected in the then current prospectus, people who were "relatively responsible about participation, articulate, and successful at managing" were not the leaders who should be recruited, for they were not actually representatives of the poor community. Moynihan's reaction was the following:

Note what is to be remedied: instead of getting hold of local people who are "relatively responsible about participation, articulate, and successful at managing organizational 'forms'", Mobilization for Youth is going to get hold of a lower level of true and genuine leaders who are--what?--inarticulate, irresponsible, and relatively unsuccessful? I am sorry, but I suspect that proposition. I was raised on the West Side of New York, and I must report that those are not the principles on which Tammany Hall, the International Longshoremen's Association, or the New York Yankees recruited indigenous leadership (speech in February 1965, cited in Marris and Rein, 1973: 167).

Subsequent studies found that those in the black community who did assume leadership positions in the CAAs tended to be more middle class than the people they were representing and that middle class blacks tended to be the major beneficiaries of the programs as well (Austin, 1972; Strange, 1972a; Falkson, 1974, cited in ACIR, 1979: 167-169; Greenstone and Peterson, 1977; Kotler, 1977), just as black protest leaders in the 1960s came from a significantly higher class position than the average for the black

community which they were leading (Ladd, 1966: 255, cited in Piven and Cloward, 1972: 234; see also Sowell, 1979). That this should be the case makes a good deal of sense on purely logical grounds, for, as Yates points out (1973: 111-112), who actually has the time to be a community leader, especially when there is no pay for it? Only those who are better off. One could make the same observation for South Asia.

There is also a deeper dimension to this pattern of middle class bias in the CAP, one that again applies to South Asia as well as the United States. Interestingly, the sharpening of this issue comes in analyses emanating from both sides of the political spectrum. Edward Banfield (1974), a leading neoconservative social scientist, sees the major problem of the cities to be an absolute "lower class," whose position at the bottom of the economic and social pyramid is basically intractable. The population of this lower class, amounting to perhaps 15 percent of the country as a whole, has a culture of its own, somewhat like the "culture of poverty" we looked at in Chapter 3. The main characteristic of this culture in Banfield's view is quite simply that its members are incapable of deferred gratification; they live lives of simple self-indulgence unable to plan for tomorrow, helpless to take advantage of opportunities to climb out of their poverty.¹⁴ Naturally it follows that such people are incapable of providing leadership to anything like a CAA.

In his analysis of the CD and PR movements in India, A.H. Hanson (1966: ch.11) concluded much the same thing. The Indian village was so riven with division and antagonism, he thought, that it was utterly futile to try to establish unity at that level. Further, there was no point in working with the poor, who had neither the resources nor the motivation to advance very far; the only hope was to work with the "progressive farmers," if anything was to be accomplished at all.¹⁵ In this company we also find John Kenneth Galbraith, who in a recent analysis of poverty (1979) concludes that there is a large psychological component of it, in as much as poor people quite understandably accommodate themselves to the reality of their situation. Their experience and that of their forebears has been that there is no way out of the trap of poverty and that to try

¹⁴It is intriguing to note that Banfield reached a rather similar conclusion in his study of a southern Italian village in the early 1950s. The lower class he found there was mired in an almost Hobbesian struggle for daily existence and had no inclination to look to the future for anything (Banfield, 1958).

¹⁵In other words, Hanson advocated the same strategy at the micro-level that Papanek (1967) had urged at the macro-level in Pakistan, with his ideas of the "robber barons" providing the dynamic for economic development.

to resist their condition is both futile and frustrating. With this mindset built up over the generations, it is not surprising that most poor people do not respond with alacrity to new opportunity. Instead it is those who have refused to accommodate to poverty who will respond, and these people are (or soon become) village elites. In other words, it is inevitable that elites will take over PDPs.

Solid empirical evidence on the social psychology of peasants is difficult to find on any real scale, with much coverage or depth of analysis, for the resources necessary to undertake such a task are simply too forbidding. There is, however, one exception that supports the idea that peasants in general are slow to respond to the opportunity for change. This is the massive psycho-analytical study of a poor Mexican village conducted by Erich Fromm, Michael Maccoby and their associates (1970) over a 10-year period in the 1950s and 1960s. In the course of the study the entire adult population (n=406) of the village was subjected to psychoanalysis with a number of techniques being employed. The authors' conclusion was that the vast majority of the population had "accommodated" exceedingly well to their reality of poverty, so well in fact that their entire psychological mindsets acted as a virtually insurmountable constraint on responding to economic opportunity. The average villager was passive, averse to risk taking, hoarding and unproductive. Only a small segment of the village—less than 10 percent—was both aggressive and responsive to new opportunity. This group was found by the psychiatrists also to have strong tendencies toward sadism, exploitativeness, narcissism and other unpleasant characteristics. In the authors' words,

the effects of the new entrepreneurs on the village are in large measure destructive. They support the structures of domination that hold down other villagers, most of whom become economically dependent on them....[The entrepreneur] may increase the actual production of agricultural goods, [but] one should ask, even in economic terms, whether he does not have a long-range negative effect, compared to other ways of building the economic system (Fromm and Maccoby, 1970: 123-124).

In short, those who would respond to economic opportunity and were either already the village leaders or soon would be, as they translated economic progress into social and political power, were a very unattractive group. In view of what we know about South Asian villages and American slums, there is little reason to think that things would be different in either place from what Fromm and Maccoby observed in Mexico.

Even the land reforms stemming from the Mexican Revolution in the early 20th century did not appear to have any effect on the psychological orientation of the villagers, although a full two generations had passed since the land reform that had created the ejidos (small, inalienable plots carved out of the old landed estates). The ejidatarios (owners of the ejidos) included in the Fromm-Maccoby study show no significant differences at all from the non-ejidatarios, indicating that socioeconomic change even of a major scale does not induce any change in character orientation for a long time (ibid.: 126ff). Instead, it may take centuries; Fromm and Maccoby traced the development of the unproductive and passive psychology of the majority back over hundreds of years to the Spanish conquest and the humiliations of the male Indian in front of the conquistadores (ibid.: 115-116). If their analysis and time sense are correct, and if the village that they worked in is representative, the prospects are bleak indeed for any real "bottom up" PDP, at least in the near future.

There is also contrary evidence. Emiliano Zapata's revolution, to cite one obvious example, began in the same area that Fromm and Maccoby studied and would certainly indicate that at least in some circumstances large numbers of rural people can reorient themselves relatively quickly (Womack, 1970). For Southeast Asia, the case has been argued on both sides at some length. Scott (1976) finds that peasants, immersed as they are in the cultural matrix of their societies, are slow to respond to the chance for change, while Popkin (1979) finds them to be highly responsive to economic opportunity.

In the subcontinent, response to the opportunities offered by the Green Revolution has been amazingly rapid in some areas like the Punjab, though agonizingly slow in others like Bihar, as Nair (1979) shows in considerable detail. As Nair also shows, however, in the Punjab, where farmer response was so quick, there had been a tradition of peasant innovativeness dating back long before the advent of the Green Revolution, whereas in the more backward Bihar area there was not such a tradition at all.

Still, there is other evidence that even in such places as Bihar the pace of social and economic change can be more rapid. Not as quick as those in the international development community would like (or as those in the War on Poverty would have liked), that is, not a period of a year or two from program initiation to final goal attainment, but definitely much quicker than the four centuries and more that Fromm and Maccoby suggest or the generations that Nair and Scott offer. We will return to this theme in Chapter 5.

2. Structural Contradictions. In any set of programs with goals as vague and diffuse as those of the PDPs, there would necessarily be a great number of contradictions. If governments were trying to bring about economic, social and political development through participatory programs in which no one ever defined exactly what participation was or how it should work, then there had to be a very real sense in which, in Daniel Patrick Moynihan's words, "The Government did not know what it was doing" (1970: 170). The observation could be applied equally well to the United States and the whole experience with PDPs in South Asia.

But there were also contradictions in the programs at a much deeper level that were inherent from the outset. The programs were seeking the benefits of structural change for the poor while trying to avoid any substantial change in the status quo. For participatory institutions to make decisions that can improve the lives of the participants, they must have some real political power. "Empowerment" at the bottom, however, was the one thing that those in charge at the top were unwilling to give, and in its absence there was no way that the PDPs could succeed. This unhappy state of affairs prevailed at both macro and micro levels.

The macro level has been considered in more detail elsewhere for the South Asian case (e.g., Blair, 1978; 1980a; 1980b; and the references cited therein) and for the American case also e.g. Piven and Cloward, 1972), so we can review it very briefly here just for comparative purposes. In all three South Asian countries, the government may be thought of as drawing on a number of support bases, whose interests in turn it represents. These support bases may be divided analytically into three groups: national urban classes, national government institutions and the dominant rural strata.¹⁶ The most important national urban class is what may be called conveniently (if warily, for the term has certainly been overused) the national bourgeoisie—the owners and promoters of the industrial sector. We may include here also the financial strata—managing agency people, stockbrokers and, until the nationalization of banks in India in the late 1960s and in Bangladesh right after independence, the bankers. The major interest of this composite group has been its own security vis-a-vis other sectors and the economy's growth, to be financed by the countryside through a combination of

¹⁶It is questionable whether all these groups can be called "classes" in the traditional sense of that term, but they do have distinct interests and those interests are different from (and often opposed to) those of other groups in the system, as we shall see. I employ the terms "stratum," "class" and "interest group" more or less interchangeably in referring to these institutions.

transfers (tax money moved from rural to urban sector or from consumers in the urban sector to producers there) and investments both voluntary (big farmers putting money into industry) and unwitting (banks mobilizing rural savings and transferring them to the industrial sector).¹⁷

The major national governmental institution is of course the army, a frequent intervener in Pakistan and Bangladesh. In India the army has not thus far taken the praetorian option, but it remains in the background as a kind of eminence grise. It is ready to step out of the wings and take over in an emergency but in the meantime it is kept content through an ever-increasing budget (Khalilzad, 1977; also Karat, 1975). In Pakistan the military budget has always been a large share of the government accounts, and in Bangladesh after minimal allotments during the Sheikh Mujib period, the military has been receiving a goodly share of government funds. In addition to the military there are the civil services inherited from the old British Indian Civil Service—the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) (see Braibanti, 1966a; 1966b). In Bangladesh that part of the CSP that the new country inherited has supposedly been abolished in favor of egalitarianism, but in fact the former CSP men who survived after independence are just as much in control of the government machinery as ever.

There are a number of other elite bureaucratic groups as well, some formal cadre services like the Indian Police Service or the Indian Audits and Accounts Service, and some not, like the executive echelons of the nationalized banks. In all three South Asian countries, these elite cadres have continued to enjoy a very high degree of influence, and accordingly must be contended with as a national power factor.¹⁸ In

¹⁷The effort to put commercial bank branch offices in rural areas of India has had this effect. Deposits in commercial banks in Bihar (itself about 90 percent rural in population) at the end of 1975, for example, were Rs. 6.4 billion, while advances were only 2.8 billion, or about 42 percent (RBI, 1977: 238); the remainder was available to finance non-rural activities out of the state. Rural bank branches recently established in Bangladesh appear to serve the same savings-transfer function, moving money from countryside to city (see, for instance, Bangladesh Bank, n.d.: 48-49). On the urban/rural relationship more generally in the developmental context, see Lipton (1977).

¹⁸We avoid here arguments over the relative degree of autonomy of the military and civilian bureaucracies (cf. Miliband, 1977: ch. 4; Poulantzas, 1973; Horowitz and Trimberger, 1976; Patankar and Omvedt, 1977). For a good airing of the issue with respect to civilian bureaucracy in South Asia, see the exchange between Wood (1979 and 1980a) and Moore (1980). Suffice it to say that for practical purposes these bureaucracies are a power base that must be taken into account in understanding the national political economy.

addition there are also other state bureaucratic agencies that enter the picture from time to time, usually in the form of disruption, such as the teachers and the police constabulary. All of these groups, whether a gazetted cadre like the IAS or secondary schoolteachers, are interested in security of position, increasing salaries and perquisites and, in the case of the cadres, their power in the government.

There used to be only one rural class of consequence, the major landowners, whose allegiance the British carefully cultivated. Over the years since independence, the power of this group has gradually eroded, partly through land tenure reorganizations that put a middle and upper-middle cultivator class in charge in India and East Pakistan/Bangladesh.¹⁹ The erosion was also helped along by the Green Revolution in the 1960s that encouraged the growth of profit-oriented middle class farmers in all three countries. The present position is that the Indian and Bangladesh countryside are controlled largely by middle and upper-middle class farmers; rural Pakistan is dominated by a combination of semi-feudal estate owners and profit-oriented farmers with smaller holdings.²⁰ At least a portion of the rural landowning class in all the countries wants to maximize its agricultural profits, but there appears to be a larger element within the class that wants above all to retain control, even at the expense of profit if necessary.

In each of our three South Asian countries, national policy has to take these three key groups into account. Over the years a national political formula has been worked out in which each group gives support to the regime, in return for which it gets tangible benefits. The industrial sector gets subsidies, protection from foreign competition, labor unions kept on a reasonably tight leash, licensing oligopolies, and so on. The bureaucratic sector gets ample defense budgets and civilian salaries and perquisites. The rural landowners get a guarantee of land tenure, police protection of property rights and the right to control rural development programs at the village level. There are, to be sure, perturbations in these relationships on occasion. Portions of the private sector have been nationalized at times, like the life insurance companies, banks and

¹⁹The term "land reform" is consciously not used here, as control over land did not pass so much to the tillers of the land as to the class of rent receivers that was next to the top of the incredibly complicated land revenue system of British India. See Jannuzi (1974) for a case study of this process in one Indian state.

²⁰West Pakistan did have a rather tepid land reform in the late 1950s that did transfer control of some land from a landed aristocracy to middle farmers, but the process was by no means a thoroughgoing one (see Jahan, 1972: 56-57).

jute mills; and self-proclaimed socialist governments have in effect reserved expansion of various activities for the state (e.g., steel). Military budgets have not increased every year, and the position of the civil services has been somewhat diluted as they have been expanded by promotion from below. Periodic though invariably meaningless announcements are made promising land reform, decreeing the abolition of bonded (i.e., debt servitude) labor or enforcement of the agricultural minimum wage. But for the most part things go on as before, and an uneasy balance is maintained.

For PDPs to succeed in the subcontinent, there would have to be some accretion of real power to them, an accretion that would severely upset the government's rural support base, the landowning class. Governments generally do not want to repudiate their major pillars of support, and there is no reason why South Asian governments should be an exception to this rule. It is for this reason that PDPs wind up not only failing to change the status quo but positively reinforcing it by channeling most of whatever program benefits there are to the dominant rural class. It must be emphasized that for India and Bangladesh there is no clear evidence of any conscious decision that PDPs should be used as patronage mechanisms to build up this dominant rural class (Pakistan under Ayub would appear to be an exception here, for he seems to have looked at the support-building functions as the major purpose of BD). Rather, it has been the internal dynamics and logic of the system that have led to this result.

At the macro-level on the American side, the general outlines of a class system have been much more clearly (though not more easily) delineated than for South Asia (e.g., Mills, 1956; Domhoff, 1967; Dye, 1978; Katznelson and Kesselman, 1980). This kind of macro-level analysis is not as germane to the American side of our inquiry as it is in the South Asian case, though, because the portion of the American population that we are dealing with is so small. Still, there is a broad relationship that we should take account of, and it would be appropriate to do so here. There does appear to be a functional linkage between the urban poor and the larger society, that Piven and Cloward have explored at length in their influential study, Regulating the Poor (1977; see also Sackrey, 1973; and Rodgers, 1979). In their view the poor are not merely "always with us;" we need to have them with us, in order to hold down wage rates among the lower echelons of the work force and to provide a bad example to the rest of the society of what can happen if we do not accept a minimum of discipline in our economic and social behavior. The corporate business sector, accordingly, has a vested interest in maintaining at least some poverty, an interest which we see reflected today in the neo-conservative clamor for cutting back and even cutting out welfare programs

and in the concern displayed on the right over "coddling welfare bums" (in President Nixon's phrase) and thereby damaging the moral character of the lower strata of society (e.g., Anderson, 1978).

The micro-level in South Asia has also been explored at length elsewhere (Blair, 1974; 1978; and 1980a; see also the insightful case studies by Wood, 1976; Arens and van Beurden, 1977; Jahangir, 1979), but it would be of use to summarize briefly the position here. The crucial dimension is the relationship of the various strata in rural society to the means of production, which is to say usually land. Accordingly, the rural population may be divided into landlords (who rent out their land), farmers working their own land (some of them surplus farmers who have an income left over after meeting immediate needs and many small farmers who do not), sharecroppers, landless laborers, and the nonfarming population (generally artisans of low to middling income).

Because of the possibility that laws against owning land over a specified acreage ceiling or against rackrenting to tenants may someday actually be enforced, landlords are understandably reluctant to admit that they let land out on share. So it is difficult to assess the exact proportion of the rural population in the various classes (a term more readily used here than in discussing political economy at micro level in the United States). Another problem is that many people as individuals may fall into more than one group--an artisan who rents out a smallholding on share, for example, or a small farmer who owns an acre or two and rents in a couple of additional acres from a landlord. Still, it is possible to get an idea of the rural class structure in terms of numbers, for instance from the very detailed survey work in Bangladesh by Jannuzi and Peach (1977; 1980). They have come up with the following picture as of 1978. About 50 percent of rural households own land beyond merely housesite land; in addition about 22 percent both own and sharecrop land, 6 percent sharecrop only and 23 percent are altogether landless (though 8 of this 23 percent do have enough land for homesites). At the top of the structure, about 5 percent of the households own some 37 percent of the land, while at the bottom about three-fifths of the households own 8 percent of the land. Of those households engaged in farming, about 35 percent are sharecroppers, and about 24 percent of the land is sharecropped. This state of affairs represents a measurable deterioration since 1964-65, the time of the most detailed previous survey (GOEP, 1966), though some of the change may represent a more accurate methodology used by Jannuzi and Peach rather than any trend over time. For India, there are no data that are quite comparable in detail, though the agricultural census of 1970-71 (GOI, 1975b) revealed a similar pattern of land distribution in much of the country

(particularly the northern and eastern areas of the country, where the zamindari and taluqdari settlement patterns prevailed previously).

In retrospect it is more than a little strange that what would appear to be a rather obvious conflict of interest between these various rural classes passed almost unnoticed by developmental specialists in South Asia until the 1970s. Mayer, in his book, Pilot Project, India (1958), which quickly became the classic analysis of village development in South Asia, did not address class structure or any of the problems that such a structure might pose for a CD program supposedly benefitting the village as a whole.²¹ He devoted an entire chapter to the theme of "village participation," but betrayed no knowledge of differentiation within the village and remained innocent of the idea that participation for the lower strata at village level might be a rather different reality than for the upper strata.

When taken to task for this social naivete by Daniel Thorner (1959) in a review of Pilot Project, India, Mayer replied somewhat heatedly that

Thorner is wrong if he means that any planner in India can be unaware of such harsh and over-arching problems; I was not unaware of them, nor were my associates in Uttar Pradesh. His implication must be then that no specific work can go ahead and be worthwhile until all major political and biological (sic) issues are settled, and that to go ahead before settling these issues is tantamount to having concluded that such issues do not exist (Mayer, 1959: 477).

Mayer's protestation rings hollow in view of the fact that in all of his voluminous papers now at the University of Chicago, there is likewise no reference to such problems, either in Mayer's own reports, in the frequent (and very detailed) newsletters that he sent to friends in India and the United States, or in any of the large number of Indian letters and publications, whether official or unofficial that are in the Mayer papers.²²

One must hasten to add that what appears in hindsight to be an egregious misreading of reality was not an affliction peculiar to Mayer and his colleagues in CD.

²¹ There were only a couple of references to class differences, one of which was noted in section 1 of this chapter. The other was an extract from a report by Baij Nath Singh (who was involved in the early days of CD). He notes that 20 percent of the villagers in the Etawah area were landless and 30 percent were cultivators too small to be "as much affected by our program as we would wish" (Mayer, 1958: 115). Characteristically, Mayer took no notice of these thoughts, for this theme is taken up nowhere else in the book.

²² For a general description of the Mayer papers, see Emmett (1977).

Other observers and practitioners of the time, even the planning commissions (e.g., GOI, 1953b; GOP, 1957), showed no greater awareness of such matters,²³ Certainly, the standard texts on economic development evidenced a far greater concern with overall growth than with matters of income and asset distribution or class structure. It was not until the 1970s that concern began to center on rural class structure, "growth with equity," the "bottom 40 percent," when "New Directions" began to be supported in the international donor community or in higher governmental circles in South Asia. Today, the publications of the donors (e.g., Chenery *et al.*, 1979) and the planning commissions (e.g., GOI, 1978b; GPRB, 1980a) are full of awareness of class differences, but this was not the case in previous years. The same could be said of the academic community of South Asia scholars, both in North America and South Asia itself, a theme that has been explored elsewhere in some detail (Blair, 1980b).

How to account for this blindness? On the academic side there was a preoccupation with pluralistic political theory and liberal Keynesian economics, but while such preoccupations may account for the failure of scholars to explain reality, they do not account for such a failure on the part of Mayer and his practitioner colleagues. These developers thought of themselves as pragmatists, not theorists concerned with scholastic paradigms. Accordingly, they did not consciously allow theory to get in the way of fact. Rather, it appears to have been their perception of fact itself that was at the heart of the problem. For Mayer and the early planner, "the village" was assumed to be a completely integrated system, so that no matter who availed themselves of CD inputs, all would benefit, just as in the industrial countries it was generally thought that tax breaks which inspired entrepreneurs to invest would in turn create growth and bring prosperity to all. There was no "big farmer interest" or "dominant landlord class" interest as opposed to "small farmer" or "landless laborer" interest for Mayer; there was only a village interest.²⁴ Thus it was only necessary to make available the right inputs and technical assistance, and development would radiate throughout the village.

