THE POLITICAL REALITIES OF AFRICAN MANAGEMENT

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The Varieties of Management

We are gathered to discuss ways in which African governments might improve the management of their agricultural development activities. In reality we are discussing not one thing but many. It would be well if we begin by acknowledging the plurality of phenomenon with which we are concerned and the tensions that sometimes exist between them. The "Africa Bureau Development Management Assistance Strategy Paper" of March 20, 1984 begins by speaking of "how to use scarce resources efficiently to produce development results" (p. 1). It then shifts its focus to project management and proclaims an interest in factors ranging from project impact and sustainability, on the one hand, to accountability for funds and cost over-runs, on the other. Four different types of management behavior are involved in these shifting focii--public policy-making, organizational leadership, internal administration, and what we will call bureaucratic hygiene. These activities are not at all the same and frequently excellence in one of them is purchased at the expense of one of the others.

Of course the most important way in which a state affects agricultural development is through its public policies. Development specialists are in substantial agreement today that the most effective and efficient methods of promoting agricultural production in Africa today involve righting distorted prices, devaluing inflated currencies, reducing the monopoly powers of parastatal marketing agencies, and generally decreasing the extent to which the state is extracting resources from the farming sector of the economy. Thus the emphasis is not so much upon improving the operations of the state as upon finding ways to decrease its role altogether. (World Bank, 1981: 40-80.) These are important issues of public management and they are among the most critical variables effecting project success and sustainability. In African conditions the best project might well be the one that has done the least to directly manage its environment and has left the most to the play of market forces. We do have techniques for dealing with these issues, but they are those of policy analysis and economics, not of management science.

Organizational leadership entails goal setting and the mobilization and management of the human and material resources that are necessary to achieve them. The largest part of a leader's efforts are probably directed at factors that are external to his (or her) organization, as funds and authorizations are secured, the cooperation of other agencies is negotiated, the support of clients is obtained, and political threats to a program's (or project's) image and mission are averted. Even many of the internal aspects of a leader's task are political in character-- obtaining consensus on goals, inspiring commitment, negotiating inter-unit conflicts, etc. Organizational theory has some important insights to offer on leadership (e.g., Barnard, 1938; Selznick, 1957), but there is no real set of management techniques on how to do most parts of this job. This part of management is an art, not a science, and it is second only to public policy in determining whether a project or program will be successful.

Internal administration is what we usually think of as management. It entails the organization of work and already secured resources to achieve agreed-upon goals. Here a management technology does exist, with the insights into supervision and communication provided by organizational sociology (e.g., Blau and Scott, 1962) and with such tools as process analysis, the critical path method and PERT (Rosenthal, 1982).

Particularly in the public sector, internal administration also requires the operation of certain control systems that have been designed to assure those outside the organization that its resources are not being misused (e.g., accounts, audits, civil service regulations, contracting mechanisms, and administrative law). Once again there are well-established ways of doing and organizing these tasks, which might be called the <u>bureaucratic hygiene</u> functions. They are not directly productive themselves. Although organizations that do badly on them generally have difficulty achieving their goals, those that are too scrupulous about them also often fail to meet their objectives. We then appropriately speak of goal displacement and bureaucratic red tape (Merton, 1940).

When we consider the factors that affect the success of projects or programs, the hierarchy of importance begins with public policy, is followed by leadership and general internal administration, and ends with bureaucratic hygiene. When USAID personnel think of the components of good project management, however, the rank order generally will be the reverse. This is partly because failures at the policy and leadership levels are more diffuse and harder to measure, but also because shortcomings in bureaucratic hygiene can be more damaging to AID careers than project failures are. There are good reasons for this. These systems of bureaucratic control were established in the late 19th century in Europe and the United States over considerable resistance in order to eliminate the abusive use of public goods for private ends. They have been quite successful in that regard in the Western democracies and their general objectives (although not the detailed consequences of their operation) enjoy considerable public support. When a USAID officer moves money that will not subsequently withstand an audit or that violates certain contracting regulations, he (or she) knows he is taking a risk and he will put pressure on aid recipients to run their control systems in a way that will avoid the danger. Once things begin to go wrong a vicious circle sets in--unsuccessful projects invite tighter control and are more vulnerable to audit criticisms; if the host country's control systems are weak donors will impose their own; both the multiplicity of systems and the pressures to meet their standards demand more and more host country managerial attention, pulling it away from policy and leadership and making project failure all the more likely (Morss, 1984). The point here is not that USAID personnel are wrong, but that we are confronting a problem with multiple components and that we need to keep all of them in mind as we work toward solutions.

