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IMPROVING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:  
BEYOND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

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## IMPROVING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Few of the problems that developing nations have faced during the past quarter of a century have been as complex and intractable as finding effective ways of implementing development plans and programs. These problems are likely to become even more complex during the last two decades of the twentieth century as developing nations and international assistance agencies more vigorously pursue programs to promote socially equitable growth and extend the benefits to poorer groups in developing societies. Recent national development plans and foreign aid policies underline the importance of decentralized planning and administration and of widespread participation by intended beneficiaries in the design and implementation of development programs. Indeed, some argue that decentralization and participation are inextricably related in achieving equitable development. Analysts in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), for instance, contend that "increased popular participation, to be sustained and effective, requires the mobilization of local actors and the institutionalization of their activity." They insist that "decentralization is necessary to increase the scope of decisions, and thus incentives, available to local participants, as well as to build institutions to encourage, structure, focus and stabilize such participation."<sup>1</sup> More equitable development can only occur, they argue, if new administrative structures and procedures allow those who have been excluded from economic and political activity to participate in development planning and management in the future.

Although decentralization and participation appear frequently as objectives in development plans and policies, implementation has lagged far behind political rhetoric.<sup>2</sup> The difficulties can be attributed to the general dearth of knowledge about program implementation and more specifically to the lack of attention given to the design of implementation strategies by planners and administrators in Third World nations. Moreover, the theories of development administration that emerged during the past quarter of a century have provided little guidance on either count; development theorists and practitioners are only now beginning to explore the dimensions of the implementation problem. Much of the development administration theory of the 1950s and 1960s focused on macro-economic planning, societal modernization and national political and administrative reform. Grand schemes quickly met pervasive and intransigent obstacles, however, and lack of attention to administrative detail destroyed the credibility of those approaches during the 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

But implementation has now become a central concern of governments in developing nations and of officials in international funding institutions. Improving the management of development programs and projects is also likely to be a dominant focus of development administration theory in the 1980s. Nearly all national development plans now recognize that implementation is at the core of development strategy. Nigerian planners, for instance, admit that "implementing a plan is as important as, if not more important than, drawing up the plan. Experience has shown that even with the best planning techniques, there usually exists a gap between plan formulation and plan implementation."<sup>4</sup> Kenya's development plan for 1979-1983 makes the improvement of managerial capacity in government institutions a major objective, arguing that

"performance of many of these (institutions) must be improved if the tasks set forth in this plan are to be accomplished. The development strategy to alleviate poverty places new demands on the nation's institutional network."<sup>5</sup>

International assistance organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations Specialized Agencies and USAID have come to similar conclusions. A recent UN report points out that the "process of decisionmaking on strategy choices for national development should be accompanied by elaboration of their public administration implications."<sup>6</sup> The experience of USAID officials indicates that "erroneous assumptions about project organization and management or administrative factors have been a major cause of failure, or lack of complete success, of many development projects."<sup>7</sup> And a recent World Bank report concluded that "the main function which has evolved for the Bank is to assist the borrower...in identifying, helping to prevent, and solving the problems that arise in the course of implementation."<sup>8</sup>

Despite this strong resolve to deal more aggressively with problems of implementation, little has actually been done to anticipate administrative requirements in the formulation of development plans and policies. Of the 342 pages in the Nigerian plan, for example, only 6 are devoted to implementation. A recent review of 30 national development plans formulated during the 1970s found that only half had sections addressing administrative and management issues, and that only 6 of those explored implementation requirements in any detail.<sup>9</sup> Nor is there much consensus among international assistance agencies about how program implementation can be improved in developing countries. The United Nations report points out that the concept is new and that "in practice, few developing countries have initiated such comprehensive administrative planning."<sup>10</sup> USAID officials frankly admit that "determining the precise application of general development approaches in specific cases remains, despite all our efforts and those of thousands of practitioners and scholars alike, a very murky, difficult, uncertain, complex and intractable business."<sup>11</sup>

Although many studies have been done of Third World governments, little effort has been made by development administration theorists to identify the factors that influence policy implementation and to provide a comparative framework for designing and managing development programs and policies. Traditional theories of development administration attributed the difficulties of Third World governments to three major deficiencies: ineffective administrative procedures and managerial techniques, weak or inadequate development institutions, and inappropriate or pre-modern governmental structures. The prescriptions of the 1950s and 1960s, therefore, focused primarily on administrative "modernization" and reform. But evaluations of development programs during the 1970s found that administrative reform alone had little impact on promoting economic and social progress or on alleviating massive poverty. Most prescriptions for administrative reform failed to address crucial questions of distribution and equity, and were themselves deficient in providing strategies for implementation. Indeed, the issues addressed by traditional development administration were too narrowly defined to improve implementation capacity; crucial variables such as political will, bureaucratic attitudes and behavior, cultural norms, economic structure and spatial and physical systems often went unexplored.