²³ Naturally, there were exceptions, for instance Daniel Thorner (1962) and Wolf Ladejinsky, many of whose most insightful analyses are gathered in Walinsky (1977).

²⁴ An interesting contrast is provided by Jayaprakash Narayan, who perceived that the village is divided into classes, but was convinced that it should forge a unity (see Section 1 above).

In this respect Mayer and his contemporaries, though very conscious that they were starting work at the beginning of India's independence (which came only two years before the Etawah experiment began in 1949), followed the familiar British pattern of concern with rural uplift, perhaps best exemplified by F. L. Brayne (1929; 1937).²⁵ A close and enthusiastic student of the Indian village while a district magistrate in the Punjab and an ardent advocate of village development, Brayne thought of "villagers" as a more or less undifferentiated mass who would prosper or starve together depending on whether or not they took up his ideas for improvement.²⁶

We should not think of Mayer's myopia as some tropical ailment peculiar to the Indian subcontinent. After all, it was not until the beginning of the 1960s that we "discovered" poverty in America through the writings of Michael Harrington, whose influential book The Other America (1962) has been credited with introducing John F. Kennedy to the reality of poverty and inspiring him to begin the actions that later became Johnson's War on Poverty. Before this "discovery" we more or less assumed that poverty would disappear over time with continued economic growth. Only in the 1960s did we as a nation begin to perceive that poverty might have structural determinants not easily neutralized by overall growth in the GNP (see especially Aaron, 1978: 17-23).

The reality of class structure was also an important constraint on success of anti-poverty efforts in the United States. Unlike South Asia, where our focus was on class structure at the national level, it makes sense in the American case to look at it at the local level, for it was here that the War on Poverty was fought. First there was the problem of determining who was actually poor and thus qualified to participate in the programs. Certainly not all the inner city poor were black, nor were all inner city blacks poor, so it was hard as a practical matter to distinguish. Consequently, and for reasons more of administrative convenience than anything else, being black and residing in a target area was taken to signify being poor and therefore qualified to participate (Strange, 1972a).

²⁵ Interestingly, Mayer (1958: 18-19) denigrates Brayne as a high-pressure, "top-down" planner who achieved much in a hot-house atmosphere but nothing in the longer term.

²⁶ Not all British administrators were unaware of class in the countryside, of course. See, for instance, Grierson (1893) for a very different view of rural India.

Needless to say, such an approach of treating the target population as a homogeneous mass of people led to problems of skewing benefits, just as in South Asia where treating a village population as an undifferentiated group allowed the more well-established villagers to garner the lion's share of program benefits there. Most importantly there were three other strata at the local level: bureaucrats, politicians and the business community.²⁷ Administrators as a group were very much like their counterparts in South Asia—concerned about tenure, career advancement, salaries and perquisites, and expansion of the scope of their operations. To the extent that they enjoyed autonomy from political control in these matters, an autonomy in many cases only recently won in the name of "merit" and "professionalism," they were very fearful of any threat to it, particularly threats from groups that tended to think of merit and professionalism as a mask for oppression, racism and injustice.

This fixation on autonomy was most notorious in the case of teachers, especially those in the New York City system, where an experiment in decentralization began in the mid-1960s in three school districts. The experiment, in which locally elected boards were given power to hire and fire teachers and school administrators, evoked such a wave of hysteria from the teachers (including mass demonstrations, disruptions, strikes and intensive lobbying at the state capitol in Albany) that the decentralization experiment had to be drastically modified (Fantini *et al.*, 1970), along lines that in the end ensured teachers domination of the system.²⁸ Reaction from other quarters of the municipal establishment was also evident (e.g., Greenstone and Peterson, 1973; Marris and Rein, 1973; Marshall, 1981) though less strident than the outcry from the New York teachers, in considerable part no doubt because no other bureaucratic sector was quite as directly threatened as were the teachers. An exception were the police, the target in many larger cities of accusations of brutality in their behavior toward minorities. Civilian review boards were set up in a number of cities to look into charges of police misconduct. Reactions of the police to all this were, to say the least, predictable. Community control, they averred, and even review boards, were antithetical to the whole concept of professionalism and depoliticization of the police (Altshuler, 1970).

²⁷ As with our strata in the South Asian case, it is debateable whether these interests can be labeled classes (see footnote 16), so I will follow a similar solution and call them "interest groups," "strata" and the like.

²⁸ For an intriguing analysis of what happened to the New York system during the 1970s, see the series of essays in the New York Times in the summer of 1980, especially Chambers (1980), Fiske (1980), Rule (1980) and Serrin (1980).

Mayors, their allies and their political subordinates were also very jealous of what they saw as their rightful interests, which in this context meant control over all programs in their cities, in terms of both activities and staffing. When CAAs were set up independent of mayoral control with direct linkage to OEO in Washington and when at least a few of these new organizations began to agitate against city hall, the mayors became very quickly upset and lost no time in demanding redress from Washington (as noted in section 1 of this chapter).

As a third element we must add the business interests--the absentee landlords, banks with their "redlining" mortgage practices, merchants battenning on what amount to monopoly market situations, small loan agencies and a large "informal sector" (to apply the term used by analysts of South Asia) with its moneylenders and other less desirable types that we shall consider in a moment.²⁹ Then there are also the more subtle interests of the business community in having a pool of low-wage labor and in having a source of savings that can be mobilized through savings accounts at local bank branches for investment elsewhere.³⁰ Naturally, these interests would all be jeopardized by any real transfer of power to the poor community, a lesson that was not lost on businessmen in the wave of urban riots during the 1960s when the stores of white merchants were the first buildings to be looted and burned.

We should also take into account the "informal sector" just mentioned. This is the illegal or extralegal side of the business community, in which the people are engaged in gambling, prostitution, "protection," loan sharking, drugs and the like. They also have a very definite interest in keeping things the way they are, an interest which might well be badly damaged if there were any real transfers of power to community organizations. The entrepreneurs of the successful extralegal business operations necessarily make accommodation with the political and bureaucratic strata (particularly the police) of the city, for if they fail to do so, they do not survive very long. This accommodation may take the form of bribes, kickbacks and graft, or it may be what amounts to a tacit agreement that the extralegal business will not operate in

²⁹The pathology of the urban slum in this regard is well diagnosed in Tabb (1970); also in Downs (1970); Sackrey (1973) and Tussing (1975).

³⁰Much as rural bank branches in many areas of India and Bangladesh have been doing (see above, footnote 17). With respect to a low-wage labor pool, business interests in the major cities today have a very clear interest in illegal immigration, which at present is producing future generations of the poor for the anti-poverty programs of coming decades.

middle class areas (where most of the votes are, as well as most of the citizens who will vociferously demand that official counteraction be taken). In return for such forbearance, the municipal authorities will allow the "informal sector" a free hand in the inner city slum areas. Naturally the details are rather difficult to come by, since the activities are illegal to begin with, and it is only very infrequently that the accommodational arrangements come into public view (as for instance in the Knapp Commission hearings in New York City in the early 1970s; see Knapp, 1972; 1973).

These extralegal business interests in the United States have a distinct parallel in the South Asian context, primarily in the form of the moneylender at village level, who is also for the most part operating outside the law. These moneylenders, or mahajans as they are called in North India and Bangladesh,³¹ and their "enforcers" or lathials, operate in much the same way that loan sharks and their collection agents do in the United States. There are also the extralegal aspects of landlord-tenant relations--landlords employing the leverage of market conditions to force their sharecroppers to give them more than the legal one-third share of the crop, discharging their tenants after a year or two so that the latter cannot build up any right of tenure as permanent sharecroppers, and so on.

Altogether, then, we have a local structure that looks like Figure 2, with legal and illegal interests in both regions, all having a common motivation to prevent any structural redistributions of power. In South Asia the two groups are often the same people acting in different roles--the landlord farming some of his land directly and legally, while letting the rest out on shares at rackrenting terms, lending money out at extortionate interest rates, and utilizing thugs to make sure that collections are prompt. Both police and civilian officials also act in dual roles. They perform their official duties, generally to the minimum possible extent (particularly in the rural areas, where supervision tends to be extremely lax), but they are also involved in illegal activities as well. The police are accustomed to harass and extort money from villagers (especially those in the lower strata) abuse women, prepare false cases, take bribes and so on,³² while civilian officials are hard put to resist the temptation to become corrupt.

³¹This term, originally the name of a Hindu vaishya merchant caste, has come to refer to moneylenders in general, including in Bangladesh even Muslim moneylenders.

³²Take the Baghpat incident in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh in the summer of 1980, in which a police patrol murdered the male members of a travelling party and raped the woman in the group (see Kotru, 1980; Rao, 1980). It was the fact that the group was riding in an automobile that brought the incident to the notice of the press.

Figure 2: The Structure of Dominant Interest Groups At the Local Level

	<u>United States</u>	<u>South Asia</u>
<u>Legal Activity</u>	Politicians Bureaucrats Merchants Bankers Police performing official duties	Landlords and big farmers Officials performing duties
<u>Extralegal Activity</u>	Loan sharks Organizers of prostitution, gambling, "protection" Purveyors of drugs Police as corrupt	Rackrenting landlords Moneylenders Officials as corrupt

Improbity is particularly rampant when they are given the authority to distribute scarce resources like government funds, agricultural inputs, jobs, health care and even education. Locally elected officials in South Asia could be similarly characterized, the only difference being that citizens assume that it is one of the functions of the political officeholder to be corrupt, whereas they tend to be at least somewhat dismayed (though perhaps not surprised) when government officials are discovered to be venal.³³

³³This tendency for the public to accept corruption among politicians but to be (at least mildly) upset when it occurs among officials is reflected in what is printed in the newspapers in India (in Pakistan and Bangladesh the press is more firmly under government control and so embarrassing material is not often printed). Stories on political corruption rarely get published, except when the venality occurs at the very highest levels (for instance, the great interest in the alleged corruption indulged in by Prime Minister Morarji Desai's son, or the reputed sexual escapades of Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram's son during the Janata period), whereas tales of administrative corruption surface in the press fairly frequently. For an interesting case study of political officeholders, government officials and wealthy local elites all operating in both legal and illegal modes in a rural network spread over a number of villages, see BRAC (1980).

In the United States the businessmen operating in legitimate areas are more likely to be different people than those working in the illegal sector.³⁴ With the civilian and police bureaucracies, the picture is more mixed. Some activities seem to involve a great deal of corruption (e.g., zoning, tax assessment, municipal code enforcement), while others appear relatively more honest (social welfare agencies, health care programs). Even with the police, while corruption is far from unknown, the level of probity is probably rather higher than in the Indian subcontinent.

In sum, then, the local power structure has both legal and extralegal sectors in both the American and the South Asian settings. The major difference is a relatively greater tendency for the people involved to be the same ones in South Asia.

In the American context, how much influence did the business sector, whether legal or illegal, have in containing citizen participation in the WP? The answer depends in large measure on which of the two major interpretations of local politics in the United States one accepts. The power elite or stratification analysts, following Hunter (1953) but tracing their lineage back to the work of the Lynds (1929 and 1937), hold that communities are eagerly controlled by economic elites in their own interest, while the pluralist school, in following Truman (1953) and Dahl (1956 and 1961b), asserts that political systems in general and local political systems in particular are not closed to any group of significant size that wants to participate. Certainly local politics are not closed to the poor, say the pluralists, while the stratification theorists counter that local systems are very much closed to the poor. The debate continues down to the present (e.g., for the power elite side, Domhoff 1977; and for the pluralists, Polsby 1980). There is no good reason to think that victory will be conceded by either side in the near future.

The bulk of the evidence in municipal studies that have been done would seem to favor the power elite school (e.g., Agger *et al.*, 1964; Presthus, 1964; and Vidich and Bensman, 1968, in addition to those cited in the previous paragraph). But the other side has also made a case (e.g., Banfield, 1961; Banfield and Wilson, 1963, as well as those mentioned in the paragraph above). The most important evidence in our context, though, is furnished by what in fact happened to the CAP after its initial forays into confrontational politics. As we have seen, the mayors protested vehemently and the White House responded by toning down the program. Then in 1967 the Green

³⁴There are, of course, exceptions, for instance those in the Mafia who are reported from time to time to be buying up or starting legitimate businesses for "laundering" purposes.

Amendment passed Congress and gave the mayors the option of taking over the CAAs directly if they wished. A number of observers think it significant that the mayors in fact took over very few of the programs. Selover (1969: 177-178) estimated that about 80 percent of the CAAs were being run independently of city hall before the Green Amendment, and Sundquist and Davis report (1969: 39; confirmed by Moynihan, 1970: 159) that fewer than five percent of them were taken over by city hall after the Amendment. This fact might appear to be a strong point in the pluralists' favor, for it could be interpreted to mean that the mayors and their allies did not have such a dominant role after all--they found it politically necessary to let the vast majority of the CAAs go on operating autonomously.³⁵

A more convincing interpretation, I think, arises from the fact that, after the brief period of confrontational politics in 1965, there were virtually no real challenges to mayoral authority from the CAAs. The point here is not whether the mayors did take over programs but that they could take over programs even before the Green Amendment, a power that was reinforced after the Amendment's passage. The threat of such takeover meant that any activity to which a mayor might strongly object was almost automatically excluded from a CAA's agenda. In the phrase of Bachrach and Baratz (1970: 39-63), a "nondecision" was made; in our terms, any real redistribution of power was avoided.

Was this "nondecision" a result of alliance between politicians, bureaucrats and business communities at the local level? Such a question puts us back into the longstanding quagmire of debate between pluralists and power elitists: is it necessary to show conspiracy or conscious collusion among interest groups in order to show control by a power elite, as the pluralists would have it, or is it sufficient to argue that the capitalist system makes these interests run in the same direction, as the other side insists?³⁶ We may sidestep the quagmire by observing that all three groups benefited

³⁵ Sundquist and Davis (1969: 39n) see the low number of takeovers as a "tribute, in many cases, to the political strength of the agencies (i.e., the CAAs)." On the other hand they also quote one mayor's aide as saying the pattern showed a worry that the mayors not "be caught holding the bag when the federal government and its resources withdrew."

³⁶ A fascinating panel on this issue was presented at the 1979 American Political Science Association annual meeting in Washington (Hardin, 1979), in which James O. Wilson and Charles E. Lindblom argued the case for the two sides. It is to be hoped that their debate finds its way into print. As for written material, Polsby's treatment (1980) is the most complete for the pluralist side. For the other side, Lindblom (1977) has much useful analysis.

from the policy outcome. Politicians averted any challenge to their power, bureaucrats retained their "professionalism" and their "merit" systems, and businessmen were able to go on as previously with activities dysfunctional to inner city areas. This outcome, which was the same over the entire theater of operations in the poverty war, should be enough to allow the conclusion that these three groups remained dominant, whether or not direct collusion existed among them.

Although we have appropriately focused on socio-economic structure at the local level for the American case, it also makes sense to look briefly at the national level, for there were several issues of relevance here as well. The mayors as a collective entity were certainly an important factor in the Democratic electoral calculus, for, as we noted in section 7 of Chapter 3, Democratic presidential candidates needed solid majorities in the major urban centers if they were to carry the large crucial swing states in elections. This was especially true for cities like New York, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, where urban Democratic votes were closely balanced statewide by the suburban and rural Republican vote.

Chicago was the most clearcut case in this regard. There in 1960 the Daley "organization" managed an unprecedented Democratic sweep that turned out to be just enough to counteract the Republican majority in the "downstate" region and give John Kennedy a bare 9000 vote edge out of almost five million cast (O'Conner, 1975: 152-162; Kennedy, 1978: 178-187). There was an uproar from the Republican side and a recount (Wicker, 1960), but Daley weathered the storm and the Democratic margin held (Wehrwein, 1960; Finer et al., 1961). Had the Daley forces failed to deliver and had another one or two of the close states slipped into the Republican column (for example, Hawaii, which Kennedy won by only 115 votes), the overall outcome in this very narrow election would have gone the other way. Small wonder, then, that Mayor Daley found a ready reception at the White House when he complained about the CAP, and found almost immediate compliance with his demand that CAA activities in Chicago be placed under his control. When it came to a choice in a concrete case between the possibility of building a new black vote base (as argued by Piven and Cloward, 1972) and the reality of offending an important and reliable big city mayor, the White House lost no time in deciding what to do. Big city mayors and their political machines, then, were an important interest group at the national level and one that Democratic presidents were accustomed to heed.

Another facet of national political ecology was the issue, perhaps better phrased as the non-issue, of redistribution. Right from the beginning, the emphasis in the OEO was on "opportunity," not on redistribution, which was denigrated as "welfare handouts." Director Shriver liked to say things like, "We don't give handouts" and "Opportunity is our middle name" (Kershaw, 1970: 23). To put it another way, all of the benefits to come to the poor would be through growth in the economy, not through redistributing the present shares of income and wealth. One could say the same of political power: it was assumed that somehow the CAAs would generate political power at the community level, but that this power would not come at the expense of anyone else.³⁷ Henry Aaron could have been writing about political power as well as about income shares when he observed:

The officials of the Johnson administration obeyed the longstanding, if unspoken, rule of American politics, not to make income redistribution an issue. The gains of the poor were to come from the improved efficiency with which the poor would be able to use their natural endowments (Aaron, 1978: 28).

At the national level as well as at the local level, a "nondecision" was made: redistribution would not come onto the political agenda.³⁸

Even so, many in the electorate thought that the federal government was over-solicitous of the poor, and in 1968 the "backlash" against urban riots and governmental response to them was a potent factor in the third-party candidacy of George Wallace that year, as well as in the eventual Nixon victory (Converse et al., 1969; Scammon and Wattenberg, 1971). Large numbers of voters were offended if not frightened by the whole anti-poverty effort (though it is admittedly difficult to sort out and distinguish between voter response to urban unrest, the civil rights movement and the War on Poverty, all of which were "backlash" issues in 1968, to say nothing of the Vietnam issue). And surely the most frightening aspect of the War on Poverty must have been the participatory CAP with its heritage of confrontational politics supported by the

³⁷ Power, thus, was assumed not to be a zero-sum phenomenon, but rather to resemble the economy itself, which could grow if properly nurtured.

³⁸ Some analysts apparently confused redistribution with incremental change, e.g., Frieden and Kaplan in their otherwise very astute treatment note at one point that "the Congress did not challenge the basic redistributive nature of the (MCA) program--to send additional federal resources into poverty neighborhoods" (1975: 58-59, emphasis added).

government itself. At any rate, the incoming Nixon Administration took the 1968 election as a mandate to dismantle the CAP, although as we have seen, total welfare expenditures continued to rise sharply.³⁹

The black protest movement, partly because of the civil rights struggle and more directly because of the urban violence of the mid-1960s, had two very different effects on the wider society. Initially there was a positive response, in part a moral response to the demands of the civil rights movement but also in part a pragmatic response to urban unrest, as Piven and Cloward assert (1972: ch. 8-10) and as Jennings demonstrates (1980). But then there was also the very negative response that we have noted, the "backlash" of "middle America" that played a strong part in bringing Richard Nixon into the White House.

Could things have stopped or been stopped somehow, just after the positive response had been triggered, but before the negative response manifested itself? The answer will never be known of course, since we cannot go back to replay the historical record with a different orchestration, but from what we do know, the answer is probably no. For one thing, there is the dilemma that if the wider society responds positively, this encourages more demands. These demands will move participation up the Arnstein ladder (cf. Figure 1), and sooner or later there will be conflict, for the fundamental issue of redistribution of power cannot be evaded for very long. It takes only rather modest demands (up to the fourth or fifth rung of the Arnstein ladder) before confrontation, conflict and ensuing hysteria arise, as they did in the Syracuse, Chicago or Ocean Hill-Brownsville situations. And in a democratic society it does not take very long for opportunistic politicians to see the possibilities of exploiting public worries with strident calls for "law and order."

In Bangladesh there was a similar situation at the macro-level that culminated in the independence movement itself.⁴⁰ Widespread feelings in East Pakistan of neglect and exploitation by the western wing led to a series of confrontations, riots, and even the temporary collapse of government authority in early 1969. In the course of the crisis, the Ayub Khan government was thrown out of office through a military coup in the west and replaced by a new military regime under Yahya Khan. He promised a

³⁹ Meaning, ironically, that to the extent those on the political right like Anderson (1978), Kristol (1974) and Browning (1976a and 1976b) are correct, the Nixon Administration actually did redistribute some income.

⁴⁰ Most of the following analysis is taken from Blair (1971b). On the truth in the Bengali charges of exploitation, see Jahan (1972).

better dispensation for East Pakistan, including a national election in which the eastern wing would have a majority of the seats in the national legislature to reflect its proportion of the population. Protest and unrest seemed to have paid off. Two years later, though, a very similar pattern of unrest, stemming from the election of 1970 and its aftermath, resulted not in a renewal of gains for the eastern wing, but in the unleashing of the Pakistan army on the Bengali civilian population, mass slaughter, civil war and eventually the independence of Bangladesh.