The Premises Underlying Western Policy Analysis and Management Techniques

We noted above that American social science does have methods for approaching problems of policy-making and internal administration. There are limits o their application, however, and to understand them we must identify the basic value premises that underlie them. First, they assume commitment to collective, formal, organizational goals (or, in the case of the state, to societal ones). (I will refer to this as purposive rationality, for lack of a better term.) Second, most of them are based on the assumption that economics is the fundamental social process and that all other human transactions can be understood in terms of it. (We can speak of this as economic rationality.) Obviously these assumptions are not universally valid in any society, but their applicability is even more limited in Africa than in the West.

The state is a particularly fragile institution in most of Africa, threatened simultaneously with military coups and ethnic secessions. USAID does not allocate its funds between countries on the basis of benefit-cost analysis and weak African states are even more sensitive to the political implications of their economic policies and administrative decisions than the U.S. is.

African elites also are linked to particularly large networks of social obligation. The great egalitarianism of pre-colonial African society and the relatively meritocratic character of upward mobility in the late colonial and independence periods have resulted in African leaders and managers who have large numbers of poor relatives and strong ties to disadvantaged rural communities. The values of the social exchange systems that peasant communities employed to insure themselves against risk are still strong (Hyden, 1983; Scott, 1976). Consequently Africans are unusual among the world's elites in the extent of their patronage obligations to poorer peoples and the strength of the moral pressures which they feel to fulfill them. For these reasons and for selfish ones that are far more universal, state organizations in Africa are extensively used to pursue informal, personal goals of their managers rather than the collective ones that are formally proclaimed.

Many of the differences in organizational behavior between Africa and the United States therefore are not due to managerial failures but to fundamental dissimilarities in the value priorities of the societies that encapsule them. Any attempt to treat management science as suitable for a mechanical transfer of technology is bound to meet with failure. We need to understand how these socio-political realities affect the various levels of managerial behavior.

Public Policy Making

The factors which most affect the success of agricultural projects and programs are the overall structure of the economy and public policy. There is wide-spread agreement that the governmentally-imposed internal and external terms of trade for African agriculture have been disadvantageous and that the sector has been burdened by an overgrown and overextended state apparatus. A reduction in the role of inefficient marketing boards and the freeing of the market have been recommended as remedies (World Bank, 1981: 40-80). Such measures derive from the application of neo-classical economic theory. How do they fit with an environment in which economic rationality is not dominant in public policy-making and how would one have to adapt them if they were to be applied?

Governments on the continent in fact spend large amounts of money on programs of direct support to agricultural producers, but all too often they are unwilling to correct their far more damaging disincentives to production. This seems surprising, particularly given the fact that the credit and subsidized input programs into which the money is poured are ineffective, while the negative consequences of poor marketing are dramatic. It is not that Africans have been naively innocent of the effects of exploitative or inefficient marketing boards. Peasants in Uganda, for example, rioted against them as early as 1945 (Ehrlich, 1970).

Robert Bates has demonstrated the political rationality that underlies the frequent economic irrationality of these activities. Positive acts of support for farmers, such as credit and subsidized inputs, both bring gratitute and can be and can be directed to the clients of a politician or civil servant. Therefore they bolster the legitimacy of the regime and strenghten the patronage networks of those who work with it. Although good prices are seen by peasants as positive acts of government, they produce no patronage. From the point of view of the government the economic and political costs of creating marketing boards which effectively tax agriculture are more than offset by the political benefits of the jobs and "free goods" which they indirectly finance (Bates, 1981). Even Tanzania, which has resisted the creation of personalized patron-client networks by its politicians, has felt it necessary to extract a dysfunctionally large surplus from agriculture in order to finance dramatic expansions in social services and formal sector jobs.