This paper reviews the major approaches to development administration in the three decades following World War II and their limitations for guiding the implementation of development programs. It then describes the experience of several developing countries in East Africa that have attempted to implement programs for promoting decentralized administration and increased participation in development. It identifies major obstacles to implementation of these programs in Tanzania, Kenya and the Sudan, and some of the crucial variables that impinge on policy and program implementation in the developing world, to which development administration theory of the 1980s must be addressed.

#### APPROACHES IN DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION THEORY TO IMPROVING IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

Development administration theory of the 1950s and 1960s was reflected in two somewhat different but not mutually exclusive approaches. One, which Siffin has labeled "tool oriented," contended that program implementation could be improved in developing nations through the transfer of administrative procedures and techniques from industrialized countries, and especially from the United States, Britain and France.<sup>12</sup> The other argued that political processes and administrative structures had to be thoroughly transformed and modernized before developing country governments would be effective instruments for promoting economic and social progress.

Those who believed that implementation capability would be improved by the transfer of administrative procedures and techniques from industrialized nations followed the Weberian model for building efficient bureaucracies. They sought to create administrative procedures that were objectively "rational," politically impartial, and economically efficient. Advocates of this approach insisted that development administration must be concerned with the "technical procedures and organizational arrangements by which a government achieves movement toward development goals."<sup>13</sup> Riggs argued that development administration in this sense was concerned with the methods used by governments to attain their development objectives through the implementation of policies and plans.<sup>14</sup> The UN Handbook of Public Administration issued in the early 1960s was the embodiment of this approach. It set out prescriptions for creating organizational hierarchies within bureaucracies, establishing a civil service based on skill and merit, improving personnel administration, establishing public enterprises and reforming budgeting, supervision and training procedures.<sup>15</sup>

Administrative and political modernizers, on the other hand, believed that the transfer of administrative procedures and techniques from Western democracies was necessary but not sufficient. They viewed development administration as "social engineering," and national governments as the prime movers of social change. Landau defined development administration as a "directive and directional process which is intended to make things happen in a certain way over intervals of time."<sup>16</sup> Others perceived development administration as a means of improving the capacities of governments to deal with problems created by modernization and change; it would be the primary instrument for

transforming traditional societies.<sup>17</sup> Unless the entire political and administrative system was reformed, governments of developing nations could not adequately direct and control social and economic progress.

But traditional approaches to development administration came under heavy criticism during the 1970s. Siffin concisely summarized the weakness of the "tool oriented" approach.<sup>18</sup> It attempted to create bureaucracies based on values of rationality, political impartiality, efficiency and democracy that were predominantly characteristic of Western cultures. When the procedures and techniques were transferred to other cultures they were either misused or found to be irrelevant. This approach also assumed that complex social problems could be solved through modern administrative procedures and techniques. But in many countries the transfer of Western administrative methods simply introduced predetermined solutions and inhibited the development of analytical skills among planners and administrators to deal with unique problems as they arose in their own societies. Moreover, the tools were transferred from well-structured institutions in industrialized societies to loosely organized governments in the developing world, where they could not work as they did in Western countries. Indeed, many procedures and techniques, such as program budgeting and systems analysis, were transferred before their efficacy had been proven in industrialized nations.<sup>19</sup> In countries where the techniques took hold, they often created powerful technocratic classes that were out of touch with the real problems and needs of people--especially the poor--in their own countries. Finally, the tools of Western administration were concerned primarily with maintenance functions and thus their transfer did little to improve Third World governments' capacity to promote development.