Could the situation have been held in check after the first round? Again, as in the United States probably not, for the strongly held Bengali grievances that set the first round into motion were the same forces that returned an overwhelming victory for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the 1970 elections and produced the confrontations in 1971 that led directly to the war. In essence it came to much the same thing as in the United States: the demand for social (or economic or political) justice could be placated to an extent with promises of reform, but sooner or later the questions of a real redistribution of power had to be faced, and that was when the backlash ensued.⁴¹

Another very different kind of contradiction arose in the CAAs themselves. To the extent one accepted that the citizens in program areas actually should manage things, who among the poor should be in charge? As we saw in section 1 of this chapter, those blacks who did participate tended to be more middle class than the communities whom they were supposed to be representing. This was surely not the intention of the programs, but as Moynihan put it (Marris and Rein, 1973: 167), it made no sense to insist that those with middle class characteristics be kept out of leadership positions in community action projects, or later in the CDAs, for among those very characteristics were the qualities needed for leadership: education, articulateness, ambitions of upward mobility, and the like.

The result of this class bias was what Miller and his colleagues (1970) have aptly called "creaming"--the skimming off of the most able inner city residents through participatory projects. "Access" as a goal was being realized, but only for a few (Schaffer, 1977). The implications that the Miller group draw are worth examining in some detail, for they apply to the South Asian experience fully as much as to the American one. There are several benefits to creaming in the Miller view (1970: 43-45).

⁴¹One could go on to say that the reaction to Yahya Khan's crackdown of March 1971 constituted a backlash against a backlash, which had no parallel in the American situation. But then everything does not have to match up for useful parallels to exist.

First, programs operate more smoothly for officials when they can work with those who are easiest to work with, that is, those most like themselves. By working with these people, "success" comes more quickly and so does recognition for the official and further funding for the program itself. A cooperative extension agent working for the IRDP in Bangladesh, a VLW in India or a CAA official in the United States all had powerful incentives not to work with the "poorest of the poor" or even the "very poor." Second, creaming coopts those who might otherwise lead the poor into agitational activities while at the same time serving to encourage those left behind to think that there really is a way out of poverty for everyone if all will just continue to have faith in the system.

There are, of course, bad effects, as well. First, creaming isolates the uncreamed even more than before, for there is less leavening in the urban inner city slum in the United States and less talent remaining in the South Asian village when the most able and ambitious slum dwellers or villagers get siphoned off, metaphorically upward and physically outward from the community. Second, the initial "success" of creaming (an inner city black getting a supervisory job with the municipal health department, a villager obtaining a managerial position with the credit extension program) may mislead the upper echelons of the society. White middle and upper-middle class America, urban upper class Indians and expatriate advisors in the international donor community may come to think that the program really is going to solve the system's social ills (see Banfield, 1974: 273-281), whereas in fact the programs have developed methodologies that are useful only for creaming off a select few who are upwardly mobile anyway.

The problems of creaming were very cogently set forth in an analysis by Junius Williams of the 1980 Miami riots:

Federal poverty programs siphoned off the most articulate and well-trained persons from black communities. These programs stifled creativity and divided the inner-city communities that fought for the few Federal dollars available. They took attention away from the main issue of institutionalized racism and structural poverty. And by placing the spotlight on such eye-catching programs as the "War on Poverty" the news media ignored the hard problems that wouldn't go away (Williams, 1980).

One solution to the creaming problem would be to keep the "creamees" in the slum or the village somehow, as Williams implied in the passage just quoted. In a way, doing just this was one of Akhter Hameed Khan's many contributions to the Comilla

program. Khan knew full well of the ambition of every village boy to move up and out to the city and the ambition of his family to move him there. Almost all South Asians instinctively would agree with Marx's ideas about "the idiocy of rural life" and with Dr. Ambedkar's remarks about the village as a "sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and Communalism" (cited in Bendix, 1969: 294). As Khan put it,

In the village, anybody who has the slightest intelligence, education or resources has one aim: to educate his boy so that he may get out of the village. That is the chief aim of his life. And if the boy cannot get out of the village after having acquired some education, it is considered a calamity, a curse laid by God Himself or by the devil to defeat the main purpose of all his endeavors (Khan, 1965: 16).

His solution was to choose as cooperative managers and "models farmers" middle-aged men with families who were locked into family responsibility in the village and could not use their cooperative training and experience to lever themselves out into the wider society.

But would such a solution be possible in the American context? To impose it would be to require that ghetto people be selected for participation not on the basis of ability but rather on the basis of their immobility. And how could program administrators seriously pursue the idea of structuring things so that people were manipulated into staying in the inner city when the whole American doctrine of opportunity (which was what the WP was supposed to be all about) insisted that everyone be not just allowed but encouraged to move socially and geographically wherever his talents could take him? Even in South Asia the prospects for keeping the cream in the bottle were rather modest. Perhaps a few middle-aged family men could be manipulated this way, but younger men having higher qualifications (essentially in terms of education), would be hard to pass over, and besides the extended family system is still so prevalent among the higher socioeconomic strata that even a family man could get backing to move out in order to improve the family's fortunes in the outside world.

What if the poor were really put in charge? What evidence that exists is not hopeful. From their study of CAAs in America's five largest cities, Greenstone and Peterson (1973: ch. 6, esp. 188-190) concluded that the more CAA members actually represented the poor (i.e., being from among the poor themselves), the more they were interested in "particularistic benefits" for individuals rather than in any kind of social

change; conversely, the more middle class they were, the more interested they were in universalistic change (see also Marris and Rein, 1973: 185-186). A central problem here was the very inarticulateness of the poor in the sense of a lack of class consciousness. Greenstone and Peterson found very little sense of a coherent agenda felt by large numbers of the poor. The same could be said of the poor in South Asia.

One last contradiction concerns the role of agitation and conflict in PDPs. If it is successful, then conflict will surely have to be a part of the process, for as we have seen, those who have the power will not give it up easily. And it is certainly true that confrontation has marked effects in raising group consciousness and thereby mobilizing people for participation, both at the time of the confrontation and later on.

Yet if a confrontational approach is used (e.g., Alinsky, 1969 and 1972; also Sanders, 1970), local elites are sure to reassert themselves, with national help if necessary, as in the case of the CAP in 1965. The MCA experience in Philadelphia that was mentioned already is instructive in this regard. Despite the Johnson Administration's desire to structure citizen participation into distinctively advisory roles, a community organization in Philadelphia put together a program for the Model Cities competition in which it would have a genuine decision-making part. To retain this role, the organization found it continually necessary to engage in confrontations with the authorities at city hall and Washington. The latter two levels fought every attempt to create anything more than a strictly advisory capacity for the poor, and in the end defeated the local efforts.⁴²

In South Asia the reaction has generally been rather more abrupt. Rural attempts to organize the poor for social reform movements or even to redress illegal economic exploitation have generally met very swift and very brutal retaliation from local elites (e.g., the Harijan atrocities at Belchhi village in Bihar in 1977; see Bhushan, 1977; Sinha, 1977; Narayan, 1979), often with the help of local authorities (e.g., Das, 1975; Sinha, 1975). The list of such incidents could be multiplied almost endlessly (see for instance Special Correspondent, 1980; or the references in Blair, 1980a; 73-74). In a word, it appears that no real success is possible without confrontation of some kind, but on the other hand its emergence tends to evoke countermeasures that make success very much more difficult.

⁴² A very complete account is given in the series of essays by Arnstein (1972), Kloman (1972), and (Unsigned) (1972). For a comparative analysis of four poor people's movements, see Piven and Cloward (1977).

Another way to understand the confrontation issue is to look at the problem of control. It has often been observed in the South Asian context that the underlying purpose of such practices as moneylending, debt bondage, rackrenting, etc., are not to accumulate capital for investment, or even to extract the maximum possible surplus for non-productive activities like land speculation, dissipation and so on. Rather, the argument goes the real purpose is to control the lower orders of society (Thorner and Thorner, 1962; Alamgir, 1978; Prasad, 1979 and 1980; also Blair, 1980a). If the moneylenders who find so many ready takers for their cash (or grain when lending in kind) at annual interest rates of up to 200 percent or more were really concerned to acquire all the productive assets in the rural economy, they would be able to do so after only a few years of such lending activities. The fact that they do not own everything lock, stock and barrel indicates that the true rates of interest must be much less than the nominal ones.⁴³ Their real purpose appears to be not so much to control everything as to control everybody. Similar arguments are made for sharecropping institutions and debt bondage where the latter exists (widely in such regions as Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, rarely if at all in Bangladesh it seems). Life is seen as a zero-sum game, and anything that would allow sections of the lower strata to improve their lot must in this view of things be injurious to the position of dominant elites. It is a political economy of fear that guides the activities and anxieties of dominant groups.

One of the accepted pieces of wisdom in the development field (e.g., Banfield, 1958) is that this view of a zero-sum game is characteristic of poor, resource-scarce societies and that as capitalism introduces itself and the economy begins to expand, the dominant orders (the new ones, anyway) become much less preoccupied with control. In the expanding economy that comes with the capitalist order, all groups can improve their condition at the same time. This suggests a fundamental difference between developed and developing societies in this matter of control.

But is this in fact the case? Or were dominant groups in the United States interested in control also? Racism was certainly a major factor here, as white establishments were greatly agitated by the threat of black power. Of even greater moment, white political and bureaucratic leaders at local level needed only the hint of a black bid for power to rally their constituencies around them.

⁴³Rahman (1979) presents some corroborating findings on this point, though he sees the lenders as having other (profit-making) motives for low-interest loans.

There are also other aspects. In recent years Michel Foucault (1977a and 1977b) has developed and elaborated an impressive and wide-ranging theory that argues the case for control. Far from being a liberating experience, in his view, the primary characteristic of capitalist society is its compulsive insistence on controlling the lower orders. Education, the criminal justice system, the workplace, even psychological therapy--all are instrumentalities of control. To some extent the reactions of local elites in the United States to the War on Poverty would appear to fit well into Foucault's conception. Just as American professors and university administrators were concerned with problems of control during the student movement days of the late 1960s, so too were urban politicians and bureaucrats concerned with the same problems in their own theatres of operations.

Having looked at those constraints on success that are essentially structural, let us now turn to obstacles that appear to be primarily bureaucratic in nature.

3. Overrapid expansion. All of the programs under examination here expanded at an incredibly rapid pace at some point in their histories, and in all cases this expansion was a major factor responsible for the failures of the programs. Some of our PDPs started as pilot projects which were highly successful, attracting a great deal of publicity and attention. Largely because they seemed to work in a field where most programs do not succeed, they came under intense pressure to expand as quickly as possible, so that the achievement could be replicated elsewhere. The problems to be tackled in the development effort were surely immense, and anything that looked like it might work was immediately seized upon by a national political leadership and bureaucracy eager to find an approach that might actually do something for underdeveloped sectors of the economy. Community Development in India, the Community Action Program in the United States, the Integrated Rural Development Programme in Bangladesh and the Rural Works Programme in East Pakistan grew this way, expanding from the Etawah Pilot Project, the Mobilization for Youth project in New York City, the Comilla experiment and a Comilla-managed local works program respectively.

Other PDPs sprang fully grown from the head of national government, as it were, with no pilot project, experimental trial, or even much in the way of a gestation period before they began to be multiplied. Panchayati Raj in India, Basic Democracies in Pakistan and the Model Cities Agency in the United States, were PDPs of this second type. In retrospect it could be said that the second type of program was in trouble from the start, for at birth each was already suffering from the problems of lack of control and supervision that beset the programs of the first type when they began to expand.

Within only a couple of years of the launching of CD in October 1952, Albert Mayer became concerned that the program was growing too rapidly. The Etawah Pilot Project expanded slowly and steadily from one block in 1948 to two in 1949-50 and then five in the next year, a number which did not increase further for the next two years (Table 7).⁴⁴ CD, in contrast, started with 167 development blocks scattered around the country in 1952-53, then mushroomed to 475 the next year and 727 the year after that. True, many of the programs in the additional blocks were of the less intensive extension variety (which was used for several years as a warmup for the intensive phase; in later years CD began intensively in each new block and then shifted to a less intensive version). But however one counted, the rate of growth was getting out of control in Mayer's eyes, especially in the years after 1954. He feared that this rapid growth would generate demands to spend money too quickly, allow incompetent officers into the program, and create a mania for facile measures of success. All of these tendencies were certain to undermine the whole program, he thought (Mayer, 1955). At the least, he believed, it should be possible to slow down the pace enough to maintain some quality by periodically weeding out incompetent staff (Mayer, 1958; 320-321). But expansion continued, and in September 1955 a despairing Mayer sent an appeal to his old associates in the project. In this message he agonized over the evils of overrapid growth but exhorted his allies to keep their faith in CD in the hope that sanity would return to the program at some future time (ibid.: 329-330).

Unfortunately, sanity did not return, and the CD program continued its dizzying growth rate, until by 1963 it had covered virtually all the more than 5,000 blocks and 560,000 villages in the entire country (Kurukshetra, 1964). The sad consequences of lower quality that Mayer saw coming did in fact come, as the Mehta Report pointed out (GOI, 1957: I, 28). By 1960 even Nehru, who was very enthusiastic about the growth rate in 1955 (Nehru, 1963: 35,37), described himself as "angry at its expansion on a big scale" (ibid.: 92).

Why did the expansion get out of hand? At the beginning of this section, we noted the political pressure to capitalize on the rare success in a field characterized by general failure and to move quickly to get what seemed like a workable program out to the citizenry. But it appears that there were also some dynamics internal to CD that pushed it to expand. Earlier, in the discussion of Table 4, it was pointed out that actual

⁴⁴The Pilot Project blocks did, however, expand internally, including more and more villages within each one.

Table 7: Expansion of Community Development in India, 1948-1957

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pilot Project Blocks</u>	<u>Intensive Blocks</u>	<u>Non- Intensive Blocks</u>	<u>Total Non-Pilot Blocks</u>
1948-49	1	---	---	---
1949-50	2	---	---	---
1950-51	5	---	---	---
1951-52	5	---	---	---
1952-53	5	167	---	167
1953-54	5	220	252	472
1954-55	5	220	507	727
1955-56	5	372	607	979
1956-57	5	622	853	1475

(Source: Mayer, 1958: 339)

government spending never equalled the amounts allocated for CD and PR in the five-year plans. Part of the reason for this shortfall was, of course, the periodic changing and revising that happens to any longterm plan in its implementation. But some of the shortfall was internal to the program itself. In operation, the CD blocks did not use all their allocations. David Potter tells the story succinctly:

Government expenditure during this period actually fell far short of the targets established. This experience was contrary to expectations, for it was thought that shortage of funds rather than shortfalls in expenditure would characterize the program. One reason for this unusual experience was that people's participation was required for most schemes in the program, and it was taking time to mobilize this participation and create organizations for it before release of funds. Initial apathy and suspicion were encountered in many places, which also slowed up work.

It is clear from S.K. Dey's correspondence at the time that the solution to this shortfall in expenditure was to press ahead with the program at a much more rapid pace, opening more and more blocks to absorb the total allocation for the program. He appreciated the danger involved in this solution: "We seem destined for an expansion faster than we like. There are too many forces about. These will not let us sit down and consolidate."

What followed was rapid expansion of the program and a rash of letters imploring the state governments to spend the allotted funds.

Administrative innovations were put into effect to facilitate this process. The program began quietly to stress amenities and construction activities which ate up funds more quickly, while the slower and less expensive extension work took second place (Potter, 1966: 189).⁴⁵

The reduced emphasis on extension work that Potter mentions meant that the VLW in the CD program wound up with an average of 10 to 17 villages under his supervision (roughly 1,000 people per village), rather than with four villages as was the rule at Etawah (Tinker, 1963: 112). When one adds in the constantly increasing work load for block and village level personnel in the form of new programs to administer, procedures to follow and fashions in development (e.g., Heginbotham, 1975: ch.5, in which he examines this problem in Tamil Nadu), the demands became altogether too much. The Block Development Officers, their staffs and the Village Level Workers had too little time for any extension work much more serious than flying visits to the countryside.

Akhter Hameed Khan was wary of the danger of expansion from the outset, and resisted all pressure to spread his Comilla program before it was ready (Raper, 1970: 232ff; A.H. Khan, 1965: 26-29). Like Mayer, Khan favored a slow, steady pace of expansion, so that a careful watch could be kept over all aspects of the program. Thus by 1966, after six years of the Comilla experiment, just ten new thanas beyond the original Comilla Kotwali thana had been taken into the program, and in 1970, on the eve of the liberation war, there were still only 23 thanas in all, as is seen in Table 8. After independence, these 23 thanas formed the nucleus of the IRDP, which was to become the government's major rural development effort. Sheikh Mujib's administration did not want to delay on what it saw as a crucial enterprise, so in 1972 it took up 10 more thanas and in the first half of 1973 some 54 more. In the 1973-78 Five-Year-Plan, it was initially hoped to spread the IRDP to all 410 thanas in the country (GPRB, 1973d: III, 34), but as the plan actually got put together, the target was scaled back to 250 (Table 8, bottom). Even this reduced goal was a very ambitious one, calling for practically quadrupling the number of primary societies and a tenfold increase in

⁴⁵In this passage, Potter cites the Planning Commission's Evaluation Report on First Year's Working on Community Projects (Delhi, 1954) and S.K. Dey's letter dated 1 January 1954, reproduced in GOI, Community Projects Administration, Random Thoughts (Delhi, 1956). See also Sussman's (1980) analysis of the expansion.

Table 8: Expansion of Integrated Rural Development Programmes in Bangladesh, 1963-1978

Year	Thanas Covered ^a	Primary Societies	Members '000	Shares & Savings Tk '000,000	Loan Issue Tk '000 000		Overdues Tk '000,000	Percentage Overdue ^b
					Yearly	Cumulative		
1963-64	3	142	4	0.1	0.3	0.3	---	---
1964-65	3	232	8	0.2	0.8	1.1	---	---
1965-66	10	676	20	0.8	1.2	2.3	0.03	2.5
1966-67	10	1,091	28	1.2	2.1	4.4	na	na
1967-68	10	1,620	42	2.3	5.3	9.7	0.3	5.7
1968-69	23	2,290	59	4.5	10.3	20.0	0.8	7.8
1969-70	23	3,209	81	6.7	13.9	33.9	3.2	23.0
1970-71	23	3,592	93	8.3	13.1	47.0	7.1	54.2
1971-72	33	5,680	136	11.4	15.1	62.1	17.7	117.2
1972-73	87	10,170	261	16.9	20.8	82.9	27.2	130.8
1973-74	152	14,690	387	22.9	24.1	107.0	30.3	125.7
1974-75	161	17,691	480	28.5	31.8	138.8	34.7	109.1
1975-76	162	18,975	526	33.4	50.3	189.1	33.0	65.6
1976-77	200	21,874	649	40.2	75.1	264.2	38.7	51.5
1977-78	250	27,548	844	54.3	128.1	392.3	58.1	45.4
Target A 1977-78	410	61,057	4,125	170.6	na	1,934.4		
Target B 1977-78	250	39,000	2,570	76.9	na	1,117.0		

Notes: ^aData do not include the original Comilla Kotwali Thana, which was kept separate from the expansion program.

^bOverdues divided by yearly loan issue.

Sources: For 1965-68, Ahmed, 1970: 56-60.
For 1968-71, A.K.M. Obaidullah, 1973: 78-84.
For 1971-78, K.M. Rahman, 1978: 20-25.
For Target A, 1977-78, GPRB, 1973d: III, 42-44
For Target B, 1977-78, GPPB, 1973b: 160-161.

members over a five-year-period. Deposits and shares were expected to go up by five times and loans a dozenfold.

As Table 8 shows, at the end of the five-year-period, there were considerable shortfalls from the targets, but the expansion that did take place was nonetheless considerable.⁴⁶ Primary societies almost tripled, both membership and savings went up by over three times and loan issue increased by more than six times. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the IRDP organization lost control of its system. In 1978 the director of research for IRDP reported numerous problems; supervision was irregular and ineffective, inputs were coming too late to the cultivator, managers at thana level were diverting loans to their own cooperatives, and managers at the village level were failing to hold weekly meetings, steering loans to themselves and defaulting at a much higher rate than ordinary members (K.M. Rahman, 1978).

This loss of control shows up in the default rate shown in the last column of Table 8. From a relatively modest rate of less than 10 percent in the 1960s, default went up to well over 100 percent (that is, overdues were more than the year's total loan issue) during the civil war in 1971 and then went up still further, a rate that was brought down in the last several years in large part through increasing the loan issue by a factor of four from Tk 31.8 million in 1974-75 to Tk 128.1 million three years later. A ruling in 1975 that primary societies in default would not be given new loans must have helped as well, though it tended to penalize the small farmers who had repaid their loans more than the bigger farmers in the defaulting societies, who have always been the major defaulters (USAID, 1977: B.6, 19).⁴⁷

In fact, none of these problems were new; they had all existed since the original expansion in the later 1960s, both in the new thanas taken up and within the original Comilla Kotwali laboratory thana itself. For it was at that time that supervisory capacities became overstrained, and after that they were never able to catch up. What happened provides an excellent study of how things can get out of control even in the most well-managed of programs. Between the 1965-66 and 1967-68 crop years, cooperative membership doubled and loan issue went up fivefold in Kotwali thana; in

⁴⁶ Actually, by the mid-1970s the annual plans had become a more important instrument than the Five-Year Plan (Islam, 1977: 204-206), but the latter still provided a statement of goals against which to measure progress.

⁴⁷ The idea that default varies directly with farm size in rural development programs has by now become a commonplace. See Lele (1974).

the new thanas membership tripled while loan issue increased by seven times.⁴⁸ While this expansion both within and among thanas was going on, the Academy was also trying to introduce the new high-yielding variety technologies of the "Green Revolution."