The solution both of USAID and of the World Bank's Berg Report to the unproductive growth of the African state is more moderate than, but parallels that of Cyril Ehrlich a decade earlier--"When a machine runs amok it requires, not adjustment, but dismantling" (1970: 134). Given the realities of contemporary Africa this recommendation is appealing in its market rationality. "The incomes of poor farmers were better left to fructify in the pockets of the people" (Ehrlich, 1970: 129). After all, even the left, which supported the expansion of government, was looking for developmental and distributive benefits from a socialist state. What has occured instead has been a merchantilist state, which has hampered the operations of the market in order to provide protection and spoils for the elite (Callaghy, 1979). Still, given the political rationality that underlies these state activities, is an appeal to economic rationality any more realistic now than it was before?

Escape from the unproductive growth of the state will require something more subtle than laissez-faire economics. We have a situation in which the performance of public organizations is poor because few of their participants are commited to purposive rationality. (Recall that the term "purposive" refers here to the pursuit of formal organizational or societal goals. In other words, most actors expect to use governmental agencies to achieve personal and other extra-organizational goals first and formal goals second.) To propose market discipline as a cure for this problem is simply to call for the imposition of a new form of purposive rationality. It is true that the market can achieve purposive rationality with a smaller number of consenting actors than can hierarchically imposed rationality. (Hyden, 1983, argues that public organizations in Africa are undermined by their penetration by peasant values of social exchange. Yet Marris and Somerset, 1971, have shown that African small businessmen start pulling away from such social obligations under the pressures of market discipline.) Ultimately, however, the very politicians who currently use their hierarchical positions to reinforce behavior which is inconsistent with organizational goals are being asked by donors to turn to the market for the sake of the same goals.

It is essential to the integration of African states and the survival of their regimes of all political persuasions that their governments produce visible, distributable benefits. African politicians must have projects and patronage to distribute if they are to survive. The priority therefore is not to dismantle the state but to redirect its activities into areas that combine some economic returns with high political pay-offs. If the latter are high enough it may be possible to contain the pressures for still greater state expenditure and thereby preserve incentives for vigorous growth of peasant agriculture and small business. It is true that economic development would be better served in most contemporary African states if the size of government were smaller or if market-like mechanisms for creating purposive rationality could be imposed on governmental operations. There is little prospect of this being done, however, unless we confront the causes of the problem and look for solutions that fit the political rationality that is currently dominating decisions.

A decision to expand the number of agricultural extension agents often is not an optimal one from either a political or an economic perspective. If a donor offers to finance such an expansion, it is likely to receive enthusiastic support from host country officials, for it will provide patronage and a way to alleviate the politically dangerous levels of unemployment among the educated. Yet those who are given the jobs will be thankful to the state and their patrons only when they are first given them, and their salaries will drain the Treasury for 30 years. Furthermore the political demand for expanded extension in peasant communities is weak. The economic returns on extension therefore need to be long-term and certain to make this a sensible investment of government resources.

One way to raise political returns while lowering economic costs is for benefits to be provided in such a way that they can be given again, rather than constituting a permanent drain upon the resources of the state. An ideal investment for a politician is a labor-intensive rural roads project such as the one currently being conducted in Kenya. From an economic point of view roads improve access to producers and rural markets, thereby lowering the costs of trade and improving the chances of competition without imposing government controls or officers that could become exploitative. Simultaneously, roads are very popular with the peasantry and when they run down their construction can be undertaken again. If those employed are drawn from the local area, the jobs given are a limited act of patronage that can be repeated with new jobs in the future. Extra benefits are that: the employed are more likely to have been needy; their employment in the rural areas encourages them to stay in the farm economy; and the income provided is more likely to be reinvested in agriculture or food than in imported goods.

We need innovative thinking about how vital rural services can be provided in ways that will make them politically productive, self-managing, and not a permanent drain on the Treasury. For example, a subsidy could be paid to set up a veterinarian or paramedic in a private rural practice (perhaps by providing housing, equiping the lab, and maybe giving a cash grant). Even if only one out of two of these practioners worked out, the real services in the rural areas would be expanded (through better incentives), government would not be left paying for those who do not work, and both communities and practioners would be grateful for the initial subsidy. No assumption is made here that private practioners are not exploitiative, only that public ones currently are too. The payment of a fee is no different than a bribe and may be more conducive to productivity. Also, the explicit introduction of private practice make it more likely that competition will be introduced, lessening the exploitative potential that goes with (public and private) monopoly.