Similar criticisms have been made of the administrative and political modernization theories. They were ethnocentric and based on philosophies and values that often rendered them useless or perverse in many developing nations. Pye points out that the literature never yielded a concise definition of political development. It was variously defined as the creation of political prerequisites for economic growth in industrialized countries, the creation of governmental institutions with characteristics similar to those found in European nation states, and reform of legal and administrative structures in the American or British tradition. Some thought of it as mass mobilization and participation in political processes, creation of procedures for orderly political succession, or the sharing of power and authority in democratic fashion.<sup>20</sup>

The institution-building movement, which largely displaced these prescriptions in the 1960s, called for more intensive efforts to expand the number and strengthen the administrative capacity of government institutions. The theory was based on the premise that the poor record of implementation in developing nations was the result of inadequate institutional capability to perform development functions effectively. Thus, development administration was given a new task: to build the institutional problem-solving and innovation capabilities of governments in developing countries. Siffin argued that "the essence of development is not to maintain, but to create effectively. ...Doing this means, among other things, marshalling substantial amounts of knowledge about organizational design and the effects of alternative organizational arrangements."<sup>21</sup> Thompson insisted that Weberian models of bureaucracy were inappropriate for the innovative and creative tasks required of development administration. He offered an adaptive model aimed at creating

an organizational atmosphere conducive to innovation. Both tool-oriented and administrative reform approaches sought to strengthen central government control. But because policies evolve under conditions of rapid change in developing countries, Thompson and others argued that they were not susceptible to central direction. He called for the creation of institutions that would be more conducive to creative problem-solving: non-hierarchical, non-bureaucratic, professional, problem-oriented systems in which communications structures were loose and in which decisions evolved from group interaction.<sup>22</sup>

Esman defined institution building as "the planning, structuring, and guidance of new or reconstituted organizations which a) embody changes in values, functions, physical and/or social technologies, b) establish, foster and protect new normative relationships and action patterns, and c) obtain support and complementarity in the environment."<sup>22</sup> The aim of the institution-building strategy was to create "viable development institutions;" those with the ability to deliver technical services, to internalize innovative ideas, relationships and practices within the staff of the organization, and to continue to innovate so that new technologies and behavior patterns would not be "frozen" in their original form. A viable organization would be able to attain favorable recognition within society, be highly valued or regarded by other organizations, and get them to adapt the innovative technologies, norms or methods that it introduced. Thus, institution-building strategy was concerned not only with strengthening the administrative capacity of individual organizations, but also with forging cooperative relationships among institutions.<sup>23</sup>

Application of the institution-building strategies, however, has usually been limited to ministries in central governments and to large educational and research institutes; the abstractness of the theory and the complexity of executing it made it difficult to apply in most Third World nations. Where institution-building was tried it was often considered as an end in itself. It did not, therefore, address questions of equity and participation, or the role of the poorest groups that lacked access to institutional resources.

Perhaps the most serious shortcoming of traditional approaches to development administration, however, was that prescriptions for modernizing administrative procedures, techniques, institutions and structures were themselves policies and programs that had to be implemented within existing government institutions. Development administration theorists largely begged the question of how these reforms would be implemented in administrative systems diagnosed as inefficient and ineffective, and therefore in need of reform.

Although debilitating deficiencies in administrative procedures, managerial techniques, government institutions and political structures may, in fact, inhibit the implementation of development policies and programs in many countries, they do not entirely explain the difficulties that Third World nations have had with implementation. A variety of other factors that condition the amount of change that can be made in institutions, and which therefore are crucial in formulating implementation strategies, have not been integrated into development administration theory or practice. This is illustrated quite clearly when the experience of developing nations with implementing administrative reform programs is examined and the obstacles are identified.

Recent attempts by governments in Tanzania, Kenya and the Sudan to decentralize development administration and planning functions, strengthen local institutions and reorganize the political structure to attain more equitable economic growth, underline the complexity of policy implementation. Experiences in those countries highlight the variety of factors other than administrative variables that affect implementation. Although the policies pursued in East Africa sought to attain quite radical changes, they were based on a conventional assumption of development administration: that reform of administrative procedures, institutions and structures would itself promote social and economic changes in society. Failure to analyze those factors that shape the society in which reform programs must be administered created obstacles to attaining policy objectives.

ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT: PROGRAMS AND POLICIES IN EAST AFRICA

Governments in East Africa have emphasized the importance of administrative decentralization and local participation for equitable economic development since the early 1970s. Tanzania, for instance, has experimented with decentralization and participation for more than a decade. President Julius K. Nyerere, the architect of Tanzania's socialist government, insists that development must mean more than simply increasing gross national product. Tanzania's model for equitable growth required benefits to be widely distributed. Tanzania's leaders attempted to create an economy capable of providing for the basic needs of the entire population and sought to establish a governmental system in which the population would become politically conscious, independent and responsive. Nyerere attempted to fashion a unique form of African socialism, combining institutions for widespread participation in development decision-making and management with those for strong central guidance of the national economy. Tanzania's leaders sought to develop a self-reliant agrarian economy in which all segments of society could participate in productive processes and reap equitable returns for their participation. Tanzania would thus avoid the great disparities in income and wealth between urban and rural areas, and privileged elites and the peasant masses, that appeared in the wake of economic growth in many developing nations that tried to imitate Western industrial societies.<sup>24</sup>

To achieve these goals, Tanzania's leaders decentralized the government in 1972. Local governments were abolished and their officials were absorbed into the central government's civil service. The highly centralized national ministries were reorganized and many of their development planning and implementation officers were assigned to the regions. Regional authorities were given greater responsibility for rural development planning and the powers of district and village development committees were expanded. Teams of technical officials headed by development directors provided administrative support to local development committees.

Administrative decentralization was designed in part to strengthen the ongoing process of "villagization." The creation of ujamaa villages was a form of area development in Tanzania through which the widely dispersed rural

population could be concentrated in communal production units and be provided more efficiently with government services needed to meet basic needs and increase agricultural productivity. Through ujamaa villages, government resources for rural development could be integrated and local organizations could be created for popular participation in development planning and administration. The underlying political and ideological motivations for mobilizing the population to support the national government was reflected in the designation of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), the country's only political party, as the organization responsible for implementing the decentralization program. In most of the country, political party structure paralleled the decentralized government structure, with TANU leaders playing a significant role in village activities.<sup>25</sup>

Three principles were inherent in the reorganization of local administration: that rural development must be managed at the local level, that it must have the participation of the population, and that it must be coordinated by the central government. Thus, the Decentralization Act of 1972 created a four-tier, hierarchically-organized administrative structure, with the President and central ministries at the top, dealing with national affairs and overall guidance of the national economy, and three levels of local administration for planning and implementing regional and community development activities. Regional and district administrations, headed by commissioners, formed the second and third tiers, with wards and villages headed by party secretaries forming the base of the administrative pyramid.

Kenya's economic system remains basically capitalistic, but decentralization of planning and implementation also became the cornerstone of its rural development policy. The national development plan for 1970-1974 outlined a program for delegating substantial responsibility for development to provinces and districts. Provincial and district development advisory committees were set up "to coordinate and stimulate development at the local level by involving in the planning process, not only Government officials, but also the people through their representatives."<sup>26</sup> In 1974, the government further decentralized development functions by making the districts, rather than the provinces, centers of development administration. It would strengthen their technical and administrative capabilities by assigning District Development Officers (DDOs) to local development committees and by providing assistance with industrial, infrastructure, and natural and human resources development through District Planning Officers (DPOs). The staff of the ministries operating within each district were to become members of the development committees along with local officials and members of Parliament.

For the Sudan, decentralization was a necessity in a country that is larger in size than Western Europe and where the ability of the central government to rule from the capital city meets severe physical, political and organizational constraints. With the socialist revolution of 1969, President Gafaar Mohammed Nimeiry and the leaders of the Sudan Socialist Union advocated decentralization as a precondition for political stability and as a fundamental principle of socialist ideology. As one Sudanese official pointed out, decentralization was essential for creating the type of government that Sudan's leaders sought, a "system of government in which power is vested in

the masses." For them "mobilization of the masses for the maintenance of this power in their own hands and for the reconstruction of their own country and destiny" was an integral part of the concept of development.<sup>27</sup>

In 1971, Nimeiry attempted to decentralize by strengthening the authority and decision-making responsibilities of the provinces and by establishing a system of participation for localities. Decentralization was seen as the best way to make administration more responsive to the needs of diverse and physically isolated regions. It would make Sudan's socialist approach to development operable, and mobilize diverse cultural, religious and tribal groups in support of national policy. The People's Local Government Act of 1971 expanded the duties of the Province Commissioners and created Provincial Executive Councils to coordinate the work of local officials and central ministry technicians working in the provinces. Provincial planning teams were to be formed throughout the country. Moreover, within each province the Executive Council could create district, town, rural and village councils to which they could delegate planning and administrative responsibilities. Serious consideration is now being given to regionalizing the entire country and granting a form of autonomy similar to that given to the Southern Sudan in 1972 to the nation's three northern regions.<sup>28</sup>