The deteriorating supervision that went along with this expansion meant that it became easier for unqualified people to get loans, for borrowers to "roll over" loans (use a portion of larger new loans to pay back old loans overdue), and for incompetent people to get promoted in the administration of the project. Perhaps most significantly, the inspectors became corrupted, for they were responsible for checking all cooperative accounts weekly and were thus the key factor for maintaining honesty in the program. In addition, loan officers were given quotas of how much money they were required to give out, a factor which exacerbated all these tendencies a great deal.⁴⁹

We should note also that even with all the expansion that took place, the coverage of PDPs in Bangladesh is far from complete. In Comilla Kotwali thana, it can be estimated from the 1974 census that there were in that year about 26,000 small farmer households.⁵⁰ For that same year the coverage of the BARD model credit cooperative project was 13,741 members, slightly over half the number probably eligible. And this, it should be said, was in the 14th year of the program. For the country as a whole, a reasonable estimate would be that as of 1978, a bit more than 11 percent of small farmer households were covered by the IRDP.⁵¹

⁴⁸Expansion data are from PARD annual reports. See Table 8, and for Kotwali thana see Blair (1978: 68).

⁴⁹These factors are examined in more detail in Blair (1974: 74-83; 1978: 74ff) and A.H. Khan (1971: passim). Mayer (1955) complained about pressure to spend more money faster in the CD program.

⁵⁰The method used here follows that used by Akhter Hameed Khan (1971: 17-18). We take the 1974 census figure for rural population (GPRB, 1975c), subtract 30 percent as being big farmers, landless laborers, and non-agriculturalists, and then divide by six (the average family size).

⁵¹Here the data on landholding assembled by Jannuzi and Peach (1977) were employed. If we take away 32.8 percent of rural households as being landless (aside from homestead land) and another 3.7 percent as being big farmers (over 7 acres exclusive of homestead land), the remaining 64.5 percent of the total 11.85 million rural families would give us about 7.5 million small farmer households. The 844,000 IRDP members for 1977-78 (Table 8) come to 11.4 percent of these small farmer families, assuming one coop member per household. If we use Jannuzi and Peach's data to determine coverage in Kotwali thana (i.e., applying their countrywide figures to this thana), we obtain a 57 percent membership among small farmer households.

Much the same fate befell the Thana Irrigation Programme and the Rural Works Programme. The former grew from about 2,200 pump groups in 1964-65 to more than 24,000 six years later. After independence, growth has been slower, only about 50 percent during the 1972-78 period (World Bank, 1979: 97, citing data from the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation). But the evils that accompanied the earlier growth appear to have remained too entrenched to eradicate, even when the growth rate slowed down (Stepanek, 1979: esp. 124-125; also Islam, 1977: 159-162).

The most notorious example in Bangladesh of rapid expansion and its effects is undoubtedly the Rural Works Programme, which operated in Comilla Kotwali thana in 1961-62 as a pilot project involving unskilled labor (presumably landless agricultural laborers) in off-season construction on flood control embankments. The project was so successful that even Akhter Hameed Khan was willing to expand it to 50 thanas the very next year (Sobhan, 1968: 108-109). But the following year the government found itself faced with the problem of trying to promote recovery from a devastating flood season while having also large-scale food imports resulting from the Public Law 480 agreement recently signed with the United States. A public works program that would build up flood control infrastructure using the large new sources of foodgrains as wage goods (so that the wages paid out for the construction would not simply fuel inflation) was extremely attractive to the Pakistan government. Accordingly it expanded the RWP to the entire province of East Pakistan for 1962-63. The budget rose from a few thousand taka to Tk 100 million, and the number of thanas from one to all 410. Administered through the Basic Democracies system, the RWP soon became a motherlode of graft and corruption, as has been shown in detail elsewhere (Sobhan, 1968; Thomas, 1971; see also Blair, 1974: 88-98).

Despite the plethora of studies on all aspects of the War on Poverty, there is not much data readily available on overall growth of the CAP. Marris and Rein (1973: 208) report a \$340 million appropriation for Title II (which included the CAP primarily) of the Economic Opportunity Act for fiscal 1965. They further report that the sum doubled for the following year and, "After four years of doubtful achievement, many frustrations and a few precarious triumphs, the endeavor was rewarded by a fifty-fold increase" (ibid.: 208). Presumably this brought the budget to somewhere in the range of \$17 billion (\$340 million x 50). The data shown in Table 9, based on the admittedly fragmentary annual reports of the OEO, do not show anything like a fifty-fold increase, and much of the money included in Table 9 was spent on activities that were not exactly "community action" (e.g., Head Start, a preschool program; and Upward Bound,

Table 9: United States: Growth of the Community Action Program, 1965-1971

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>No. CAP Projects</u>	<u>No. CAP Participants</u>	<u>Outlay (million \$)</u>
1965	3,222	n.a.	248.5
1966	8,340	4,657,000	612.6
1967	10,826	6,337,000	835.3
1968	n.a.	n.a.	738.4
1969	n.a.	n.a.	379.7 (713.6) a
1970	n.a.	n.a.	383.5 (709.5) a
1971	n.a.	n.a.	390.9 (911.1) a

^aThe smaller figures are the officially reported total budget activities of the CAP for these years. The larger figures reflect the inclusion here for comparative purposes of the Comprehensive Health, Legal Services and Head Start programs, which had been part of CAP for the first four fiscal years but were switched over to other branches of OEO in the Nixon Administration.

(Sources: OEO, Annual Reports)

a pre-college preparatory project). But the figures do indicate a very substantial spending program. In the very first year of its existence, CAP formed over 3,000 CAA projects and spent almost \$250 million, and at the end of its third year it had over 10,000 projects in the field involving more than six million participants and \$835 million. After that (and after the Green Amendment, which brought the CAAs under city hall control), the comprehensiveness of the OEO annual reports began to decline, and so data are unavailable for projects and participants. But the budget itself leveled off at around \$700 to \$800 million, rising to just over \$900 million in the last year for which an annual report is available.⁵²

So great expansion came early in the sunny days of the CAP and was impressive: from nothing to 10,000 projects, six million participants and \$835 million in three years. Particularly in the first year of the CAP, there was intense pressure to get program

⁵²The OEO's annual reports thus reflect the history of the agency itself. Earnest and comprehensive at first, they became skimpier toward the end of the Johnson years, and in the Nixon Administration showed a distinct change to a more glossy but less

funds allotted before the fiscal year ended on 30 June 1965, for the EOA had not gone into effect until November 1964, and as always in governmental organizations, officials feared funds would be cut in the future if not all spent on time. The problem was especially acute in that first fiscal year, since a doubling of funds was in prospect for fiscal 1966, and the OEO would look incompetent if it proved unable to spend even the modest fiscal 1965 appropriation on time.

In the end, it was reported that almost 60 percent of the CAP grants for fiscal 1965 were allocated in June of 1965, the last month of the fiscal year (Silberman, 1965: 224). This achievement enabled OEO Director Shriver to announce to the Senate in hearings in July that by the 30th of June his agency had "obligated all of our fiscal 1965 funds and we could have used \$55 million more" (US Senate, 1965a: 27). The OEO justified the haste by saying that unwise programs could be modified or even cut off in the future, but it was essential to get them all started as soon as possible. In fact, however, the programs hastily put together developed constituencies of their own that were as resistant to change as any other (Silberman, 1965: 222-224).

As on the Indian subcontinent, there was no way that such a vast program could be adequately controlled and supervised, especially in view of the fact that in its early years decentralization was of such fundamental importance. Thus corruption and fraud played a significant role in the program, as many on the political right gleefully pointed out (e.g., Scheibla, 1968: 120-170).⁵³

More importantly, however, the rapid expansion of the CAP surely played a major role in allowing middle class and upwardly mobile people to take charge of CAP projects, reinforcing the pattern that was discussed in the previous section. In short, the same set of circumstances existed in the early CAP days that occurred in the South

informative format. The reports disappeared altogether after fiscal 1971, even though the OEO itself struggled into one more fiscal year before finally being dismantled completely. The titles of the reports reflect the agency's fortunes:

Fiscal 1965	"A Nation Aroused"
Fiscal 1966	"The Quiet Revolution"
Fiscal 1967	"The Tide of Progress"
Fiscal 1968	"As the Seed Is Sown"
Fiscal 1969	"Annual Report"
Fiscal 1970	"Annual Report"
Fiscal 1971	"Annual Report"

⁵³Tom Wolfe's essay "Mau-mauing the Flak Catchers" (1970) was in much the same vein, though a great deal better written than Scheibla's diatribe. As for more general attacks on the CAP, see U.S. News, 1965a; 1965b; 1965c; 1965d; 1966b.

Asian PDPs--inadequate supervision and a bureaucracy anxious to expand its operation by pumping money into community-level activities.⁵⁴ Expansion simply accelerated the tendencies toward domination by local elites.

For both South Asia and the United States it seems fair to say that if Lowi (1979) is right in arguing holding that decentralization makes for elite control, it is also right to assert that decentralization plus rapid expansion means that elite control will happen faster and surer.

4. The Compulsion for Measurement. The 1960s were an era of measuring things, and PDPs were no exception. There appear to be two reasons why this was so. The first was the same reason why people involved with governmental programs have always felt themselves obligated to measure things: to show results in an area where there are no profit-and-loss accounts, amortization data or net sales records as in the private sector. More than most federal officials, the poverty warriors thought themselves particularly obliged to show measureable success. This was true because the OEO as an agency had to show the Congress, its watchdog organization the General Accounting Office (somewhat similar to the audit and accounts services in the subcontinent) and the public that it was actually doing something to wipe out poverty. Also, within the OEO itself people as individuals had to show their effectiveness for the usual reasons of career security and advancement.

The other reason for measuring progress was the ascendancy of positivism in the 1960s, a phenomenon that we have already noted in Chapter 3. Fortified by developments in the computer field and by the rapid progress in perfecting techniques like multivariate analysis, linear programming and input-output analysis, social scientists thought it possible to measure virtually any social condition or process. Not only that but in the then-current spirit of behaviorism, they also insisted that the only way to assess social reality was quantitatively. The older methods of qualitative study of a few cases in depth were passe--mere "journalism" to the behaviorist.

In the 1960s the quantitative approach had come to dominate government; academics had convinced bureaucrats of their methods. This conversion had taken place partly through the "fine tuners" like Walter Heller and Arthur Okun on the Council of Economic Advisers and the Bureau of the Budget, but almost certainly the

⁵⁴ Actually, after the Nixon Administration consolidated its control over the OEO, the misuse of program funds continued, only now the diversions were directed from Washington, specifically toward neutralizing urban militants by lavishing poverty funds on them (See Moffett, 1971).

greater influence came through the application of quantitative methods to business management. From their success in the corporate sector these approaches moved into government through people like Robert McNamara, who came from the Ford Motor Company to become Secretary of Defense under Kennedy and Johnson.

There was a problem, however. Just when quantitative analysis was coming into flower, the two major enterprises of the Johnson Administration were proving highly resistant to the technique: the Vietnam War and the War on Poverty. In fact, it is probably safe to say that there have been no two major American government undertakings in this century more inhospitable to the quantitative approach than these two ventures. In Vietnam, the traditional measures of military progress like population liberated from the enemy, miles of railway track destroyed and so on were useless, for the enemy seemed to recapture everything by night that he had lost during the day, and he did not transport supplies by rail anyway. But the Pentagon and the White House insisted on computerizable measures of progress, and so there came about the unfortunate and notorious indicators like body counts, tons of bombs dropped, strategic hamlets fortified and the like, all of which served primarily to deceive American officials into thinking that they were winning a war that in fact they were losing.

The War on Poverty presented a similar problem. How to measure progress against poverty? Some aspects of it could be quantified, to be sure, and, as we have seen, prodigious efforts were expended to determine measures of poverty, the amount of income transfers and their recipients, the incidence of benefits of social welfare programs and so on. But while all these indices dealt with various facets of the problem, no indicator or conceivable composite of indicators could get at the central issues involved, which were concerned with such dimensions as social status, psychological motivation, aspirations for one's children, self-esteem, sense of social and political efficacy, neighborhood safety and ethnic prejudice—all extremely difficult and probably impossible to measure with any real accuracy. Measuring success was therefore difficult indeed (Marris and Rein, 1973: 193-194). Qualitative field studies in social anthropology might come up with some valid analysis of progress in the WP, but higher level administrators, as Moynihan observed (1970: 83-84), needed results immediately, and so indicators had to be developed. Thus numbers of trainees finishing a vocational program was the measure of success, rather than follow-up studies of how the trainees used the new knowledge.

The following observation was written about the Model Cities program, but it could just as well have been directed at the WP:

Administrators...and Congressmen need immediate, often hard, quantifiable results--results not readily provided, at least initially, by a highly structured and extended evaluation program. No matter how important the theoretical need to obtain a tough and legitimate analysis of the ultimate impact of Model Cities, officials and politicians alike who were associated with the program could not afford the uncertainty inherent in the testing of methodology or the speculation inherent in the long-term effort that had no short-term alternatives (Frieden and Kaplan, 1975: 184-185).

Thus, in his testimony before Congress in connection with the authorization for the OEO's second year, Director Sargent Shriver presented a barrage of numerical data. A few examples:

Next week on July 8, OEO will have been in existence only 9 months. But in those nine months we have reached 1.2 million poor people directly and another 1.9 million through their families....During the opening months of our campaign, we have seen an unprecedented peacetime outpouring of volunteers. One hundred thousand of them are or will be working full time for Head Start alone this summer; 400,000 part time....Fifty thousand doctors, nurses and other professionals have donated their services. The Head Start program...to have 530,000 youngsters in a program that was announced in January clearly reveals a lot of local and popular interest. In West Virginia...every one of the 55 counties in the entire State has a Head Start program this summer (US Senate, 1965: 27,29).

What did "reaching" the 1.2 million people mean? What did "working full time" by the 100,000 volunteers consist of? What kind of "services" would the "fifty thousand doctors, nurses and other professionals" donate to the cause? What were the 530,000 youngsters going to get out of the Head Start program? What was the quality of those 55 programs in West Virginia? These questions were not addressed by Shriver, nor did any of the Senators present at the hearings see fit to ask them.

Senator Clark of Pennsylvania expressed the problem a couple of years later, at a hearing of his subcommittee, which was examining the WP:

The ultimate test of the Community Action Program is the result achieved. For certain aspects, such as resident participation, this is hard to measure, but for service programs objectives should be specified and accomplishments determined (US Senate, 1967a: 4).

Indeed, measuring community organization and its effectiveness was virtually impossible, for there are no units of citizen participation or inputs in the decision-making process, or even a firm and objective idea of what community organization is or of what community decision-making means. But the OEO in Washington had to have some measures, and so did the General Accounting Office. Thus in Los Angeles, for example, "career development" (that is, training programs) proved much easier to measure than community organization or participation; therefore, it became the focus of attention, even to the point where as an activity it replaced the community organization undertakings, so great was the need to show results to Washington (Greenstone and Peterson, 1973: 220-221).

In the OEO's annual reports, which are the basis for Table 9, even the definition of "participation" came to mean taking part as a beneficiary in one of the programs like Head Start or Upward Bound, becoming a client of the Legal Services project or receiving care at a community health center, rather than being involved in organizing a neighborhood action group or sitting on the managing board of a CAA (e.g., OEO, 1968: 95).

There was probably another factor at work which predisposed administrators toward quantitative analysis: not only was it easy but also it was safe. What would happen if serious qualitative studies of the CAP were in fact conducted? Beside taking too long, they might show that the programs were not successful. Perhaps even more dangerous for the program, there was always the chance that the efforts were successful in some instances in organizing the poor to make effective demands on city hall for a larger share of goods and services, or in other words that the "shaking up" of local institutions that Lyndon Johnson had looked forward to (1971: 74-75) was actually taking place. The hysteria of the mayors that has already been mentioned would only get worse. There was more than a little contradiction here--failure was unacceptable, but so was success. It seemed safer to gather quantitative measures of the CAP than to deal with the intangibles of effective CAAs.

As an old hand at dealing with bureaucracies, Albert Mayer was familiar with the dangers of number-gathering. Back in 1951 he warned against overeagerness for quantifiable indicators (1958: 153-154), and when Indian CD began its rapid expansion in the mid-1950s, he became even more concerned, fearing that bogus measurements of progress would undermine the program fatally. In 1955 he wrote that:

The real and irremediable failure will be this: that all the 'targets' set will be 'achieved' on paper by wishful reporting, and by wishful acceptance of the reporting, punctuated by prepared visits to the field (1958: 317; see also 319).

Mayer was right on the mark, but too late, for a quantitative mania tantamount to dementia had already set in, as revealed in reports like the following:

The information available about the progress of these projects during the last 18 months ending March 1954 shows that 242,966 compost pits were dug; 1,030,600 maunds of fertilizers, 383,800 maunds of seeds and 25,080 agricultural implements of various sorts were distributed; 167,200 demonstrations were held; 14,700 acres of land were sown with fruit and 28,799 acres with vegetable; and 104,100 acres of land were reclaimed. In addition, a substantial number of wells and tanks were constructed and repaired; pumping sets installed and various other irrigation measures undertaken, whereby an additional area of 311,000 acres of land was brought under irrigation.

In the field of animal husbandry, 383 breeding centres were started; 117,800 bulls were castrated; 720 pedigree bulls were supplied; 2,200,000 cattle inoculated and vaccinated and 752,000 treated. Besides, 20,500 pedigree birds were supplied and 2,250,000 fish were distributed. (GOI, 1955: 202).

The people have participated in a large number of activities, and this has given them a feeling of greater confidence in their ability, with some measure of assistance, to find solutions to local problems. Thus, the construction in project areas of 14,000 new schools, conversion of 5,154 primary schools into basic schools, opening of 35,000 adult education centres which have imparted literacy to 773,000 adults, the construction of 4,069 miles of metalled and of 28,000 miles of unmetalled road and the building of 80,000 village latrines are illustrations of local development which have far-reaching social implications. In all these, the greater part of the effort has come from the people and government agencies, notably extension workers, have served as guides (GOI, 1956: 238).

As Mayer had foreseen, and as Hanson documents in detail (1966: ch. 11), the effects of this fixation were debilitating for the CD program, for in the end people at all levels confused number-gathering for real achievement and in their preoccupation with the former failed to notice that there turned out to be very little of the latter.

In East Pakistan there were difficulties also, most notably with the province-wide RWP, which reported figures like 15,000 miles of roads built and 80,000 miles repaired, 3,600 miles of embankments constructed, 3,800 community buildings put up and 280

million man-days of employment generated (Thomas, 1971: 198). The Comilla program brought forth a flood of annual reports on the Academy's activities, the experimental Kotwali thana, the RWP and the TIP among other things, all full of numerical measures of progress (whence, for instance, most of the data in Table 8).

Rural credit programs had such problems with the need to measure that the programs themselves became severely weakened and also perverted in the usual direction of benefits for the rich. Default on loans will serve as an example. Administrators found it too difficult to measure program success in terms of the increase in rural welfare or even in family income, for such information could only be generated through detailed field studies, but it was easy to measure default rates, for all one had to do was look at the account books in the comfort of the central office. Alas, the preoccupation with default meant that the loans inexorably went to the larger farmers, notwithstanding the fact that they were the biggest defaulters as well, because on paper larger farmers looked like "better risks."

In all these cases a fixation on numbers as the measure of progress answered several bureaucratic as well as political needs in the short term, but even in the middle term this quantitative compulsion served mainly to create a make-believe world of achievement and progress that obscured the real world of program failure.⁵⁵

5. Supervision vs. Autonomy. The problems of expansion that we examined in section 3 of this chapter are closely allied with the more fundamental problem of the tension between supervision and autonomy. The core of the difficulty is that too much of either is bad, yet at the same time it is almost impossible to find a proper balance between the two. If there is enough supervision from the center to keep a program under control, there tends to be so little autonomy that the enterprise stagnates and withers out in the field, but if there is enough autonomy at the local level to allow accommodation to differing local needs, there tends to be so much inefficiency and corruption that nothing of substance gets accomplished. To make matters worse, whenever an agreement can be reached that is acceptable to both the center and periphery in an organization it is bound to be unstable, for the headquarters has an inherent and constant need to increase its control over the field units, while the field units simultaneously and incessantly feel it essential to widen their freedom of action

⁵⁵The Indian state of Tamil Nadu provides an excellent example of this pattern. At one point it was found that only one-third of the area reported through administrative channels to be planted in high-yielding varieties of rice was in fact so planted (Farmer, 1977: 96).

so that they can adapt the overall program to local conditions as they exist. Thus, however much control it has, the center wants still more, and whatever degree of autonomy exists is not enough for the periphery.⁵⁶

Again, these problems are not new or unique to PDPs. Wherever social activity has been organized on any scale in human history the same kind of tension has existed between the center and the periphery. What is interesting for us is how this tension manifested itself in much the same way in all the programs that we are looking at here. All of them began, as we have seen in Chapter 3, with a very strong emphasis on the fundamental importance of decentralization, and in all of them this decentralization caused almost insurmountable problems of control.

Sometimes the contradiction between supervision and autonomy was perceived consciously. But often the government seemed unaware of its importance or even existence. In the Bangladesh Five-Year-Plan, there is, as usual in these documents, a strong call for a decentralized approach:

The only way we can ensure [the people's] participation is by decentralizing development activities. Small projects and various development programmes particularly in the rural areas must be implemented through the local government institutions (GPRB, 1973b: 80).

Yet further along in the same plan, one reads that:

The Planning Commission will use its allocative authority over the development funds in effecting a desirable performance standard on the Executive Agencies. Depending on how an agency performs during the year, the Planning Commission will increase or reduce resource allocation for the next year for the agency and/or area, and increase or decrease its projects [and] programmes accordingly (ibid.: 192).