In this regard perhaps we should reevaluate the high failure rate on loans given to new small African businessmen (not the big and already established ones). The political returns on these "grants" is quite high and the costs to the government of such attempts to expand the economy may be less than the permanent drain presented by parastatals. Grants also are likely to be less damaging to the economy than the manipulation of protective tariffs and licenses. Perhaps what the development community needs is a realistic acceptance of the political and economic benefits of such practices by making explicit grants rather than doubtful loans.

Finally and most practically of all, this analysis suggests that USAID's implicit movement away from a Basic Needs type of approach to development is mistaken. Although it is true that bad policies are at the root of much of Africa's economic crisis, donors will make very little progress if they confine their attention and assistance to those areas. Policy reform will only be possible if donors provide politically attrative projects as an inducement to governments to change and as assistance in muting the impact of the ensuing domestic criticism. Basic Needs projects have precisely the political appeal that policy reform lacks. So a "hard" laissez-faire approach to African economic development probably needs the support of the "soft", humanitarian Basic Needs one if it is to be applied successfully.

These kinds of trade-offs will not be easy for donors such as USAID to achieve. The idea that a project might be undertaken in one sector in return for policy change in another implies a considerable amount of cooperation between sector specialists in the donor agency and a willingness of one to have his (or her) project held hostage to developments outside his area of primary concern. It also implies that a good portion of USAID's visible portfolio would be tied up in project's that did not appear to reflect the agency's priorities and did not seem to be particularly successful. Obviously this would be difficult for USAID to do, but no more so than the reforms that it is expecting of its African host governments. If the United States can not undertake purposively rational structural changes, there is little prospect that its African allies will either.

In sum, African agriculture (and hence projects designed to assist it) are frequently seriously hampered by the public policies governing the sector. Overvalued currencies, low prices, and monopolistics and inefficient marketing boards all conspire to sap the sector of its natural dynamism. This heavy burden which the state imposes on agriculture is not accidental, however, but is designed to provide the resources for the public employment and patronage which the fragile regimes need for their survival. Donors and managers ne to face the political roots of this problem directly if they are to succeed in making their projects effective. The solution is likely to be found the trade-off of politically attractive projects that are highly efficient in their use of public resources in return for policy concessions that will assist agriculture.

Leadership

Leadership is second only to a congenial policy environment in its importance for project success. It is the most political of the management skills, and the West has some insight but no "technology" to transmit on how to perform it. Precisely because it is an art and not a science, however, it is a skill that is abundant in the highly politicized environment of African management. A number of requisites would have to be fulfilled if an African project were to be well led. The person at its head would have to: (1) have a strong, personal commitment to its goals, (2) be able to anticipate problems, (3) have skill in bargaining, (4) be politically sensitive to both national and local aspects of the project's environment, (5) have the ability to inspire effort in his (or her) staff, (6) have extra resources which could be used in bargaining for needed support, (7) have flexibility in pursuing project goals, and (8) be able to identify and recruit good staff.

Several things are striking about the preceeding list. The first is that it would be the same for a project in the United States. The second is that these items are very hard to affect through training and almost none of them are susceptible to the deductive rationality that is the hallmark of Western management science. The third is that all but one of the requisites is as easily fulfilled in Africa as it is in the U.S.

The most important requisite of a good project leader is that he (or she) have a strong, personal commitment to its goals. Unfortunately this also is the one item that often is lacking in Africa and all else turns upon it. In the West we are used to this commitment's being created artificially. A manager takes over an organization without any strong feelings about its particular objectives, but he does care deeply about his career and he perceives his advancement as being directly affected by his success in achieving the organization's formal goals. The environment of governmental activity in Africa is so politicized that this kind of artificial link between organizational goals and a senior manager's career rarely exists. To a much greater extent than is true in the West, then, commitment must be internally generated by the manager.

There are two places that this internal commitment to an organization's goals might come from. One is the value socialization component of a professional education. For such socialization to be effective it has be be intense, lengthy, encapsulating, and reinforced by one's peers in the educational institution. Not all educational programs provide such an experience. Medical schools, academic graduate programs, schools of social work and military academies generally do; business schools, engineering programs, and schools of public administration usually do not. This socialization also cannot be acquired on short courses. But it can be reinforced by them. This is significant because professional values will be eroded when they are not shared in one's environment (Achebe, 1961). International conferences and short courses can reinforce threatened values by bringing together people who share them, as well as by providing the tangible incentive of travel to those who have been faithful to them. Many African managers do have strong professional commitments, but they usually are technical specialists (whose training and work are closely interlinked) and not generalists. The latter are more powerful in Africa's colonially derived administrative systems than they are in the

United States and this diminishes somewhat the prospects for a program's having committed leadership.