#### Administrative Obstacles to Implementing Administrative Reform

The results of these administrative reforms have been mixed; none of the three governments has fully implemented its decentralization and participation policies. Many of the obstacles to reform, ironically, can be attributed to the very weaknesses in existing procedures, institutions and structures that the reforms sought to overcome. Moreover, none of the governments anticipated the constraints and obstacles to, nor engaged in detailed planning for, implementation.

Obstacles to the implementation of administrative reforms appeared quickly in the Sudan after the promulgation of the Local Government Act of 1971. The Act greatly increased the administrative responsibilities of the provinces, but also created serious problems for province and local councils, of which inadequate financial resources and the lack of trained personnel were the most pressing. Although the President had transferred many functions from central ministries to provincial executive councils, the national budget did not reflect the shift in workloads and responsibilities. As a result, the provinces lacked adequate facilities, equipment, supplies and trained personnel to perform their newly assigned duties. Although the central ministries were required to assign field staff to the provinces, many Commissioners complained that the central ministries did not second staff in sufficient numbers or of good quality to provincial posts. High rates of turnover, resentment on the part of some employees who were involuntarily transferred from Khartoum, and frequent changes in postings made stable administration in the provinces difficult.<sup>29</sup>

An investigation of decentralization conducted in 1975 by the national legislature (the People's Assembly) found that these and other problems were impeding implementation of the Local Government Act. The Assembly committee

found that ambiguity in the Act concerning relationships between provincial and local councils impeded the work of both and aggravated problems caused by inadequate manpower and financial resources. Many local councils were unable to perform their functions effectively, even four years after enactment of the local government law. Moreover, the committee discovered that without corporate status for local government, administrative officers were rendered powerless to perform their previous duties. Decision-making and administration were left almost entirely to the rather weak local councils; administrative functions had to be performed in many areas by what the Assembly committee called "part-time persons who may not even be qualified to carry them out."<sup>30</sup> In this atmosphere of ambiguity, the Local Government Act had little influence on changing the structure of informal leadership in rural villages.<sup>31</sup>

In 1976, the Assembly's Select Committee for the Study and Revision of the People's Local Government Act concluded that the 1971 law did not really devolve power as much as it deconcentrated it from some central ministries and reconsolidated it in other ministries and in the provincial Commissioner's offices. The People's Assembly was told by its Select Committee that "power thus becomes centered in the headquarters of the province and thus the administrative shadow expands at the same time it was meant to be contracted by the establishment of such a tremendous number of People's Local Councils."<sup>32</sup>

To overcome some of these implementation problems, Nimeiry introduced more drastic changes during the late 1970s. He reorganized some central ministries in 1977 and completely abolished others in 1978. He elevated province commissioners to cabinet rank and eliminated the Ministry of Local Government to which they had previously reported. In 1979 he devoted nearly all powers, except for a few national functions, to the provinces. Finally, the basis for national budgeting was altered to give the provinces more authority over their own expenditures. Despite these changes, however, decentralization programs still faced myriad administrative obstacles at the end of the 1970s.<sup>33</sup>

Similar problems--shortages of skilled personnel and financial resources, complex and ambiguous administrative procedures, institutional inflexibility, and weak administrative capacity at the local levels--obstructed implementation of Kenya's programs of deconcentration. Bureaucratic opposition to decentralization and widespread participation, moreover, limited the attainment of the program's goals. From the beginning, central ministries tried to maintain control over district and provincial planning and to restrict the scope of participation in the development committees. The Ministry of Finance and Planning made it clear in its early guidance to the provinces and districts that the development committees were to perform only review and approval functions, and not to take part in day-to-day planning. A manual issued by MOFP shortly after the 1974-1978 National Plan announced decentralization asserted that "it is utterly fallacious to think that a district action plan can be developed at a meeting of the DDC."<sup>34</sup> Ministry officials feared that political maneuvering would influence the formulation of the plan. "The DDO and the individual sectoral heads should together revise the draft if necessary in readiness for full discussion at the DDC," the manual instructed district development officers. "If this 'behind the scenes' consultation is effective, there will be little reason for 'political talks' in the DDC when