Albert Mayer (1958: 122) was very concerned that too many demands from the top might crush the enthusiasm of the Etawah staff at block and VLW levels, a morale that he had carefully built up. Yet he also insisted on lengthy fortnightly reports from the

⁵⁶Control and autonomy can be thought of as end points on a spectrum, as in Marshall (1981), who sees the categorical grant programs of the 1960s as the most controlled type and the revenue-sharing efforts of the Nixon era as the most autonomous. Block grants are in the middle of her spectrum.

Etawah staff, in which all phases of the project were covered in meticulous detail (e.g., D.P. Singh, 1950). One must suspect that he issued equally detailed instructions in response to these reports.⁵⁷

At times it was recognized that there was some incompatibility between the two needs. Nehru, for example, wrote in 1960 that the two could be balanced, though the balance should be more in the direction of autonomy for the CD program:

The tendency of modern scientific age is to centralize. Big industry or agriculture in advanced countries inevitably tends towards centralization. You cannot advance without a measure of centralization. I am all for centralization in some spheres. While you cannot do without centralization, it is also true that you cannot do away with decentralization either. You have to balance the two. I want decentralization, as far as possible, because in the ultimate analysis we want the development of human beings, of their spirit of self-reliance. It is this background which leads me to like the original approach of the Community Development movement (Nehru, 1963: 93).

Even in the planning stage there were conflicts between how things were perceived at the local level and the limits set at the central level, as was nicely illustrated in one of the five-year plans for the Indian state of Mysore:

The Government...took steps to implement the instructions of the Planning Commission in the matter of initiating schemes from 'below'. The result was that the several schemes suggested for inclusion involved an outlay of Rs 252 crores [2.52 billion] nearly. After discussion the Planning Commission has tentatively fixed a ceiling of Rs 85 crores [850 million] for Mysore....Steps are now being taken to prepare District Plans and Taluk Plans within the ceiling now allotted (Government of Mysore, Second Five-Year Plan, cited in Hanson, 1966: 403-404).

In addition to conflicts on planning, there were also problems with administering of PDPs in the subcontinent. Here the dilemma was that decentralization led to corruption while centralization led to the preoccupation with number-counting that we looked at in section 4. This corruption was an inevitable concomitant of

⁵⁷ Mayer's personality most likely had a somewhat inhibiting effect on autonomy in the early days of Etawah. A dynamo of energy, he was so fascinated with every aspect of the Pilot Project that it was probably difficult to gain much independence from his scrutiny.

decentralization, for what decentralization did was to bring administrative decision-making down to the people, a necessity if national and state programs were to be adapted to local needs. Whether to use CD funds to build a primary school or an irrigation channel, which farmers would be the most reliable risks to give loans to in a credit program, where to put the flood control embankments in the RWP--these were all decisions that could only be made effectively at the local level. But to make these decisions at village level was to put an impossible burden on local administrators and political leaders, for it was at the village level that the bonds of kinship, caste, patron-client relationships and locality are so strong as to overpower any thoughts of administrative rectitude. It is not for nothing that in the subcontinent one always speaks of his home village as the place to which he "belongs." And if the BDO or VLW were not a native of the region to which he was posted and hence not prey to these local ties, then he was almost sure to succumb to the bribes that were certain to be offered.

Every village has countless stories of payoffs to the local constable to bring false charges against one's enemies (or to evade valid charges against oneself), to the government fertilizer agent for a few extra bags, to the local record keeper to falsify a land sale deed, to the credit extension agent for an illegal loan from the cooperative, to the land survey and settlement officer to change a boundary line, and so on and on. It may well be that popular beliefs in venality are exaggerated.⁵⁸ But even if the reality is less than the folklore, corruption has been a problem of extremely serious dimensions. When one considers in the low salaries that PDP officials customarily have received, it is not surprising that corruption has been virulent; the temptations are simply too much to resist. A VLW in the Etawah Pilot Project, for example, received Rs 80 (\$18) per month, a salary that was itself about 50 percent higher than that received by government employees holding equivalent positions (Mayer, 1958: 25-26), but abysmally low when one thinks of the demands of caring for a household, educating children, etc.

The promoters of the PDPs hoped that popular participation and the glare of publicity that attends the democratic process would limit corruption. In making its recommendations for establishing PR, the Mehta team realized that corruption would be a problem, but thought that it

⁵⁸ Many observers of Indian administration have thought so, for instance Appleby (1953: 53), Gorwala (1951: 12) and the Santhanam Committee, which investigated corruption in the early 1960s (GOI, 1964: 12-13, 48-101). For a more general analysis of corruption in developing countries, see Braibanti (1962).

can be eliminated only by constant and intelligent vigilance on the part of the citizens. This, in the circumstances of our country, is possible only if the electorate knows at least by name the persons in whose hands they have placed power (GOI, 1957: 1,8).

In Bangladesh, Narul Islam, who was Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission when the 1973-78 Five-Year Plan was being formulated, spoke of the "one countervailing advantage" that local level organization had to offset its lower efficiency:

provided there is open and wide discussion and a maximum participation by the local people, chances of mistakenly willful negligence or due to lack of interest, not uncommon in a national bureaucracy, are fewer; the possibility of corruption, provided all accounts are openly discussed and all decisions are publicly taken, is less. (Islam, 1978: 82n; see also GPRB, 1973b: 80).

Unfortunately, as PDPs worked out in the subcontinent, these checks of popular participation did not function, and corruption soon became debilitating in all of them. Local democracy meant local corruption and like any other corruption, this variety favored the rich, who are always better equipped to pay for its benefits. As we have noted Lowi saying of the United States (1979: 259), so too it could be said of South Asia that "decentralization is only a carte blanche for vested interests."

If the glare of democratic publicity did not work to combat corruption, then the only way out was close supervision from above, a method which fit in with the experience of ancient Indian rulers in their attempts to control the periphery of empire, and also one in tune with the general path of bureaucratic development that had been charted early in this century by Max Weber (1922). The articulation of universal rules, maintenance of files, arrangement of positions into hierarchies of command and control all should help hold down corruption. But these developments were also ways of centralizing control and thus antithetical to the needs for autonomy in decision-making that were so fundamental to the PDP. Worse yet, this kind of Weberian "bureaucratic development" created an illusion of probity and integrity in the system that did not exist in fact, for it encouraged those compulsions for measurement that we focused on in the previous section. Data on default, numbers of cooperative members, percentage of cultivators, production plans approved for loans--these became the methods of control, but even in a system as small as Comilla district's Kotwali thana, these devices

were not enough to prevent corruption during the program expansion of the mid-1960s. For the nationwide programs like RWP, TIP and IRDP, this control through statistics was impossible from the beginning, and in India, where the scale of everything was so much larger, the same could be said of CD and PR.⁵⁹

It should be noted here that centralized administration has customarily provided at least as big an opportunity for corruption as decentralization. The command economy of the Soviet Union is perhaps the extreme case, with its history of entire factories that exist in fact but not in any government records. Anyone familiar with the highly centralized procedures in the subcontinent for creating or expanding industrial capacity, obtaining licenses to import goods or acquiring scarce foreign exchange knows that centralization is a very fertile ground for venality. For the PDPs there is no reason to think that the centralizing reaction to the local corruption of decentralization actually reduced the overall degree of improbity--it may in fact have increased it. The point here, though, is that centralization was seen as a way to overcome the corruption brought about by policies of decentralization.

In the United States there was some concern about dominance from Washington. U.S. News and World Report worried that the billions of federal dollars being spent on the WP would end up by creating a vastly more powerful government in Washington (1965c: 61; see also 1965d), while others even saw it as a socialist plot (Scheibla, 1968; National Review, 1965). Even Moynihan tended to see citizen participation in CAAs as a cover to legitimate a program controlled in fact from Washington (1970: xix).

At times OEC Director Shriver was at pains to show that autonomy had not gone too far, that all decision-making had not been turned over to the poor. In June 1965, just as the WP was getting under way, he insisted that:

There never has been any effort to exclude governmental officials at the local level, nor has there ever been a statement that the poor should control these programs...The law says that there shall be maximum feasible participation of the poor. It does not say that poor people should control the program nationally, at the State level, or locally, we never said that they should (US Senate, 1965: 41).

⁵⁹The matter of control was complicated in India by the fact that the activities of CD and PR programs were constitutionally state rather than federal subjects. New Delhi could and did try to maintain some influence both through periodic exhortations and through the national allocation of funds to CD and PR activities in the states, in much the same fashion as Washington has done over the years in the United States. Essentially, however, it was the states that had to deal with the problems of autonomy and supervision in their PDPs.

Later, in December of that year, he likened the administrators of the CAP to an architectural firm in their dealings with the poor:

A client tells the architect the kind of house he wants, but he doesn't design it. The architect designs it, but the client participates in the design (Newsweek, 1965: 27).

Despite the concern about centralized control and even evidence of it from the OEO Director, it was decentralization that received most attention in the WP and that caused the most controversy. There were two sides to autonomy in the CAP—political and administrative. Political autonomy received an immense amount of attention and concern in the media, whereas the administrative dimension, which was in the end to be at least as important, received very little.

The policies of decentralization were the object of great dispute from the very beginning of the WP. Community action projects were set up independently of the city halls in a number of places; that is, the linkage between Washington and the projects did not run through locally elected officials but was a direct relationship from the OEO to the local action organization. In some of these places the projects mounted campaigns of pressure on the city halls to redress what the new organizations saw as discriminatory treatment of poor neighborhoods. The mayors naturally saw all this as a threat to their authority as duly elected office holders representing the entire population of their cities. The Syracuse situation received a flurry of publicity (e.g., Newsweek, 1965; Time, 1965c; US News, 1965b; 1965c) when the mayor protested to the media that a community action training center at Syracuse University was "training agitators" and was teaching "Marxist doctrines of class conflict," while the organizers of the project talked about the need for "controlled but intense anger about continued injustice" among participants and organized confrontations with the municipal housing authority in Syracuse (US News, 1965b: 52; see also Knoll and Witcover, 1965a; 1965b).

Accusations elsewhere were less dramatic, but there were a number of instances where OEO-sponsored CAAs were charged with fostering attacks on elected municipal authorities. Worse yet, in the eyes of many during the early days of the WP, was the pressure Washington was exerting to institute more autonomy in those cities where the poor were not being included in policy-making positions. In the summer and fall of 1965, OEO officials in Washington were leaning hard on Richard Daley of Chicago to allow the poor into his city's poverty policy council, the Committee on Urban

Opportunity, to which he had appointed himself the chairman and for which he had handpicked all the members (Time, 1965a; 1965c). And things in Los Angeles and San Francisco had gotten to the point where the OEO was withholding millions of dollars of poverty money on the ground that the poor were insufficiently represented in poverty organizations (Time, 1965a).

Perhaps the most startling evidence of what many imagined to be the fruits of granting excessive autonomy to the poor came in April 1966 at a national meeting organized by the Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty (CCAP). This private organization was funded largely by the United Auto Workers at the urging of its president, Walter Reuther, and had as its major purpose the welding together of a national pressure group from among representatives of the poor, most of whom had surfaced in the CAAs. As he attempted to address the meeting, Sargent Shriver was booed and hissed by the representatives of the poor for not doing enough for them. Finally things got so out of hand that Shriver left the pandemonium under protective escort, reportedly muttering that "I will not participate in a riot." The incident received widespread publicity (Edstrom, 1966); Robertson, 1966; Newsweek, 1966; Time, 1966) and was a deep embarrassment not only to Walter Reuther and the CCAP founders, but also the WP itself (Moynihan, 1970: 141-142; Higgins, 1978: 89-90). The political reality was rather different. There were a few cases like the one in Syracuse when the CAAs actually did begin to agitate for what could only be structural reform, particularly in the early days of the WP. For the most part, though, things were under control even before the Green Amendment of 1967 and certainly afterwards.

We have looked at how this local political control meant domination by local political and economic elites in section 1, but there is another dimension to the consequences of decentralization that should be taken up at this point. The decentralization theme of the WP also meant decentralizing the administration of the program through the multitudes of local bureaucracies that cover the country, especially after the political adventurism of the early CAAs was brought under control. Just as the mayors were in favor of the kind of "flexibility" that put program control into their own hands, so too local administrators favored decentralization, for they saw the power going to themselves rather than to local residents (Yates, 1973: 139). In a sense it could be said that autonomy actually meant less participation by the poor at the bottom from within the bureaucracy, for city civil services tended to insist on the

"integrity of the merit system," a stand which by and large excluded "unqualified" poor people (Greenstone and Peterson, 1973: 212-214, 220).⁶⁰

Corruption quickly became a major theme in the WP, and the news media began early on to report instances of "bureaucratic bungling, waste, extravagance," in which local poverty officials received more in salaries than mayors or governors; welfare recipients managed to get higher government handouts than the gainfully employed obtained in wages; government attorneys were defending Job Corps members in criminal cases; payrolls were padded, and so on (see, e.g., the series of critical feature articles in US News, 1965a; 1965b; 1965c; 1965d; 1966b).

As with the issue of corruption in South Asia, defenders of community control conceded that it would bring some venality, but insisted this was a temporary problem that would be overcome as the democratic process asserted itself. Besides, legitimacy was a bigger problem at the moment; for the governmental and political process to acquire any real legitimacy in the eyes of the poor, it had to be subject to their having a say in local decisions. If some corruption came with this process, it was a small price to pay for the benefits of managing one's own political affairs (Altshuler, 1970: 37-44).

In both South Asia and the United States, the dilemma between supervision and autonomy was decided in favor of the latter, as it had to be in view of the essential maintenance that decentralization assumed in all the PDPs. In both areas this decentralization meant that it was virtually impossible to prevent the programs from being taken over by local elites, political, economic and bureaucratic. But it was also true that in every program the system to be managed was simply too large and the goals too vague for the center to be effective in trying to control all things even if it had wanted to do so. Perhaps if the PDPs were distributing only specific social benefits such as tubewells in South Asia or Social Security payments in the United States, the central office could have maintained control. But anything so nebulous as the PDPs in fact always seemed to be beyond firm control from the start.

⁶⁰This was, it should be remembered, before the days of Affirmative Action mandates from the federal government. The controversy over recruitment of minority group members in terms of social justice vs. merit became quite acute at times in the mid-1960s, especially in the school systems. See, e.g., Fantini et al. (1970).

Chapter 5

HOW THE PROGRAMS SUCCEEDED IN THE LONGER TERM

Despite the evidence of failure that we looked at in Chapter 4 (as well as the general failure on the output side, as detailed in Appendix A) there are other ways in which our PDPs were quite successful. We will begin by looking at the U.S. War on Poverty from the vantage point of 1981, as it suggests things we should look for in the South Asian experience as well.

United States

A number of things stand out in the contemporary United States. The most important of the achievements was probably the building of a four-faceted constituency for assistance to the poor.¹ This constituency came to consist in part of the large and still increasing number of private voluntary organizations concerned with the poor, some at neighborhood level and some citywide in scope. Another element in the constituency was the informal network of administrators who had been involved in the War on Poverty and then went on to other positions in other agencies, but who maintained their interest in and concern for the poor. They continued the habit of asking of all programs, new and old, "What will this do for the poor?"

A third element of the constituency has been the steadily increasing number of elected (and also appointed) officeholders from minority groups who obtained their initial leadership in the CAP and to a lesser extent the MCA.² Though this leadership training was pointed to at the time by some observers as being perhaps the major contribution of the community action efforts (e.g., Moynihan, 1970: 129-130; Strange, 1972a: 467), only in more recent years has it become clear the extent to which the CAP and MCA provided the crucial early experience to today's black political leaders. See Levitan, for example, (1976: 186), a close student of anti-poverty programs over the

¹Much of this idea I owe to Henry Saltzman, an early poverty warrior now a consultant in New York City, who developed it for me at some length.

²By mid-1980 the number of elected black officials at all levels in the United States was 4,912, according to the Joint Center for Political Studies in Washington; this represented a tremendous increase over the 1,469 who held elected office in 1969, the first year this research group collected statistics on the subject. Still, the 1980 total amounted to just over one percent of all elected officeholders, far below the 12 percent of the American population that is black (Associated Press, 1980).

years, thinks that a large majority of current black political leaders and spokesmen gained their initial political exposure and administrative experience in community-based organizations. While there appear to be no national-level empirical studies of the background experiences of current black political leaders, impressionistic evidence supports Levitan's assertion.³

One may ask, what difference does it make, after all, if a few blacks or hispanics get elected to public office? Sam Rayburn's dictum may be recalled on how to advance in the U.S. Congress: "To get along, you have to go along." Surely, it could be argued, black office holders have had to "go along," perhaps so thoroughly that they have become coopted before attaining any influence of significance. To some extent, such a criticism must be accepted as true. Blacks are no more immune than anyone else to the blandishments of power given on the condition of conformity. But then it is also true that just as there are Uncle Toms on city councils and in state legislative chambers, so also there are black politicians like Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan who have a staunch claim as genuine leaders representing a constituency. And even if there were no Chisholms or Jordans, it would still be a necessary condition for the advancement of the black population that there be black politicians in office. Merely having people in positions within the power structure is no guarantee of success, but apart from a successful direct assault on that structure (or other millenarian events), there appears to be no way to attain success without such representation. In short, the rise of black political leaders and officeholders (we could say the same for hispanics) seems a necessary condition for the community's progress in the American system, though it is admittedly not a sufficient condition.

The fourth component of the constituency is of course the beneficiaries of the War on Poverty themselves, not so much through their participation in directing the CAP or MCA but through their participation in program outputs like food stamps, aid to dependent children or medicaid. Within a few years of the initiation of the War on Poverty this beneficiary group became sufficiently large that it could not easily be cut off or cut down to a substantial degree. In other words, it achieved some political "clout," in that it became one of the many constituencies in the American system that has what amounts to an inherent right to large-scale subsidies from Washington (along with farmers, the merchant marine, airlines, mismanaged but large corporations, etc.).

³Saltzman (see footnote on previous page), for instance, has observed from his experience with the New York State legislature that virtually all the present black members got their political start with the participatory programs of the 1960s.

Like the other groups, the poor are sufficiently well entrenched as permanent subsidy recipients that although unfriendly leadership in the White House can whittle away their allotments somewhat, even a conservative administration cannot deny them most of what has become their due.

The other notable achievement of the CAP and MCA is much harder to pinpoint, but it surely has had a significant impact on urban life and perhaps on our society generally. That is the empowerment that these programs provided to the residents of the areas where they were active--the knowledge, ability to act and self-confidence that made significant numbers of poor people begin to treat government as something belonging to them and which could be made to provide them with at least a part of what they needed to have decent lives. Using the term elaborated by Shaffer (1977), the CAP and MCA helped give the poor access.

One of the central lessons of the War on Poverty is that this constituency was able to keep the programs going, first after the loss of interest in anti-poverty programs in the Johnson White House and, most interestingly, even after a "backlash" of national opinion against the whole antipoverty effort arose, supporting the Wallace candidacy in 1968 and helping give Richard Nixon the presidency itself in that year. Not only was this constituency able to keep the programs going, but in fact it was able to increase greatly their funding levels (although, as we have observed, participation in decision-making and implementation never regained the earlier levels).

The trend of social welfare spending is easily observed in Table 10 (for a similar approach, see Levitan, 1980). Here several of the major antipoverty programs are tracked over the 1960s and 1970s, with projections into the early 1980s. All of them show huge increases over the period. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), traditionally the core activity in the overall federal welfare effort, rose from around a billion dollars a year in the mid-1960s to well over seven billion in the closing fiscal year (1981) of the Carter Administration. Much of this rise, it should be noted, took place during the Nixon-Ford years (i.e., from \$1.7 billion in fiscal 1969 to \$6.4 billion in fiscal 1977), when the White House was certainly not publicly in favor of welfare.

Similarly the food stamp program grew from around \$30 million at its beginning to \$8.7 billion by 1980 and was projected to run more than \$10 billion by fiscal 1982. Perhaps the most dramatic increase came in the Medicaid program, which provided medical care for the poor. This Great Society enterprise jumped from its initial level of just over a billion dollars (about the same as AFDC at that time) to more than \$15 billion (about twice the AFDC outlay) by the end of the Carter years.

Table 10: Federal Outlays for Selected Social Welfare Programs, 1963-1983
(figures in billions of dollars)

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>AFDC</u>	<u>Food Stamps</u>	<u>Housing Assistance</u>	<u>Total Public Assistance</u>	<u>Medicaid</u>
1963	0.8				
1964	0.9	0.03			
1965	1.0	0.04			
1966	1.0	0.07			
1967	1.1	0.1			
1968	1.4	0.2			1.2
1969	1.7	0.2			1.8
1970	2.2	0.6			2.3
1971	3.0	1.6			2.7
1972	na	1.9			3.4
1973	na	2.2			4.6
1974	4.0	2.8	1.8	14.1	4.6
1975	4.6	4.6	3.1	18.9	5.8
1976	5.8	5.6	2.5	22.6	6.8
1977	6.4	5.4	3.0	23.6	8.6
1978	6.6	5.5	3.7	26.5	9.9
1979	6.8	6.8	4.4	28.6	10.7
1980	7.1	8.7	5.3	36.1	12.5
1981	7.7	9.7	6.6	40.1	14.2
1982	8.0	10.5	8.0	43.6	15.6
1983	8.1	10.9	9.4	46.9	17.8
					20.2

- Notes:
1. Figures not available for all programs separately for all years. Food Stamps and Medicaid did not begin until the mid-1960s, and reporting method for other categories different for some years.
 2. "Total Public Assistance" is a category including AFDC, Food Stamps, Housing Assistance and other programs, but not including Medicaid.
 3. All figures for 1980 through 1983 are estimates from the Carter Administration. The newer estimates from the incoming Reagan Administration are somewhat lower (see OMB, 1981; and U.S. President, 1981).