The other place that commitment can come from is one's social setting--the values inspired in one's early family experiences and supported by one's contemporary environment. As Goran Hyden has stressed, African managers are deeply ethical, with strong commitments to their families and villages of origin. In fact, they are likely to see the impersonality that is such a virtue in the Western bureaucratic ethic as somewhat immoral (1983). Because colonial institutions were built upon bureaucratic values and contemporary donor agencies are as well, we spend a great deal of time and effort resisting the moral commitments of African managers. Often this is inevitable and desirable. There are times, however, when it would be beneficial to swim with the current of indigenous morality. For example, a geographically-focused project is likely to get far better leadership from an official who is from the region than from an "objective" outsider. In any case, one can not treat managers as interchangeable on the commitment dimension. An officer with this scarce commodity probably will perform far better than another who is more able and technically better qualified but who lacks it (Leonard and Marshall, 1982: 205). It is wise to chose projects with the existence of personal interest among its likely managers as a primary criterion and to resist changes in management thereafter.

Attributes of the project or program itself which we mentioned as determining how well its manager would be able lead are: that it have extra resources which could be used in bargaining for needed support and that it have flexibility in pursuing its goals. (For more on the latter point, see Korton, 1980.) When a donor doubts the commitment of a project's potential management to the desired objectives, it often moves to restrict these two attributes, thus increasing still further the likelihood that the project will not have effective leadership.

The final requisite of good leadership on our list was a combination of the skill of the manager and the flexibility which the project or the larger public personnel system give to him--the ability to identify and recruit good staff. Most civil service systems are designed to restrict the manager's discretion on precisely this point because of the fear that it will be used for patronage--a fear that is well-grounded in contemporary African reality and in the administrative history of the West. An effective project leader will find ways to get around these restrictions.

One of the reasons that expatriate personnel are often important to the success of projects is because they are not protected by civil service regulations and a manager has some real discretion over their selection and retention, even though it is not as great as it could be. Some of the most effective African administrative leaders that I have witnessed have taken expatriates on as their clients and deployed them flexibly to fulfill the organization's objectives, something they had more difficulty in doing with purely local staff. Unlike many observers, I do not think such a practice inhibits the development of indigenous talent, for it provides clearly visible role models which locals can compete to supplant. Our understanding of technical assistance is inhibited by the common belief that it is a uniquely modern phenomenon, is a solution to a temporary problem and carries connotations of inferiority. In fact, the practice is as old as the European nation-state. In the late 18th century, when Prussia was the best administered state in Europe, it imported French fiscal experts to work in its government (Rosenberg, 1958: 171). French engineers also were important in Russian government projects and training institutes in the 19th century (Armstrong, 1973: 60). The difference between technology transfer in Europe and Africa thus is not the importation of foreigners; it is their presence in privileged enclaves for two year contracts. When the French went to Prussia, they went to settle. Hence they were fully subject to the incentives provided by the leaders that recruited them and they became integrated into the decision-making systems that they had been imported to improve. They also were there long enough to learn from their experiences and to adapt their knowledge to the new environment. It is the impermanence, rather than the number, of technical assistance personnel that is one of the major inhibitions to African development and deserves concerted attention by donors and host governments alike. In those few cases in which technical assistance personnel are able to work continuously in a sector and country for ten years, as is the case in Kenya with German technical assistants in agriculture and some Ford Foundation economic planners, the results are impressive and quite supportive of the development of local competence.