the draft proposals are put before the full session."<sup>35</sup> The Ministry of Finance and Planning also saw the participation of Members of Parliament and community organization leaders in the revised district planning process as a potential source of political conflict and told the district planners: "The fact of the matter is that the people's representatives should see the DDC as an institution where the heads of departments explain the rationale for their proposals and actions and also as a place where only minor modifications and adjustments that are necessary are made and not as the real planning arena."<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the principles of decentralization and participation in development planning proclaimed in the 1974-1978 Development Plan were not always supported by the Ministry of Finance and Planning or other central government agencies in Nairobi. Administration in Kenya remains highly centralized and province and district development committees play weak roles in development management. The central ministries retain strong control over sectoral plans and budgets and the relationship between national plans and district recommendations is often difficult to ascertain.

The government also ran into serious obstacles to implementing administrative reforms in Tanzania. Both the critics of Tanzania's strategies and more sympathetic evaluators point out that the government is a long way from achieving its goals of decentralized decision-making, widespread participation and equitable economic growth. The programs have not always worked as intended. Participation in rural areas, for instance varies widely among villages and regions. As World Bank evaluations note, the variation seems to be directly related to how well TANU is organized in the area and how intensively it pursues democratic participation. With the abolition of district councils TANU remains the primary, and sometimes only, channel of political representation for rural people.<sup>37</sup>

Nor has decentralized administration, especially in ujamaa villages, always been as efficient as advocates of local management claimed it would be. Organization of communal work in many villages is haphazard, and record-keeping and work-monitoring are nearly nonexistent, so it is difficult to know how much work is actually done on communal land. Nor does the government always know the level of output or rate of productivity in ujamaa villages. The steadily decreasing production in Tanzania since the early 1970s, however, seems to support the claims of critics that communal organization is less efficient than private production and that farmers are less motivated to work on communal plots.

Moreover, many families were pressured into moving to ujamaa villages, or persuaded by government or TANU officials with promises to provide services and facilities that they were unable to keep. These problems were aggravated by the severe shortages in trained manpower throughout the Tanzanian government, especially in rural areas, that prevented it from following up on development activities in the villages. Poorly trained and motivated agricultural extension and field agents, and deficiencies in applied agricultural research within the regions, also inhibit increases in agricultural production.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, the rapid creation of large numbers of ujamaa villages and the simultaneous decentralization of planning greatly increased demands for social services and facilities that the central government had to satisfy in order to keep the ujamaa program credible and to increase the motivation of rural people to participate. This resulted in severe financial problems for the central government. Since the early 1970s the government services sector has grown at rates well beyond those of agricultural and industrial production, leading to a deficit in the national budget for 1978-1979 of more than \$705 million. Decentralization has been costly and has forced a government dedicated to the principle of self-reliance to depend more and more on foreign assistance to finance national and local development programs.<sup>39</sup>

#### BEYOND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM: THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Experience with the implementation of development programs in East Africa shows quite clearly that obstacles are pervasive, and that they extend far beyond deficiencies in administrative procedures and organizational structure. Indeed, the complex administrative and organizational problems that arose to obstruct implementation in all three countries were often created by broader "environmental" factors that are rarely considered in the formulation of development plans and the design of policies and programs. Nor have these variables been well-integrated into development administration theory.

Yet, experience with decentralization programs in East Africa reveals their crucial importance in determining the success of policy implementation. The most important of these factors in the East African cases have been political will, bureaucratic attitudes and behavior, cultural traditions and practices, economic structure and spatial and physical systems. Together they formed the "environment" within which programs must be implemented and managed. They reshape the institutional models, administrative procedures and structural reforms transferred from outside of the society, either remolding them to conform to indigenous conditions or rendering them useless or perverse. The cultural environment more often changes administrative procedures and institutions in developing nations than the administrative reforms change environmental parameters. Although development administration theory sometimes refers vaguely to the importance of these "contextual variables," it provides little guidance for analyzing them in policy formulation and program design or for coping with them more effectively during implementation.