(Source: OMB, various)

The total social welfare effort is difficult to measure (as is evident from the herculean efforts of Plotnick and Skidmore (1975) to do so for three representative years). But an estimate may be derived from the summary figures given for "total public assistance" in the federal budget proposals of recent years. This item, shown as the next-to-last column of Table 10, does not include such important items as Medicaid and is not available in any comparable measure for the earlier years shown in Table 10. Nevertheless, we can get an idea of the magnitude of increase in welfare spending in recent years: from about \$14 billion in fiscal 1974 to just over \$40 billion in fiscal 1981, with a projected increase to almost \$47 billion by 1983, or more than a tripling in less than ten years.

One explanation for the success in raising welfare funding levels is that by the end of the 1960s it had become structurally necessary in our advanced capitalist system, as well as politically clear at all levels of the federal system, that the poor had to be accommodated with something more than sporadic poor relief. Politicians could (and would) continue to rail against "handouts" and "welfare bums," but a many-faceted, multibillion dollar antipoverty program would remain a reality.

A second reason could be the interest of various powerful sectors in the economy in keeping antipoverty programs going. Food stamps, for instance, have received much heavy abuse from the political right (e.g., Tabacoff, 1976; Evans, 1980). Yet they are obviously valuable to those who produce and sell the food, as well as to those who consume it. In 1976, according to estimates from the United States Department of Agriculture (cited in Zarley, 1979), farmers earned some \$800 million from food stamp purchases, or in other words about one-seventh of the \$5.6 billion federal outlay for the program that year (cf. Table 10) went directly to the farmers growing the food. Other groups benefit as well, such as the 1.3 million member United Food and Commercial Workers Union, which represents grocery store employees and which lobbied vigorously in Congress to continue the program in 1980 (Donnelly and Wehr, 1980). Interestingly, there was little lobbying by other producer or marketing groups for food stamp continuation in 1980 (when the program was at the point of losing its funding altogether). Instead, there was intense pressure from church groups, anti-hunger organizations, and the Carter Administration itself. In addition, the Congressional Black Caucus (a group of black members of Congress) weighed in with strong support, as did a number of black interest organizations like the Rev. Jesse Jackson's PUSH (the acronym stands for People United to Save Humanity). In the skirmishes that broke out almost immediately after Ronald Reagan's inauguration in January 1981 over his

attempts to cut back social and welfare programs, a number of coalitions of these groups came together to defend their poverty constituencies. (see Denton, 1981a and 1981b; Donnelly, 1981; Roberts, 1981a and 1981b; Taylor, 1981; and Weinraub, 1981).

All these groups were part of an antipoverty constituency that by the 1970s had managed to master a strategy of steady but non-threatening pressure for antipoverty programs, once the initial furor of the 1964-65 CAP period had been contained. After that, certain rules of the game were clear: participants in antipoverty programs would eschew confrontational politics on the one side; on the other, government would meet at least a part of the material needs of the poor. There remained a definite tension, for each side had a powerful weapon; the poor could demonstrate, agitate and even riot, and government could cut down or cut off its antipoverty programs. But the modus vivendi that had been achieved between the two sides proved quite stable through the decade of the 1970s. There were no more of the "long hot summers" of the 1960s (with the exception of a few explosions like that in Miami in 1980), and the social welfare transfer programs continued in operation. The poor, in short, came to be included in the system in a way that had not been true before. Not as equal participants, to be sure, for they were, after all, still poor, but they did have a claim on the system that was real and which has lasted down to the present day.

At least two qualifications must be inserted at this point. For one thing, there were other enterprises under way at the same time as the War on Poverty that also empowered people, most notably the civil rights movement (one might also include the student movement for "student power" and the antiwar movement). These also had an empowering effect. Accordingly, one cannot separate out how much of the successes for the poor in the 1960s were due to the War on Poverty itself and how much due to these other factors. Second, there is the fact that some people became a good deal more empowered than others, and here we must again confront the reality of creaming (cf. Chapter 3). Those who were most able benefited the most in the sense of empowerment as well as in material terms.

Three things are certainly apparent from the American experience. First, these achievements took a good deal of time.⁴ Some perceived fairly early that it was the politicization of blacks (Levine, 1970: 161-167) or black integration into the political

⁴Marshall (1981) also makes this point. An intriguing parallel here is offered in Salamon's (1979) case study of an experiment in land reform during the New Deal period in the United States and its delayed but nonetheless significant effects.

system (Piven and Cloward, 1972: 274-276) that was the signal achievement of the CAP. But for the most part it was not recognized until well into the 1970s that the War on Poverty was more successful as an assault on political poverty than on economic poverty (e.g., Greenstone and Peterson, 1977).

The fact that its success was largely political brings us to the second point, namely, that success came in some unexpected directions. Initially the rhetoric of the War on Poverty was very much political, with much attention given to concepts like "opening up the power structure," "power to the people," "black power" and so on. But as we have seen, this aspect soon faded away, in response to the hue and cry that greeted the first CAP efforts. After that the official rhetoric was directed toward economic achievements, attaining "equality of opportunity," and the like. The political realm was scarcely mentioned at all. Yet looking back 15 years later, it is the political dimension that has changed while the economic position of blacks relative to whites, or of the bottom quintile of income receivers relative to the top quintile, remains the same. Nor can much be said of improvement in the opportunities available to the great majority of young blacks today as against those in the mid-1960s.

To say that the political dimension has changed while the socioeconomic one has not is of course to raise the question whether political change can have any effect on the overall economic base. As ever, the question is a tough one to answer, but it would seem that a negative demonstration should command some credence here. We have noted already the huge increase in social welfare transfer income taking place during the War on Poverty and to an even greater extent during the Nixon-Ford years. It is true that despite this increase the poor did not improve their relative position in the income distribution over the 1965-1980 period. But it is also true that without these transfers the position of the poor would have grown significantly worse (cf. Plotnick and Skidmore, 1975). If we recall that the years of the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations with their concomitant stagflation were not a time of much public sympathy for the poor, we must wonder how these transfers were sustained at all, to say nothing of increasing steadily. Surely the explanation is in large part that the constituency built up during the 1960s kept the transfers continuing. That this constituency was able not only to maintain the spending levels but to increase them substantially is a testimony to its integration within the American political system. To answer the question posed above, we can say that the proof of the efficacy of the political constituency for the poor is not that it eliminated poverty but that it kept the position of the poor steady and even improving in terms of social welfare spending

during a time when the wider political and economic forces at work in American society would otherwise have made the lot of the poor a good deal worse.

The third general point is an obvious one, but it must be kept clearly in mind when we speak of "success" in fighting poverty: the poor continue to be very much with us. Though some headway has been made, there is still a great deal further to go (e.g., Lampman, 1974). The successes that have taken place are real, but they are better seen as preventing setbacks and as establishing preconditions for future advance than as evidence that final goals have been attained.

India

Success in the Indian subcontinent is somewhat harder to find, but if we appreciate that it may take a long time to appear, that it will probably come in unanticipated ways and that it constitutes only an interim step in a continuing effort, there is some definite evidence of achievements stemming from PDPs in South Asia that can be discerned.

In the most backward area of India there appears to be a structural transformation of the rural economy in process that has its causes to a significant degree in the kind of developments we have been examining for the United States. This is the Bihar/Eastern Uttar Pradesh/Madhya Pradesh area, the "Hindi heartland" of India. We could also add in Western Uttar Pradesh, though economically it is more advanced than these other areas. Altogether the region includes well over 200 million people, almost 90 percent of them rural, in an area of greater poverty and inequality than even the norm for the rest of India.

In this transformation, a rising middle caste and middle class peasantry--a market-oriented, surplus farmer stratum--is displacing a formerly dominant, traditional (even semi-feudal) large farmer class. And this displacement is occurring in such a way that the lowest rural orders, that is, the sharecroppers, the near landless and landless, are beginning to enter the political arena for the first time as active participants rather than serving only as people who are acted upon by their superiors in the rural hierarchy.

The change is worth noting in brief detail.⁵ During the British period and through independence, a largely high-caste stratum of tax farmers known as zamindars was dominant in most of this "Hindi heartland." The zamindars, who were the main base of

⁵The documentation of this transformation is by now considerable. See Prasad (1978 and 1980), Gould (1980), and Blair (1980a), along with the references therein.

support for the British Raj in the rural areas, were officially eliminated through a series of "zamindari abolitions" enacted by the Indian National Congress, the party of Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru that took over the reins of power upon the British departure. The zamindars, however, were able to bend with the times and in fact vitiated most of the reforms by writing into them such massive loopholes that afterwards, though their dominion was somewhat diminished, they retained most of their control.⁶

In the 1960s and much more so in the 1970s, this control was challenged by those immediately below them--the middle farmers who were also by and large the middle castes. These were the Shudra agricultural castes, the so called "Backwards" in contrast to the upper-caste "Forwards," whose dominance had been unchallenged for so many years. The middle-farmer Backwards tended to be more aggressive than the Forwards. Taking advantage of the new technologies created by the Green Revolution and the new opportunities created by a rising demand for foodstuffs stemming from population growth, they had become surplus farmers growing for the market. They farmed their own land and they looked for ways to maximize profits, whereas the Forwards perpetrated a kind of patron-client economy in which they preferred to let their land out on shares rather than work it themselves (as members of the "twice-born" Hindu castes they could not in good conscience touch the plough) and were more interested in maintaining stability of income and control over the lower orders than they were in pushing up profits.

There were two avenues of advance pursued by the Backwards in their rise to prominence. The first was economic. India's expanding population and its increasing demand for foodgrains, combined with the availability of the new technologies of the Green Revolution, provided a tremendous opportunity to "progressive farmers" (Ladejinsky, 1969; also Joy and Everett, 1976; Wood, 1977). Naturally, much of this new technology was disseminated through the CD structure with its block advisory staffs, VLWs and so on. The group most able to take advantage of these opportunities was the Backwards. They worked their family farms to grow a surplus, they scrimped and saved, and they began to buy out and displace the larger, higher caste farmers, who found it progressively more difficult to compete with the upstart Backwards. It was, as one student of agrarian change in Eastern Uttar Pradesh has observed, as though

⁶This process is described and analyzed in detail for Bihar in Jannuzi (1974); for an update see Mendelsohn (1980). The experience for the rest of the region is comparable.

William Faulkner's parvenu Snopeses were taking over from the aristocratic but competitively flabby Sartorises.⁷

The second route of advance for the Backwards was political. The Forwards altogether amounted to only about one-eighth of Bihar's population (in most of the rest of the "Hindi heartland" proportions were roughly similar; see Schwartzberg, 1965; also 1968; 1978: 106-109, 238-240). While the lower castes were politically unconscious and quiescent, there was no opposition to Forward domination except among the various Forward caste subgroups themselves. The "progressive farmer" Shudra castes were more numerous, forming around one-fifth of the state's population, a proportion they were able to increase to some extent for political purposes by claiming to speak for all Shudra castes (i.e., the entire Backward community, which included most of the artisan castes as well as fishermen, animal husbandry castes and so on). All together, the Backwards came to around 50 percent of the total population of Bihar.

Through mobilizing their numbers and utilizing their newly-found economic power, the Backwards began to take over panchayats (see Rangnath, 1971, for a good case study of this process in eastern Uttar Pradesh), then legislative assembly seats, and finally the legislative assembly and the government of the state itself. In the Janata period of 1977-80, Backward-dominated parties governed several of the states in this region, and for a brief time they controlled the central government as well, during the brief prime ministership of Charan Singh in 1979-80.

There was much synergistic effect between the economic and political dimensions of the advance of the Backwards. Greater economic attainment meant more resources to finance political campaigns and a better chance of winning them, while possession of office meant an opportunity to promote the development of HYV-oriented infrastructure in general (e.g., irrigation facilities, farm-to-market roads, extension agencies), which would be most beneficial to those who could best take advantage of it like themselves. Charan Singh in particular was an untiring proponent of a "progressive farmer" policy of massive government subsidies and other supports for surplus cultivators (see Singh, 1964 and 1978). Backwards' leaders in power, whether at panchayat or state level, also could and did use the rights of office to steer specific, divisible inputs (e.g., fertilizers, insecticides, cooperative credit) to themselves. Economic power helped political power and political power fostered economic power.

⁷ Arthur Lopatin, an historian from the University of Rochester, cited in Kaufman (1980).

This whole process follows along the lines of our three observations on the success experienced in the War on Poverty in the United States. First, it took a good deal of time. The CD programs began in the 1950s and PR in the early 1960s, but it was not until the late 1970s that the middle peasants began taking charge of things. Second, these transformations were not exactly expected by those who planned these programs. Mayer with his vision of a homogeneous village prospering under CD did not anticipate the outcome to be the replacement of one dominant class by another. Nor did the proponents of PR in their view of a harmonious village consensus see such a result. And third, the struggle to achieve the elimination of poverty for all is only just beginning in northern India; indeed, while rural power has shifted hands, the lot of the poorest has in a number of areas and in a number of ways gotten noticeably worse in terms of the violence and atrocities perpetrated against them, a matter to be dealt with shortly.

Can we then speak of success at all? Yes, in the same sense that we can speak of the American successes as providing essentially the preconditions for further advance, rather than as being final achievements in themselves. More specifically, for any long-term positive change to happen in rural India, it was first necessary to loosen the grip of the semi-feudal class that had managed to control the countryside at least since early British times if not long before. It was not until the late 1970s that the middle peasantry was able to loosen that grasp. Even then the success of the Backwards has been a very tenuous one, for no sooner had they taken over the reins of state government in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in 1977 and begun to initiate policies to favor their class and caste constituents,⁸ than the Forwards reacted vigorously and even violently to the Backward triumph. Protest demonstrations, gang violence in the universities, sabotage of the railroads and other public property, and police firings all became increasingly common. Then in 1980 the Forwards, by working through Indira Gandhi's Congress (I) party, won their way back to political power in the elections of that year. Naturally, the Backwards have not accepted their defeat lightly, and the struggle goes on. In the end, the Backwards will probably win out, for they have both

⁸ As well as agricultural growth policies to favor the middle farmers, both state governments also instituted Backward caste reservation schemes for government posts, educational benefits, etc. For more detail on Bihar, see Blair (1980a); for Uttar Pradesh, see Mishra (1978); and for Karnataka, see Manor (1980).

economic power and political numbers on their side, but the transformation process appears destined to take some time to unfold.⁹

So far, these political dynamics have been seen primarily in the competition between Forwards and Backwards, with the latter capturing more political power. And as noted already, many of the Backwards in caste terms are not very backward economically. What is important for our inquiry are signs of further challenge to the traditional order. The same economic and political dynamics that set in motion the challenge by the Backwards has also mobilized those below them, the sharecroppers, near landless and landless agricultural laborers at the very bottom of the social hierarchy. Sharecroppers have begun to demand recognition of their status, and laborers have started to ask for payment of the legal agricultural minimum wage, enforcement of statutes abolishing bonded labor (i.e., debt servitude), access to village public lands and fish ponds, and so on.

So far these demands have had no more than rhetorical support from the government (and most of it cynical at that, in the form of consciously empty promises of police protection; see for instance, Sinha, 1980). The consequences of activism have often been harsh for the petitioners. Atrocities against Harijans (Hindu untouchables), who form the bulk of the landless laborers in northern India, have been on the rise for several years--beatings, killings, burnings, rape, etc., invariably organized by the upper strata in the villages (see the discussion in Chapter 4, section 2, for more detail).

⁹These observations are supported by an analysis of Manor (1982) concerning dynamics of integration and disintegration in India today, which was received while this monograph was going to press. Manor says that democratic values, openly espoused by political leaders for so long with a certain sting of hypocrisy because the local power structure could thwart them at will, have become increasingly known and accepted among members of the weaker sections of Indian society. This was seen first in the 1967 general election but also in many opinion surveys (e.g. Sheth, 1976). Mrs. Gandhi's success with radical slogans in 1971 further heightened the erosion of feudalistic bonds. During the 1970s, there were increasing movements among the lower-middle strata and several state governments built ruling coalitions including the poor and less poor (Manor 1977, 1980). Manor observes that poor Indians in most areas are now unwilling to be dictated to on polling day, having become more assertive and better organized. They increasingly throw up their own leaders and are less prepared to settle for promises or tokenism. There has been no revolution in the electoral or parliamentary realms, but unless the system changes, the day is approaching when politicians will have to rely particularly on the voting support of the poor (Manor 1982). This analysis and prognosis is supported by the detailed historical analysis of changes over a 25 year period in an Andhra Pradesh rural area by Marguerite Robinson (forthcoming). She also finds that in the past decade, the "voting banks" so well controlled by the rural elite previously are diminishing in effectiveness, as lower groups exercise more independence in voting.

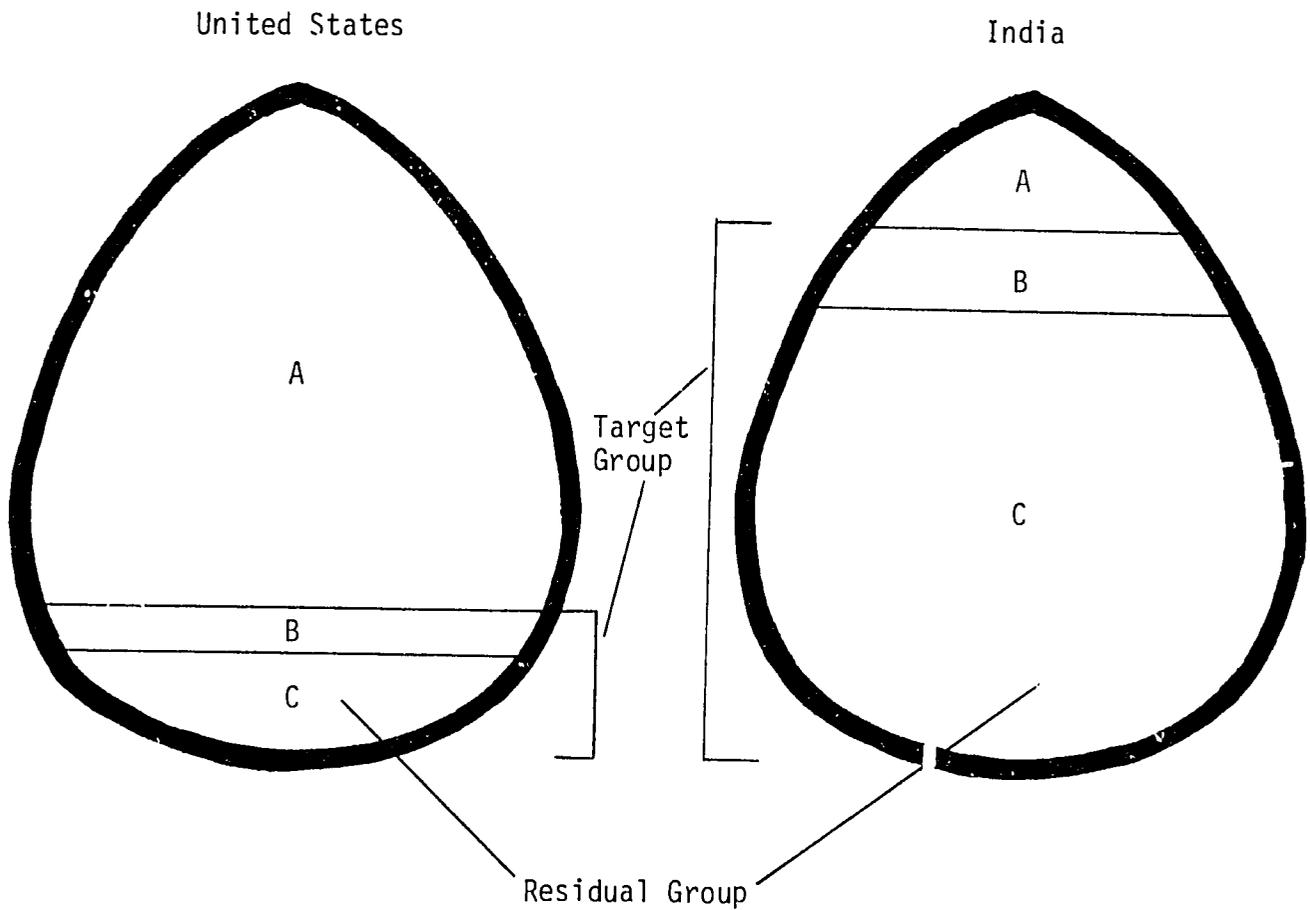
In short, a dynamic of greater social change than the Backward-Forward transformation appears set into motion. One can take no satisfaction in the violence wreaked on the poorest sections who are asserting themselves, but the fact of violence is a sign of rising strength and boldness of this class rather than of their weakness and defeat. The previous peace in the countryside was both a sign of the impotence of the poor and a sign of the unquestioned power of the rich. Now the militance of the poor is in effect "forcing" the more advantaged sectors to resort to their trump card, as the less costly resources of status and legitimacy can no longer induce compliance and acquiescence.

How strong is this dynamic of social change that has begun? At first glance there may appear to be some self-limiting quality to it, in that the first groups to benefit from development policies have a strong incentive to shut out others from joining them. A parallel here might be seen in the American craft unions earlier in this century; after their initial victories in organizing the skilled trades, many if not most of the beneficiaries of those efforts then wanted to close the door against any further efforts for less skilled workers. By the same token, the more skilled "creamees" who benefitted initially from the War on Poverty and the middle-class farming groups who gained substantially from rural development programs in India (and perhaps some areas of Bangladesh as well, as we will see shortly) have little immediate interest in extending these benefits to those further down the socioeconomic ladder. To the extent that the economy is perceived as a zero-sum game, this incentive will of course be increased.