The larger question about managerial skill in the recruitment and advancement of staff is patronage. Its consequences can be terribly destructive and the great civil service reforms of the 19th century were designed to prevent them. Yet in Africa today we often are left with all of the structural rigidities which civil service regulations create while still having ample amounts of patronage. Without the support of the political environment which created it in Europe and America a century ago, the civil service institution itself appears to be unable to produce the desired effect. Perhaps we should pause to rethink our position on this point, at least in small ways. Patron-client systems can sometimes be quite functional in organizations, depending on the ends for which they are used. If one looks hard enough one will find that they are quite common in American universities and public agencies. They also are a well-remarked feature of the Soviet administrative system (Crozier, 1964: 229- 30). The difference between these networks and the patronage we decry is that these systems are used to advance, not inhibit, the pursuit of organizational goals. Managers become patrons to those of their subordinates whom they believe can best help them achieve the objectives according to which they themselves will be judged, and junior staff seek to become clients of managers who can best help them with their careers, not on the basis of some ascriptive or political tie. The resulting informal networks of obligation give flexibility and commitment to relationships that would be much less productive if they were only formal (Blau, 1964, Chap. 8). Thus where (but only where) managers are using their patronage to reward those who are committed to the organization's objectives, there is good reason to assist them with control over scholarships, foreign trips, and off-scale appointments. The result will be better performance from their subordinates.

One attribute that I have not identified as a requisite for the effective organizational leader is skill at internal administration. This latter function must be performed well if the organization is going to run at its best. Nonetheless a good leader often is poor at it and picks a subordinate to be his administrative genius. Since the nature of the skills required for the two are quite different, such a division of labor works quite satisfactorily.

To summarize, leadership is an art rather than a science, the most political of the management skills. Most of its requisites are abundant among African managers, but too often they lack the personal commitment to organizational goals that are necessary to activate them. With sensitivity to the importance of this ingredient donors may be able to identify it when it exists and to nurture its sustenance and growth.

General Internal Administration

The area about which management science has the most to say is the internal administration of organizations. Those of us who study administrative behavior in Africa are divided into two camps, which can be characterized as the organization theorists and the environmentalists. The former hold that the theoretical principles underlying and explaining organizational behavior are universal. From this premise they argue that at least some, modified, Western management techniques may be able to improve performance in African organizations. (The clearest exponents of these views are Leonard, 1977 and Chambers, 1974.) Against this view is ranged a much larger group of scholars who hold that African administration is distinctive in the degree to which it is penetrated by its politicized and patronage-prone environment and that it therefore is not amenable to management methods that are based on a Western conception of purposive rationality. (The leading figures here are Hyden, 1973 and 1983; Moris, 1981; Price, 1975; and Collins, 1980.)

The gap between these two camps is not as large as it might at first appear to be. As one of the exponents of the organization theory point of view, I concur with the environmentalists that African administrative behavior is distinctive and that it is rooted in the political and social features to which they point. I differ with them in holding that these features are not without Western historical counterparts and that therefore no new theoretical structure is needed to understand them. These differences are largely academic.

The point at which the differences between the camps becomes practical is where they concern administrative reform and here, unfortunately, they are almost matters of faith. Because the environmentalists see the character of African organizations as rooted in their larger political and social structures, they say or come very close to saying that they are unreformable. Price, for example, suggests that only when African administrative elites become isolated from the rest of society, in the way in which European Calvinists, Leninists and aristocrats were, will they have the autonomy necessary to impose purposive rationality (1975). The environmentalist argument is consistent with the view that the only economic rationality that can be imposed on Africa is that of the market, since it is the only one that does not demand widespread acceptance of purposive rationality.

Against this position the organization theorists can only pose the hope that there must be SOME way to achieve better organizational performance in Africa. This hope has some empirical basis, but not an especially strong one as yet. The strongest exponent of the applicability of Western management techniques to Africa that I have found is Cornelius Dzakpasu (1978). He cites the case of an African public company which was near bankruptcy and was rescued through the use of such methods. He states explicity, though, that this was feasible because it was an "enclave," i.e., it could be cut off from its environment. He does not tell how such isolation was achieved. The World Bank's Berg Report takes a similar position by arguing for the autonomy of parastatal managers (1981: 38). The clear implication is that managers are committed to economic (purposive) rationality and are only corrupted by outside political influences. It seems reasonable to expect that administrators would be less responsive to political demands than politicians are, but it is hard to see them as selfless or totally insulated from societal pressures for patronage. The record of Nigerian parastatals through several regime changes and accompanying differences in managerial autonomy suggests that purposive rationality will not be so easily achieved (Wilson, 1978).

Robert Chambers achieved improvements in Kenyan administration with the use of a variant of Management By Objectives (1974). Yet the innovation collapsed after the technical assistance personnel supporting it left, i.e., the environment reverted to normal, and Jon Moris reports that he failed when he tried to introduce the Chambers system in Tanzania (1981). The Germans introduced a similar budgeting and programming system into part of the operations of the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture. When Walter Oyugi and I evaluated the innovation, we found it failing outside the area of German influence and limited in its effect even there (1982). A part of the problem was in the design of the system, but even that makes it clear that managment systems cannot be imported without substantial work and revision.