Figure 3 portrays the situation. Programs which had as their target the bottom 20 percent or so of the American population or the bottom 80 percent of the Indian population (B+C in the figure) have in fact benefitted only the upper echelons of the target groups (segment B). The newly-privileged B group has a strong short-term interest in building as strong a barrier as possible against the C elements, lest it have to share its all-too-limited gains.

There is some evidence that this has happened in the United States. One of the problems with the very successful Woodlawn Organization (TWO) in Chicago, for example, was that it established a monopoly over organizational activity and over access to outside funds in its area, and thereby inhibited other community groups from forming. In other words, it became the poverty "establishment" in the Woodlawn area, effectively preventing any other groups from entering the neighborhood scene (Delaney, 1975).

Figure 3: Target Groups and Beneficiary Population for Antipoverty/Rural Development Programs in the United States and India



$A + B + C =$ Entire Population

$B + C =$ Target Group for Antipoverty/Rural Development Program

B = Actual Beneficiary Group from Program

C = Residual Group, Unaffected by Program

Vertical Axis = Income/Social Status

Horizontal Axis = Relative Size of Income/Social Status Strata

To the extent that the leadership in organizations like TWO could maintain their concern for helping the C group in Figure 3 advance, this monopolization pattern would not be a problem. TWO itself was probably better than most local structures at keeping the faith in this regard, but the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" propounded by Michels (1915) applies to organizations of the poor as well as others, and self-serving elitism was a constant danger throughout the WP.¹⁰ (Michels' analysis, indeed, by dealing with trade-unions and socialist parties in Europe at the turn of the century dealt especially with the poor.) The best check on such tendencies is to permit new organizations to come into being to represent those who are being ignored by the original groups. But the politico-social environment of the WP was not much more open to new entry by groups which challenged those already on the scene than the economic marketplace in the United States has been to new firms entering the field in the better organized sectors of the economy. Those who got there first have tended to get the business, whether the area of endeavor was poverty programs or steel manufacturing, and they also tended to prevent others from coming along to challenge them for that business. Decentralization policies in particular seemed to confirm already extant poverty organizations in place, for such policies in practice gave them more power in their own localities, including the power to smother possible competitors (see Yates, 1973: 159; Lowi, 1979: 233).

In India the upwardly mobile Backwards (the B group in Figure 3) have been very much concerned to garner the benefits of government programs and economic growth to themselves, leaving the lower orders (the C group) in the same condition as before (if not worse, because of population pressure).

What hope is there, then, of countering what seems a natural pattern on the part of elites to form within the target population, monopolize benefits and erect barriers between themselves and those below them? The answer seems to be twofold. First, the intended beneficiary population must maintain solidarity in spite of the temptation for elites within it to siphon off benefits and manipulate programs in their own interest. Fortunately, a democratic polity provides, in the form of elections, some built-in incentive for the leadership of disadvantaged groups to foster unity by fairly equitable

¹⁰ A good deal of the thinking of Miller et al. (1970) on "creaming" has the same thrust. Similar tendencies may be observed at present in the women's movement, with some (though assuredly not all) pressing for career opportunities for those in the upper and more educated echelons of the female population to the neglect of any concern for those at lower socioeconomic levels.

distribution of benefits. If the leadership fails to deliver its constituency's votes at election time, then it cannot make much claim for special attention from the wider polity, and if it does not provide at least some goods and services to most of its constituency, it will not get the votes from that constituency to deliver to that wider polity. To be sure, as Michels (1915) observed, an oligarchical leadership can deceive its followers into thinking that what in fact is benefitting the elite is good for the mass as a whole. But in an open political system, the deception cannot last forever.

Elections in both the United States and India in 1980 demonstrated this truth. American blacks, though they voted overwhelmingly in his favor, contributed to Jimmy Carter's defeat by failing to turn out to vote as solidly as they had in 1976.¹¹ The falloff was partly because of disagreement among black leaders over whether Carter had been sufficiently attentive to the black community, but also happened in part because a large number of blacks generally were not motivated to vote for any candidate. These people, in effect, opted out of politics in 1980, and if they are to come back in the future, they will have to be given good reason to do so in the form of a believable promise of benefits. The present black leadership or some other future leadership will have to reestablish credibility with this section of the black population.

In India the Backward-oriented Lok Dal of Charan Singh did manage to hang onto the allegiance of the middle-peasant agricultural castes (perhaps a fifth of the population in north India, as we noted before), but it was unable to hold out any appeal to the Shudra castes overall (as much as one-half of total population), since despite its claim to speak for all Backwards (i.e., all Shudras), it was perceived as a party of the upper Backwards only.¹² The Forward-oriented Congress (I) of Indira Gandhi, on the other hand, was not only able to preserve solidarity among the upper castes, but also managed to secure the bulk of the vote from the lowest strata, the Untouchables, according to most analyses of the election (e.g., Gould, 1980; Wigg, 1980). Clearly,

¹¹The statistic here is somewhat confusing, for the percentage of the black vote for Carter was roughly the same as in 1976. What decreased was the turnout of registered black voters, which went down by around five percent, according to the Joint Center for Political Studies (Mashek, 1980). The hispanic vote, on the other hand, increased considerably in a Republican direction, going up from 24 percent in 1976 for Ford to 36 percent in 1980 for Reagan (ibid.).

¹²For example, the job reservation scheme (see note 8 above) was aimed at all Shudras in Bihar, setting aside some 26 percent of government jobs for this 50 percent of the population. But throughout the period of Backward ascendancy, all echelons of the population perceived the plan as one intended for the agricultural "upper Backward" caste groups only.

Backward elites have some work to do if they are going to put together a coalition of class and caste that will appeal to a wide enough public to enable them to regain office. Most important, the need to build electoral coalitions should mean greater opportunities for the poorest classes to gain a place in the political arena, as have the blacks in the United States. To be sure, as we have stated, this kind of political accommodation can be no more than an intermediate achievement in either India or the United States. But to the extent that politics is the art of the possible, then partial successes are the building blocks of victory.

The other source of hope is in future government initiatives aimed at specific, target populations of the poor. Programs such as food stamps, AFDC or Medicaid in the United States and the Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), food-for-work schemes or employment guarantee projects in India can, if properly administered, deliver substantial benefits to the poor. Despite the continual cries of waste and fraud from politicians looking for votes and publicity, these American programs are managed in a reasonably honest fashion, and there is reason to think that in a number of cases the Indian programs are also well run.¹³ To be sure, we could speculate that as the programs expand, it will be impossible to insulate them from the political arena, which will in the shorter run bring them into channels of patronage and corruption that were dealt with in the first two sections of Chapter 4.¹⁴ But in the longer run, one hopes, they would be subject to the corrective tendencies of the electoral arena just outlined.

In any event, however, these programs are all essentially top-down administrative operations, in which participation exists (to the extent that a program is successful) only at the receiving end. Their management is bureaucratic and centralized, with no

¹³ See for instance, Singh (1979: 171-182; also Dandekar and Sathe, 1980) on the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (though in contrast see also Abraham, 1980). On SFDA see the collection of essays in Desai (1979). A yearly update on rural development programs in India is given in the annual report of the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction, formerly the Department of Rural Development (see, e.g., GOI-MRR, 1980).

¹⁴ There is certainly some evidence for such tendencies in the SFDA. It has been difficult to get eligible people into SFDA cooperatives (implying that those already members are keeping others out), and little is being done for marginal farmers and the landless, though these groups are also part of the SFDA's charge (originally, when SFDA started in the early 1970s, there was a parallel MFAL—Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Laborers—agency to deal with these specific groups, but later on the two agencies were merged into one, now generally called SFDA). See Khan (1978); Salunkha (1978); PEO (1979a); Ray (1979). The food-for-work program, not at all unexpectedly, has exhibited many of these patterns as well (see PEO, 1979c, for a critique).

real participation to speak of on the input side (although there is certainly much room for maneuver here; see Esman and Montgomery, 1980). In short, they do not fit into our definition of participatory development programs. To put it another way, if there is to be participatory development at local level, governments must decide consciously to devolve some real decision-making power to local organizations as in PR or the CAP. The devolution may be halfhearted or may be done under a mistaken set of assumptions about political economy and its dynamics at local level, as we have seen in both regions, but at some level it must take place for participatory development to evolve. One hopes that the devolution will be more conscious and sooner rather than less conscious and later.

This last statement is not completely utopian. There is some indication that the beginnings of such an effort may be under way in India, reflecting a new consciousness of the need to organize the poor. The draft of the Indian Sixth Five-Year Plan is instructive:

Critical for the success of all redistributive laws, policies and programmes is that the poor be organized and made conscious of the benefits intended for them. Organized tenants have to see that the tenancy laws are implemented. Organizations of the landless have to see that surplus lands are identified and distributed to them in accordance with the law within five years. Local leaders of the poor have to ensure that all area plans and sectoral plans designed for the benefit of their localities and target groups are effectively administered.

The general lesson of the experience so far is that because of leakages in delivery systems and ineffective administration, rural programmes fail to improve the distribution of income. The Planning Commission is proposing a massive shift of resources in favor of rural areas with an in-built redistributive character in almost every programme. But whether the larger resources will have the desired equalizing effect will depend on the extent to which the organized pressure of the beneficiaries counteracts the weaknesses of the administration and the opposition of vested interests (GOI, 1978: 15; see also 155-156).

The draft Sixth Plan was, of course, the creation of Morarji Desai's Janata government of 1977-79, and will be replaced with a new plan formulated by Indira Gandhi's Congress party ministry in New Delhi, but the probabilities are that the emphasis on organization for the poor will live on. One very strong incentive is the

Congress's concern to maintain the allegiance of the very lowest rural strata against the middle peasant Backward castes in future elections.

Some new programs for the poorest have begun already, like Antyodaya, which is a project to aid the five poorest families in each village, with the next poorest five to be taken up in the second year, and so on. Local panchayats are supposed to select the families and manage the program, with rural branch banks providing the financing and the extension bureaucracy furnishing technical guidance and supervision. Depending on their abilities, local conditions, market opportunities, etc., the families are to be set up with milch cows, buffaloes, tea stalls, cycle repair shops, rickshaws, and the like.

Antyodaya began in Rajasthan in 1977 with great publicity -like CD, it was launched on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, 2 October--and has spread to other states as well (e.g., GOB, 1978: 212). It has enjoyed some success (see PEO, 1979b), though it has also been subject to the same problems that one would expect with any PDP (see, for example, Mehta's 1980 critique). Clearly, it is only a start, and it remains to be seen whether the Indira Gandhi government will evince even the same tepid enthusiasm for the effort that the Desai government displayed, though as noted just above, there is certainly some electoral incentive for the Congress ministry to pursue it. If it does, social change will probably come sooner to the countryside. If it does not, such change will come anyway, for reasons delineated in this chapter, but its tempo and direction will be much less certain.

Bangladesh

For Bangladesh, the evidence for success is much less clear and must await more detailed study, but there are some tentative conclusions that can be drawn. First, there has been a Green Revolution of some significance there, with especially dramatic increase in the boro or winter rice crop (from less than a half million tons in the early 1960s, and over two million tons by the mid-1970s) and wheat (from less than 50,000 tons in the early 1960s to more than one million in the 1980 season). On this basis there may be some reason to think that some structural progress is occurring in the economy, as in India. Other evidence is, however, so far less promising. Population has been growing even faster than cereal production, and accordingly wage rates have gone down in recent decades (A.R. Khan, 1977). They may be expected to decline further in future years, as the surplus labor force in agriculture continues to expand (Clay and Khan, 1977). Landlessness has also increased, from 17 or 18 percent in the mid-1960s to almost 40 percent in the late 1970s (Clay, 1978; Jannuzi and Peach, 1980), in significant

measure because those farmers who benefited from increased production have invested their surplus income in buying up land rather than investing it in other productive activities. Both polarization and pauperization are growing, with the rural development efforts mounted in the 1960s and 1970s serving to accelerate both (de Vylder and Asplund, 1979). The metaphor that comes to mind is homeostasis (or perhaps pathoestasis): external agencies (whether domestic or foreign) can inject resources in small or large doses, but the patient invariably returns to the same condition, with some organs developing and thriving while others--always the same ones--continue to wither and decay.

But is this polarization and pauperization due to the class interests of the dominant groups? In the words of one analyst, these groups "fear erosion of their power base, since increased investment would raise productivity and income of the dominated groups and help them become freed from debt and other bondages" (Alamgir, 1978:54). Or is it due more to lack of opportunity for productive investment?

Fragmentary evidence from some village studies (Wood, 1976: 71-90 and esp. 139-149; Arens and van Beurden, 1977: 127-138; BRAC, 1979: 226-253; Jahangir, 1979: ch. 4), indicate that surplus farmers do tend to put their profits into land, and if we translate this finding to the macro-level, it would account for increasing landlessness (as marginal farmers lose their land to surplus farmers) and for rising land values (the result of this same speculation).¹⁵ But again, is this because the surplus farmers are basically semi-feudal in their outlook, as Alamgir suggests in the quotation above, or is it because there is no other place for a would-be capitalist to invest his surplus?

A transformation of class structure in agriculture can occur at least to some extent without the immediate development of a secondary sector in the economy, as for instance in 17th century England or 18th century France. To refer back to the Indian experience, despite falling real agricultural wages, increasing landlessness and deepening poverty in Bihar (Nayyar, 1977), there is such a transformation going on, along with considerable investment in agriculture (primarily irrigation), though little evidence of surplus farmers investing outside of the farming sector.

¹⁵ Land transactions have increased greatly since liberation, at least insofar as they are recorded. See deVylder and Asplund (1979: 9) for figures on this from New Nation (Dacca), 21 January 1979. The same source also reported the average size of landholding sold to be between three- and four-tenths of an acre during the mid-1970s, suggesting that it is marginal farmers who are selling out (though it could be larger farmers selling small portions of their holdings). On rising land values, the evidence is mostly impressionistic, though there is some documentation (e.g., Jahangir, 1979: 174).

In Bangladesh there are some indications that similar developments are taking place, specifically in the Comilla area, where the cooperative programs have been going on for the longest time. In Kotwali Thana itself, which was the experimental "laboratory" of the Academy, the cooperative project started in a serious way in 1961-62. Of the twenty other thanas in the district, seven were taken up in the program expansion of 1965-66 and the remaining thirteen in 1968-69. In other words, as of 1980, the original program has been in place for almost 20 years, and some other parts of it for almost 15 years.

This should be a long enough time to tell whether any kind of structural transformation has begun to take place. Unfortunately, no thorough baseline surveys were done before the program started, nor has any recent comprehensive analysis of the enterprise been undertaken. One hopes that this gap will be filled with solid studies building on the excellent tradition of self-scrutiny that has been the hallmark of Comilla over so many years. But even in the absence of such studies it should be possible to discern the broad outlines of structural change, though more tentatively than for the United States and India.

Impressionistically, there is certainly a great deal of change taking place in the Comilla area. Even the casual traveller cannot but notice the high level of activity there in the way of small-scale industries turning out farm and household implements, brickyards, cold storage warehouses for potatoes, vegetable crop production for the urban markets of Dacca and Chittagong, transportation infrastructure in the form of trucking companies and repair facilities, small textile operations and so on. Visually, the level of economic activity outside the cereal and jute sectors is a great deal higher than one observes elsewhere, and this is true of many rural areas of the district as well as of the headquarters town of Comilla itself. There is also some indication in Kotwali Thana that the success to date in increasing agricultural outputs and producing marketable surpluses has led to increased productive investments in agriculture there (A. Rahman, 1980a, 1980b).

We should look particularly at the Special Cooperative Societies Federation (SCSF) in the original Kotwali Thana. The SCSF was designed to organize non-agricultural cooperatives for low income groups of all sorts. Beginning with eleven societies and 614 members in 1961-62, the operation expanded to 77 societies and almost 4,000 members by 1968-69, including societies for rickshaw pullers, motor operators, mechanics, masois, weavers and textile mill workers, among others.

As the agricultural cooperative aspect of the Comilla experiment expanded outwards in the late 1960s and 1970s, however, the SCSF received less and less attention. It never expanded out of Kotwali Thana and even there has languished. As of 1977 there were only 95 societies and less than 4800 members, scarcely more than a decade previously.¹⁶ In 1967-68, the SCSF issued just over a million taka worth of loans, but in the 1976-77 year the issue was only Tk 900,000 (and this in terms of a currency that had shrunk in purchasing power by 75 percent over the same period). Still, the SCSF reflects a history of growing non-farm economic activity that must have combined with a surplus from agriculture to produce the vigorous activity that now goes on in the Comilla area. The SCSF has accordingly opened up productive opportunities for thousands of households, far more than are formally members. One other piece of evidence of progress and expanded opportunity is the frequently heard assertion (confirmed by a forthcoming BARD study) that the Comilla area experiences a good deal of in-migration of agricultural labor at various times of the year, thereby indicating a significant local labor shortage and a relatively prosperous economy.¹⁷ The investment in agricultural and non-agricultural cooperatives over the past twenty years has surely contributed to this. In sum, there are at least indications that there have been some long-term changes in the Comilla region and that these changes are related to rural development programs there over the last two decades.

As in the American and Indian cases, this kind of change was not quickly appreciated by those who analyzed the Comilla experiment's achievements and shortcomings. Some attention was given to the SCSF in the early euphoria about Comilla (e.g., Raper *et al.*, 1970), but little was devoted to the subject of creating non-agricultural employment and none to the question of structural change. Then in the critical appraisals that began to appear in the 1970s, the focus was on equity and concern that larger farmers were getting most of the benefits. No attention was turned to what larger farmers might be doing with their benefits in the way of investment. So the extent to which there was more broadly-based economic development and social change going on, it has been a long time coming to our attention, and this change is coming in directions unanticipated by either the earlier boosters or the later critics.

¹⁶The data in this paragraph are from various BARD annual reports.

¹⁷Another interesting BARD study in this regard is Solaiman's work in progress on the employment created by the cooperatives themselves, in terms of managers, secretaries, overhead administrative personnel, etc., in Kotwali Thana.

Finally, paralleling the other cases, the change is no more than an intermediate one at best. The longer-run outcome depends in large measure on how what is becoming a "progressive farmer" class—now waxing dominant as the beneficiary of government intervention in the rural economy—will respond to continuing intervention benefiting others. Certainly it will view programs that aid economic expansion as basically a good thing. Whether it will be receptive (or at least neutral) to endeavors to organize marginal farmers and landless groups in new economic activities will hinge on many things—its leadership, its optimism about its own prospects for the future, the technological alternatives that may be open to it, and so on.¹⁸ This is hardly a "quick-fix" program to achieve rapid equity, to be sure, but it is also a long way from the despair that one so often hears about the possibilities for any kind of improvement in Bangladesh. Moreover, the increases in grain production cited at the beginning of this section are moving Bangladesh closer to food self sufficiency than anyone though possible 10 years ago.

Conclusion

We should try at this point to fit these findings of emergent success into our analysis in Chapter 4 of the pathology of failure of PDPs. There were, it will be recalled, two major types of constraint—those originating in the structure of political economy and those that seemed inherent in the nature of bureaucracy itself. What light does the evidence of program success shed on our understanding of these constraints?

To begin, it would appear that the resistance of dominant groups and classes to any redistribution of power is not quite so monolithic or impervious as it seemed at first glance. There is certainly nothing like a pluralist system in evidence, in which as in the mythical free marketplace anyone can enter the scene and, with a little hard work, play a significant and even leading role in the drama. But at the same time there are enough cracks and slippages in the structure that it is possible to get a foothold on the system (perhaps toehold would be a better metaphor), tenuous though it might often be.

¹⁸For instance, see Wood's suggestion (1980c and 1980d) that the rural poor could be organized into irrigation pump groups that would have access to and sell a new resource in the form of water. In this way they would be adding to the factors of production available to the community, rather than competing with the dominant groups for existing resources. Naturally, such an idea would be difficult, if not impossible, to implement in the Comilla area, where water resources are already so well developed, but it should be quite feasible elsewhere. For more on the idea of promoting social change in Bangladesh in the future, see Blair (1980c).

There was sufficient slack and play in the American system that the poor and black could assemble a constituency that would represent some of their interests, even if not fully or adequately. In South Asia the middle farmer class was rather more successful, given its relatively larger numbers and better resources, climbing up into a position of real contention in the state and national power systems. In the process it has opened the door for the entry of lower groups as well. Whether that door remains open, and how wide, is a matter that will be resolved in the interplay of groups (A, B and C in Figure 3) and of the factions and leaders within these groups.

Some of this slack existed no doubt because of momentary balances between classes and groups that made it possible for new elements to enter the arena, as when the Johnson Administration sought to add a new voting bloc to its support base in order to retain the large industrial states with their crucial strength in the American electoral college. Similarly, in South Asia the need to produce more foodgrains to feed a rapidly growing population coincided with a standoff between an embryonic national industrial class and an increasingly senescent (though by no means as yet senile) rural gentry in such a way that the middle farmer group was able to coalesce and enter the scene. This entry in turn added to the group consciousness of the lower strata.¹⁹

Some of the slack surely existed also because expanding economic systems in both cases made it easier for new groups to get a slice of a growing pie. If there had been a "zero sum game" at budget time or in getting employment or in finding opportunities to market increased foodgrain production, it would have been difficult indeed for the poor and black in the United States or middle peasants (to say nothing of the marginal peasantry and landless) in South Asia to claim a share. As it was, the cause of all these groups was greatly facilitated because they sought entry into expanding systems. The American system was growing during the boom period of the 1960s, and the governments in South Asia needed to expand the body politic by mobilizing the subjects of the former colonial regime into the citizenry and support base of the new state, while at the same time they had to expand agricultural output greatly to feed their growing populations.