Western management techniques are very intensive in their use of managers for analysis and supervision and are wholly grounded in concepts of formal economic rationality (Dzakpasu). Management By Objectives (MBO), the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS), Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB), and a host of similar methods are based on the formal analysis of means-ends chains, as they serve officially specified goals. Both managers and economic rationality are in scarce supply in most African organizations. For example, the World Bank has been encouraging the use of the Training and Visit system for rural based programs. The system is intensive and demanding in its use of managers. The institution of the educational inspector is the result of an earlier generation of attempts to supervise and support a far flung cadre of paraprofessional staff. In the several developing countries for which we have evidence the institution today lacks the resources it needs and is no longer performing its intended function. (For a detailed presentation of this argument and a full statement of the evidence supporting it, see Leonard and Marshall, 1982: 206- 209.)

The foregoing reads like a statement of despair, a concession to the pessimism of the environmentalists. It is more accurate to see it as a confession of our ignorance. We certainly have no knowledge of what reforms might be used to improve the performance of Africa's public organizations. We can be reasonably certain that techniques imported from the West will fail unless they are revised quite fundamentally. Yet we also know that some African public organizations are performing much better than others. What we do not know is why. (A preliminary start at filling that gap is Lamb and Muller, 1982.)

Our whole search process for management systems for

Africa has been fundamentally biased and flawed to date. We have tended to look at those instances in which technical assistance personnel were introducing imported innovations. We therefore were examining reforms that were intensive in their use of managers and economic rationality. These "factor proportions" are inappropriate in the African environment. Instead we must study the more indigenously based organizational experiments that have a greater chance of being "appropriate technologies" for their environments. I personally am persuaded that what we find will be best analyzed and explained by a combination of universal organization theory and the sociology of Africa. However that may be, there can be no doubt of the need for fundamental and extensive research (Kasfir, 1980).

Bureaucratic Hygiene

A number of aspects of internal administration are considered fundamental to the "good order" of an organization but are only indirectly related to project or program performance. I have referred to these as the bureaucratic hygiene functions and they include accounting, auditing, procurement, contract compliance, personnel system management. When these tasks are poorly performed donor reimbursements are problematic, financial planning is difficult, serious procedural delays occur erratically, and appropriate staffing levels are hard to organize.

The bureaucratic character of these functions gives them a universality that crosses cultural lines, and indeed the systems that colonialism imported from Europe have remained conceptually intact in Africa since independence, despite deterioration in the quality with which they are being operated. Attempts to improve managerial performance in these areas probably should be directed at the maintenance and restoration of these old systems, rather than their replacement with more modern or American variants. The colonial bureaucratic methods tended to be labor-intensive and therefore more appropriate for the factor endowments of Africa than are the United States's more capital-intensive, technology-based systems. There are some exceptions, however. Where the American systems use less high-level manpower and make fewer demands on supervision than the colonial ones do, they may well be economizing on a resource that is even scarcer than capital. There also are times when the introduction of a new technology legitimates change and provides an entry point for reform-minded personnel. In this way it may facilitate improvements, even though from a purely technical stand point it offers no advantages. (Pinckney, Cohen and Leonard, 1983: 166- 67.)

Reform in the area of bureaucratic hygiene is difficult to achieve for a number of reasons. The first is that it has only an indirect impact on project and program performance. Administrative reforms are virtually never undertaken for their own sake but instead as a means of accomplishing something else that is politically salient (Caiden, 1969). In normal times then it will be difficult to get the necessary support for changes that are disruptive, that require the removal of entrenched senior staff, that might cause labor disputes, or that in some other way entail political costs. Such costs will be "paid" only when they are necessary to the accomplishment of some valued objective or to averting something that is politically worse. Thus real reform is likely to occur only in circumstances such as credible donor threats to terminate support and severe financial stringency for the state.

The second reason that even minor improvements in bureaucratic hygiene are difficult to achieve is that the managers who handle these functions are transient and not particularly concerned with the programs that would be helped by them. A sharp distinction is made between administrative staff and technical specialists in both the British and French administrative traditions. In a ministry of agriculture the program staff, who are permanent and who will have the greatest stake in the achievement of project objectives, will have very little to do with accounting, personnel, and general administration. These functions will be handled by generalist administrators who are transferred between ministries. These staff can be thought of as administrative specialists, whose services are used throughout the government. When they are doing their jobs well, they will be more concerned with the standards of bureaucratic hygiene than any agriculturalist would be. When their work deteriorates to the point that it is hurting programmatic objectives, however, they will not be as concerned as are the technical staff. Furthermore, training investments in administrative personnel will be dissipated over the entire government, because of the inevitability of transfers. If one wants to target one part of the government for managerial improvements, it probably is best to concentrate the administrative training on the technical specialists whose whole careers will be spent in it. If they have a good background in management, they then will be able to press for better performance from the transient generalists or to take over the functions themselves.

The third reason administrative improvement is difficult is that poor bureaucratic hygiene affects the distribution of power in an organization and will be in the interests of some critical actors. When accounting and financial management are badly done, budgetary authority is effectively decentralized to those officers who make the final, detailed authorizations of expenditures, as they can move money between accounts with little chance that it will be detected. Such a situation permits corruption, but it also gives field officers flexibility in project implementation in what may otherwise be a rather rigid system. (Leonard, Cohen and Pinckney, 1983: 115.) Poor personnel administration systems seem to have the opposite effect, centralizing hiring and promoting authority in the national personnel office. The latter can hire staff against a program officer's budget without his even knowing of their existence, "misplace" files on disciplinary actions, and in other ways produce patronage for itself. None of these factors are good reasons for not undertaking reforms, but they do call our attention to the existence of real interests that may subvert improvements that everyone says they want. Improvements in bureaucratic hygiene are needed and can be achieved, but only with good timing and a fortuitous set of allies.

In my experience the greatest training needs in bureaucratic hygiene are at an entirely different level from that at which the donors generally work. The money is usually bestowed for overseas courses for senior staff or for in-country formal programs that cater to new personnel or ones seeking to be upgraded. Both of these have their place, but the former is often over funded because of its political attractiveness both to donor and to local elites and the latter is generally adequately provided for by the host country because it provides politically popular upward mobility. What both host and donor governments ignore is the operationally vital but politically lackluster category of continuous on-the-job training. All organizations have considerable turnover in personnel, especially in the lower, bureaucratic categories. Breaking these people into the <u>details</u> of their new jobs is a major and continuous responsibility. Large organizations in the United States have special units that provide this training for new and recently promoted staff. I have never encountered such a unit in Africa, nor have I found an accounting or personnel section that has funds for regular short courses on basic procedures or for one day seminars on new ones. As a result the most basic bureaucratic functions are performed very poorly, managers are overwhelmed with the task of supervising and checking simple tasks, and the low standards that result make it impossible to tell the difference between corruption and incompetence, thereby encouraging the former.

To recapitulate, the bureaucratic hygiene factors of administration-- accounting, auditing, personnel system management, etc.-- make a significant contribution to the running of a project and a donor can have great difficulties if they are functioning poorly. Nonetheless they are very difficult to reform, for very few direct program benefits are produced by their improvement and politically useful opportunities for the diversion of resources may be lost. Improvements in this area therefore require particular perseverence, good timing and luck.

Conclusion

This essay has taken us over a very wide range of managerial issues that affect African agricultural production and the efforts by USAID to promote it. We have considered policy-making, leadership, general internal administration, and bureaucratic hygiene. Throughout we have stressed the special constraints on managerial performance that exist on the African continent. The continent's political systems are heavily dependent on patronage for their tenuous survival. Individual managers are similarly subject to strong pressures from their kinsmen for support, encouraging them to find sources of corrupt income and to use their hiring prerogatives for extra-organizational purposes. Even in those societies which are less prone to patronage, politics still dominates all other organizational and policy considerations. A great deal remains to learned about effective management in Africa and any simple attempt to transfer Western managerial technologies is likely to end in failure. A great deal of thought and experiment is needed to help us find administrative reforms and managerial improvements that flow with, rather than against the logic of African social reality. All too often we enter into the realm of political fantasy when we talk of what we hope to achieve. Change will only come about gradually, with luck and good-timing, and at the cost of difficult changes in USAID as well as in the host countries of Africa.

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