¹⁹The notion of a class balance which permits the entry of new groups has interesting parallels to the neo-Marxian concept of the "relatively autonomous state," in which the state is seen to enjoy some independence from control by dominant classes. There should be some fruitful areas here for future comparative study focusing on advanced and developing regions. A good place to start would be with the thoughts of Poulantzas (1973), Wood (1977 and 1980a) and Moore (1980).

On the bureaucratic side, too, things were not as inexorably adverse as appeared in Chapter 4. Overrapid program growth certainly contributed to a debilitation and dissipation of program integrity that tended to turn PDPs into patronage channels for funneling resources to dominant local elites. And a compulsion for quantitative measurement led to a focus on trivial or even completely meaningless indicators, with the result that there was far too little attention given to finding out whether any real development was taking place, and if so, who was participating in that development. Further, the autonomy/supervision contradiction everywhere manifested itself, such that movement in either direction meant a need to reverse course, while dominant elites tended to benefit whichever course was followed.

Yet, strong as these factors were, they were not powerful enough to effect a total homeostasis. They certainly tended to steer the results of innovative efforts back to the previously existing condition, especially in terms of patterns of local dominance, and in the short term they did so with a seeming inevitability. But in the longer term they were susceptible to the same underlying shifts of political economy that produced the changes in class and group structure that we have just been looking at.

These constraints on PDP success, in sum, were powerful ones that did much to constrict and confine the programs initially, even to the extent that it appeared the PDPs were failures that only served to reinforce the status quo. But in the longer run the constraints were not enough to prevent the emergence of changes which, even if tenuous and intermediate, offer some promise for real betterment of the poorest classes.

This very tentative and hopeful conclusion may appear a weak and even forlorn counterargument to the bleak picture of PDP failure presented in Chapter 4, but there is some reason for optimism amid the gloom if one takes a view over 15 to 20 years. Most PDPs, it is clear, have not worked very well in including the poor in either input or output aspects of their operation. But to say that the record is mostly one of failure is not the same thing as saying that there was no success at all. If we look at the consequences of these programs closely enough over a sufficient period of time, we find that experiences in both regions have not been as discouraging as they seemed in Chapter 4. There has been some significant change, and this change has kept open the possibilities for future progress in ameliorating the lot of the poor. As we observed at the end of the opening chapter, then, there is all the more reason to press on now with the task of designing and implementing participatory development programs for the poor.

Appendix A
PARTICIPATION IN BENEFITS

To gauge the impact of the various participatory development programs in terms of benefits is an exceedingly difficult task. Income received by the poor would seem to be a fairly straightforward measure, but on examination it has a great many difficulties. First, it is only one kind of benefit. How can one include all the others, such as increased self-esteem, respect from others, health, etc., that should also stem from PDPs aimed at increasing the overall welfare of the people involved? Second, even if some measures could be agreed upon, how can the impact of different programs be separated out? How can we even be sure that any change observed in real income or other benefits was due to all the programs taken together, rather than to the general health or weakness of the economy as a whole? When the economy picks up, employment expands and people get jobs irrespective of whatever government programs have been going on, and on the economic downside people get laid off without much regard to government antipoverty programs. Third, to compound the problem, there is also the possibility that the presence of the War on Poverty did not so much cause the increased participation in benefits that stemmed mainly from the economic boom of the late 1960s as it augmented that participation for the bottom quintile of income receivers. By the same token, it may have ameliorated the negative effects of the economic downswing and stagnation that lasted through most of the 1970s (the latter half of this proposition is the argument that is made in Chapter 5).

Despite the many difficulties involved, a great deal of attention among those concerned with antipoverty programs has been devoted to measures of income effects, no doubt in part because of the quantification compulsion that we dealt with in section 4 of Chapter 4, but also because advocates of various political points of view have used income data to buttress their analyses pro or con. Some have tried to show that the programs have succeeded (and so should be terminated forthwith or continued), while others have argued that the programs have failed (and so should be greatly intensified, or ended). For South Asia there is not much to be argued for the positive side of the case, since few if any are willing to claim that real income for the bottom quintile of the population (or two or perhaps even three quintiles) has increased in recent decades. But there is considerable speculation as to whether things have gotten worse or remained about the same in real terms for the lower strata.

In the American case the dispute is especially intense, perhaps in part because there are so much data available on the subject of income distribution. The basic measures are superficially quite straightforward. The Census Bureau began its current series of income distribution data in 1947 and since then has published yearly figures on income by quintiles of the population (e.g., Census Bureau, 1979a). Over the three decades and more that have passed since the series began, the share of the bottom quintile has not changed; in 1947 it received 5.0 percent of total income, and in 1977 it received 5.2 percent. The official poverty data tell a somewhat different story. In the 1960s a "poverty line" was established, based on an "economy food plan" for a family of four; the cost of this low-price food basket was then multiplied by three (to cover other basic living expenses like shelter, clothing, etc.) in order to arrive at an overall estimate of the cost of living at the upper margin of poverty. Yearly adjustments are then made for inflation (Census Bureau, 1979b: 203). By this measure, the proportion of persons below the poverty line dropped quite dramatically in the 1960s, from 22.4 percent of the population in 1959 to 12.8 percent in 1968. Since then, however, progress has been very modest; by 1977 the poverty population had declined by only another 1.2 percent to 11.6 percent of total population (ibid.: 13).

Both the income and the poverty data have been the subject of attack from each side of the political spectrum. Martin Anderson (1978), the Hoover Institution economist and high-level policy advisor to Ronald Reagan, may be taken as typifying the assault from the right (see also, for example, Kristol, 1974; Schwartz, 1976). In his view, the antipoverty campaign is already over:

The war on poverty has been won, except for perhaps a few mopping-up operations. The combination of strong economic growth and a dramatic increase in government spending on welfare and income transfer programs during the last decade has virtually wiped out poverty in the United States...

The "dismal failure" of welfare is a myth. There are many things wrong with our welfare system, but in terms of essentials, in terms of the key goals it was set up to accomplish, it has been a total success (Anderson, 1978: 37, 38).

The neo-conservative argument presented by Anderson and his colleagues is that when such in-kind transfers as food stamps, medicare and medicaid, public education and so on are taken into account, the bottom quintile is found to be receiving a good deal more than the 5 percent of total income reported by the Census Bureau (Browning,

1976a and 1976b). It is also asserted (e.g., Banfield, 1974: 128-129) that non-reporting of income among the lower strata contributes greatly to a false official picture of the bottom quintile's share of income.

On the left it is argued (e.g., Dollars and Sense, 1977) that the census figures err the other way, underrecording the true income share of the top quintile. In support of this claim, it can be pointed out that when the Bureau compiles the data returned from its very large sample (c. 50,000), it uses \$99,999 as the maximum possible income a person can have (Census Bureau, 1979a: 268). Possibly the constraints of punchcard image computer technology are to blame, with a 5-digit figure the most that can be used for recording total individual income, even though survey respondents may report incomes of more than five digits. Because of inflation and increasing real incomes over time, the downward bias would have gotten worse over the decades that the Bureau has been putting together these income data, with the result that the upper income quintile may well be getting a substantially larger piece of the total income pie today than previously, an unrecorded slice that has been growing larger over time.

Then there is also the fact that when the Bureau compares its own survey data with income information derived from other federal sources, it finds that its respondents report over 97 percent of their real wage and salary income but less than 42 percent of their income from interest and dividends (*ibid.*: 275, Table A-4). It should be reasonable to conclude that since interest and dividend income go primarily to the rich, this underreporting biases the reported income of the top quintile in a downward direction, although the Census Bureau itself is too diplomatic and discreet to draw such a conclusion in its official reports.

Altogether, then, there is some reason to think that there has been substantial underreporting of actual income at the lower levels and at the upper levels as well (as ever, it seems, the middle classes are thought to be scrupulously honest, with corruption rampant above and below). Which end of the income spectrum is seen as less accurately reported tends to depend on the political predilections of the viewer. One conclusion might be that there is less poverty than the official figures show, but that there is at least as much if not more inequality than the government data reveal.

There is also great debate about the portion of people below the poverty line. Anderson (1978: 19-20, 22-23, 27), following the kind of analysis of income just discussed, concludes that there are not 11 percent of Americans living below the poverty line, but in fact only 3 percent or even less, scarcely a fourth of what the government has been regularly proclaiming. There has been, in Anderson's words, a

federal "cover-up" of the true situation. His assertion of overestimated official poverty figures finds some support, albeit only partial, from the generally liberal-oriented Congressional Budget Office, which in a 1977 study found not 11-12 percent of families below the poverty level, but 8.3 percent (CBO, 1977: xv).

More recent analysis gives a somewhat different picture of poverty by focusing on its incidence over time. While the Census Bureau data measure poverty for single-year periods only, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Michigan has been conducting a study of some 5,000 families over a multi-year period, and its findings are most interesting. SRC data show that poverty is at the same time much less persistent but much more pervasive than thought previously. Analyzing poverty over the 1967-75 period, Coe (1978) found that in the single year 1975 around 9 percent of the sample were poor by official standards (lower than the Census Bureau, but in line with the CBO study, it will be noted). But only 1.1 percent were poor throughout the entire nine years surveyed. On the other hand, fully 25 percent were poor by official definition in at least one of the years involved. For blacks the figures were 28.5 percent poor in 1975, 6.7 percent poor throughout the entire period and 65.8 percent poor in at least one year of the survey. Government anti-poverty policies, then, would seem to be both more effective and less effective than they appear to be at first glance. More people get out of poverty, but more also fall into it from one year to the next.

Some observers hold that although absolute poverty (as measured by a "poverty line") may have decreased at a faster rate than the Census Bureau data show, a more accurate measure would be an index of relative poverty, in which the poverty line was raised at the same rate as median income in the United States.¹ If this kind of measure is used, poverty has stayed at just about the same level, at least down through 1976 (Plotnick and Smeeding, 1979; see also Plotnick and Skidmore, 1975; Rodgers, 1979: 17-38; and Ginsburg, 1980). This approach, of course, is valid only if one assumes that the object of social welfare policy should be to bring about a more equal income distribution rather than merely to improve the condition of the bottom quintile.

The extent to which poverty has diminished, then, depends at least in part on one's political viewpoint. Ironically, those on the right argue that liberal, interventionist government policies have been successful, and those on the left hold that these very same policies have failed to bring about any real change in ameliorating poverty. As

¹Median income has generally risen at a rate faster than that of inflation (i.e., real economic growth has taken place on a per capita basis), which would mean that the relative poverty level would also rise faster than the inflation rate.

for those who think poverty has disappeared altogether, one suspects that they have not spent much time recently in inner cities or rural Appalachia.

What is also interesting here is that none of those involved in any of these analyses of participation in the benefits of anti-poverty programs appears to have thought of this participation as being in any way related to participation in the decision-making or implementation aspects of the programs. All assume that whatever benefits did occur were purely from a top-down welfare-dispersing bureaucracy. Because of the spotty and relatively brief heyday of citizen participation in decision-making and implementation (that is, during the mid-1960s), it would be very difficult to isolate any cause-and-effect relationships between the different kinds of participation. And certainly it would be impossible to do so with the aggregate data approach used by the Census Bureau and its critics.

A city-by-city approach might be possible, rather like Montgomery's study (1972) of the relationship between citizen participation in land reform programs and outcomes of the programs. Greenstone and Peterson (1973) have taken just such an approach in their study of poverty programs in America's five largest cities, in which they found considerable variation in participation in the input side, though they did not try to associate this variation with the distribution and extent of benefits from the programs. Kramer (1969), in his study of the CAP in five San Francisco bay area communities, did try to assess the effect of participation in inputs in providing benefits to the poor, but found very little benefit to the poor in the community generally; only those lucky enough to be directly involved (mainly through jobs) received anything tangible. Clark and Hopkins (1970) studied CAAs in 12 cities and assessed nonmonetary program benefits, but did not tackle the income issue. Harris (1976) has found a definite relationship between the extent of participation and the degree of comprehensiveness of programs in his study of 15 CAAs in Wisconsin over the 1964-1974 decade; but he does not try to relate this participation to program benefits either.

If we widen the definition of participation inputs to include urban riots, we do find some definite evidence of a connection with program benefits. Piven and Cloward (1972: 227-284) have asserted that it was the disorder and riots of the 1960s that were the primary reason for the vast increase in welfare spending in the Johnson years. Their evidence for the proposition is somewhat impressionistic, but has been recently buttressed by Jennings' study (1980) showing that there was indeed a pronounced statistical relationship between the incidence of serious riots in the 1964-1970 and increase in the welfare rolls, especially when the unemployment rate is factored into

the analysis. One hesitates to suggest riots as a participatory strategy for developing countries to increase the distribution of benefits in anti-poverty programs, however.

For the most part, then, there has been little attempt to connect participation in inputs with program outputs, largely no doubt because of the difficulty of the task. If the number of people below the poverty line in a given neighborhood or city decreased over time, was it because of the very active Community Action Agency there? Or was it more nearly due to an expansion of local economic activity, which some observers like Lowi (1979: 222-225) would say was the real factor behind any anti-poverty program success anyhow? Difficult as such questions are to answer at the micro level, they are virtually impossible to answer at the macro level, where there is no way to disaggregate the official poverty data into meaningful subunits to compare with participation inputs.²

A more important reason behind the difficulty in such comparison, though, is the simple fact that anti-poverty programs emphasizing citizen participation were never more than a very small part of the federal anti-poverty enterprise. The CAP reached a high point of \$662 million in fiscal 1967 (Budget Bureau, 1969: 172) and Model Cities peaked at \$586 million in fiscal 1973 (*ibid.*, 1975), whereas the total social welfare budget, as we saw in Chapter 3, was much greater in size. Even within the participatory program, the actual money spent on citizens' participation was not necessarily large. In the MCA in 1971, for instance, only 0.8 percent of expenditures went for citizens' participation (Levitan and Taggart, 1976, citing a MCA report). To get some sense of comparison, we might note that in their very detailed documentation of social welfare spending, Plotnick and Skidmore (1975: 52-55) found that in fiscal 1968 total anti-poverty spending was on the order of \$109 billion, of which \$44 billion went in direct benefits to the poor, while in fiscal 1972 the figures were \$185 and \$79 billion respectively (see Table 3). To put some perspective on these numbers, we could observe that in 1972 \$1.6 billion went as food stamps for the poor, \$5.7 billion for Medicaid and \$9.5 billion on public assistance (see Table 10), while only \$440 million was spent on

²The Census Bureau statistics on poverty are broken down into ten regions of the country and some data are also given for the 20 largest standard metropolitan statistical areas (Census Bureau, 1979b: 49, 197). There are also some data available at state level (Rodgers, 1979: 21-23). Still, these levels would not be low enough to compare with participation inputs at the local level.

CAP efforts benefiting the poor and \$210 million went to MCA activities benefiting the poor.³

Whatever effects these participatory programs might have had in increasing participation in benefits among the poor, then, was dwarfed by the much larger welfare expenditures that were filtered down through bureaucratic channels. One would hope that the experience of taking part in CAP and MCA enterprises at community level gave some poor people a greater ability to obtain more program benefits for their neighborhoods, or in other words "empowered" them, a theme discussed in Chapter 5. But in quantifiable terms there is no way to document the extent to which this may have been the case.

For South Asia generally there is a considerable literature on poverty and income distribution, particularly for India (for a comparative analysis, see Singh, 1979: 135-149). As with the United States, there is controversy on the subject. In the Indian case, the question of participation in benefits has had two aspects. Some analysts have focused on agricultural wage rates, primarily in relation to the Green Revolution, while others have tried to deal with the overall issue of rural poverty itself. The overlap between the two populations is a very large one, since almost all agricultural laborers (about 31 percent of the rural labor force in 1971, according to GOI, 1974: 4) are poor by any standard of measurement, though the category of rural poor is rather larger (around 53 percent of the rural populace in the late 1960s, according to Bardhan, 1973: 249). This number includes many marginal and small farmers and artisans as well as agricultural laborers, with agricultural wage labor tending to be the residual occupation, absorbing all those who cannot find work elsewhere.⁴

Both among students of wage rates and among those interested in rural poverty in general, there is some debate about secular change over time, with some holding that

³Plotnick and Skidmore (1975) break down their data into total anti-poverty expenditures and the proportion of those expenditures that actually benefited the poor. Thus some 96 percent of the CAP budget of \$458 million (in other words, \$440 million) went to the poor by their reckoning, while only 42 percent of the \$500 million MCA budget (or \$210 million) went to the poor. By "poor" they refer to "pretransfer poor," that is, those below the poverty line before transfers are taken into account.

⁴There is a considerable problem of occupational definition here, particularly with the poorest sectors of the population, where it is common for people to pursue different occupations simultaneously in the effort to survive. Thus a single individual may on various days of the week (or even on the same day) be an agricultural wage worker, a sharecropper and a fisherman.

things are steadily getting worse, while others say that such a gloomy prognosis is exaggerated and that at least in some sections of the country, the condition of the rural poor is improving.

The best known analysis is probably that of Dandekar and Rath (1971), which concluded that the number of rural Indians living in absolute poverty had been steadily increasing over the Green Revolution decade of the 1960s, despite the marked growth in total grain production that took place over that time. Bardhan (1973) reinforced this conclusion when finding that over the 1960s, the proportion of rural people below a "minimal level of living" line (defined as Rs 15 monthly per capita at 1960-61 prices) had increased from 38 to 53 percent. Roy Choudhury (1977), on the other hand, took issue with this approach, holding that essentially static analyses (i.e., the sample surveys that formed the basis for the pessimistic conclusions) cannot really be made to show trends over time. Concentrating more specifically on wages, Herdt and Baker (1972; also Jose, 1974) found that while rates may have been stagnant in some areas, they were unquestionably going up in others, like the Punjab, Kerala and possibly Tamil Nadu as well. Bardhan (1970) and Jose (1978), however, see the underlying pattern to be one of increasing rural income inequality in the country overall, with the poor getting steadily worse off.

Pakistan has a slimmer data base for estimating income trends than India or the United States, with the research published thus far drawing principally on a series of quarterly surveys done by the government's Central Statistical Office during the Green Revolution decade of the 1960s.⁵ As in the Indian and American cases, there has been an interest in fixing a poverty line and then determining the proportion of the population above or below it over time. The relatively few studies that have emerged to date have presented quite divergent findings, somewhat like the American experience. Using a poverty line of Rs 21 per month per capita at 1959-60 prices, Naseem (1973) found that in 1963-64 some 43 percent of the rural population were poor, whereas in 1969-70 only 26 percent fell below the poverty line, a substantial reduction; Khandker (1973) draws similar conclusions. Using the same data and the same poverty line, however, Mujahid (1978) found 27 percent of the rural populace to be poor in 1963-64, but 35 percent in 1969-70. In short, questions arise both as to the absolute numbers of rural poor and as to whether their numbers are increasing or decreasing over time.

⁵The data base is described in Khandker (1973). It should be noted that although the time period referred to is that of undivided Pakistan, the analyses dealt with here concern only West Pakistan.

For Bangladesh the position on participation in the benefits of rural development is much less cloudy. For particular areas like Comilla, things may be improving all across the income spectrum, but for the country as a whole, any number of studies can be cited to show a declining real income for the bottom rural strata and an increasing incidence of poverty (Bose, 1974; Alamgir, 1975 and 1978; Clay, 1976; A. Rahman, 1980b). Perhaps the clearest statement comes in the government's own Second Five-Year Plan:

The decline in real wages against an overall GDP increase of 29.6 percent between 1969-70 and 1979-80 (at constant prices) necessarily leads to the conclusion that during the 1970s, an absolute decline in the working class position has taken place when the rest of the society improved their position. Worsening unemployment situation in the face of reduced real wage reveals one of the major weaknesses of the economy of Bangladesh.

Because of decline in real income of the working population, over four-fifths of population continue to be below poverty line which is defined by the minimum caloric requirement of 2122 cal. The percentage is slightly higher in rural sector (86.7 percent) against the national average of 84.6 percent. The percentage of population below the extreme poverty line (1805 cal.) is estimated to be 53.6 percent. The percentage of farmers who are actually at subsistence level as determined by alternative wage income is 61.2 percent. The farmers in this category possess land 1.5 acres or below, while about 22 percent of the rural population is landless working as agricultural labour force. Thus about 83 percent of the rural population happens to live at subsistence level. Slow technological progress in agriculture as revealed by the growth of food production at a rate below the population growth rate and consequent pressure on land have largely left the problem unmitigated during 1970s. (GPRR, 1980: I-15).

There is not the same contention in the subcontinent as in the United States whether the income share of the bottom quintile is being understated or that of the top quintile overstated in the official statistics, though Rajaraman (1975) finds a persistent bias in the income surveys in all the countries of the region, stemming from a reluctance of members of richer households to respond to the surveys. "To the better-off household," she says, "the investigator would be someone with a low social status, not to be taken seriously."

To sum up, we find again similarities between the U.S. and South Asia. In all our countries, massive programs were taken up to promote development for previously

neglected elements of the population (though only a small portion of the total program budget was devoted to PDPs in all cases). In two of the countries (the United States and Pakistan) there is some question as to whether the proportion of people in poverty decreased or not, and if so, by how much. In the other two (India and Bangladesh), there seems general agreement that poverty has remained the same or grown worse in spite of whatever the government has done to alleviate it.

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