#### Political Will

To point out that political commitment and support are essential to program implementation borders on banality. Yet, in reality, the political feasibility of plans and programs are rarely tested in developed countries before

they are promulgated. Extensive administrative changes were introduced in Tanzania and the Sudan without assessing the depth and breadth of political support. Failure to reckon the strength of political opposition undermined and obstructed programs during implementation.<sup>40</sup> Little was done in any of the three countries to anticipate and cope with political opposition, or to build political support for decentralization, until after political problems arose. Then, advocates of decentralization had to spend a good deal of their political resources convincing other political leaders of the merits of participative decision-making. Nimeiry has had to exert considerable pressure almost constantly for a decade to obtain support for decentralization from other political leaders and cabinet members in the Sudan, and even after intensive efforts has not convinced some important political factions of its desirability.<sup>41</sup> It took nearly a decade for Nyerere's concept of ujamaa, formulated in the 1950s and early 1960s, to be incorporated into national policy, and another decade during the late 1960s and early 1970s to get the policy implemented.<sup>42</sup> Ultimately, both leaders had to resort to coercion--Nimeiry by constantly manipulating his cabinet and finally abolishing some central ministries where strong opposition to decentralization remained, and Nyerere by imposing the control of a single political party over the bureaucracy and local units of administration to obtain their support. Many ujamaa villages were created by coercion after the bureaucracy was brought under TANU's control. Where political ideology or coercion could not be brought to bear, as in Kenya, the implementation of decentralization programs was even less successful.

But the weaknesses in political commitment to decentralization should not have surprised those who formulated the programs, given East Africa's tradition of highly concentrated authority. Under both colonial regimes and independence movements, national and local political leaders benefitted from centrism and paternalism. These traditions shaped the attitudes of nearly all officials and much of the population toward the proper role of the national government.<sup>43</sup>

Nor did those who designed the decentralization programs calculate the depth of political opposition from local elites. Indeed, they saw decentralization as a way of breaking up traditional political influence by bringing younger leaders into community decision-making and by strengthening the role of centrally appointed officials at the local level. But in Tanzania, local elites often joined with small landowners and central ministry officials in obstructing or neutralizing programs to expand participation in development planning. In Kenya, local leaders often formed alliances with large landowners and central ministry officials or members of parliament to protect the existing pattern of resource allocation and resist changes proposed by district development committees. As Cliffe observes of Kenya, "the position of both political leaders and senior government officials depends on a patronage pattern which provides a link between their ambitions, and in turn their ability to deflect resources 'back home', and the aspirations of the local notables on whose organized support they partially depend."<sup>44</sup>

In retrospect it is clear that political support and commitment to decentralization and local participation in development planning in Kenya and Tanzania was limited to arrangements that would extract greater compliance from localities for central government policies or that would not interfere with existing allocations of resources. Commitment to more extensive forms of decentralization was constrained in both countries and the amount of support that can be mobilized for devolution in the Sudan is still uncertain.

### Bureaucratic Attitudes and Behavior

Adverse attitudes and behavior of government officials toward the participation of rural people in development planning and administration also underlie many of the obstacles to implementing decentralization programs in East Africa. Equally as important is the deep distrust that senior government officials have of local leaders and that rural people have for all government officials. East African bureaucracies have supported decentralization only reluctantly, in part, because of ingrained attitudes toward the sharing of power and the role of government in exercising control. The bureaucracy's resistance to devolution in the Sudan is attributable not only to the unwillingness of central ministries to transfer those functions that provided their base of financial and political influence, but also the deep distrust of local administrators and leaders among technicians and professionals within the central bureaucracy. A recurring objection by central ministry officials to devolution in the Sudan was that local administrators and rural people would not understand their work. They feared that in the field they would not receive the same amount of support that they got from supervisors in Khartoum who shared their professional values.<sup>45</sup>

Indeed, some of the most serious obstacles to implementing decentralization programs in all three countries arose from the discrepancies between national policy objectives and the behavior of government officials in the field. The pronouncements of the central government about the need for local participation in development planning and administration were often belied by the attitudes and behavior of field staff. Thoden VanVelzen's study of Rungwe District in Tanzania vividly illustrates the disparities between the central government's political rhetoric and the attitudes of district officials.<sup>46</sup> Field administrators in the districts maintain an air of superiority in dealing with rural people. They avoid social interaction with villagers and participation in their time-honored rituals and activities, which they sometimes demean as being primitive and backward. Government officials dress and act differently from rural people, expect and demand deference from farmers and villagers, and attempt to obtain their cooperation through threats and coercion. Even the lowest level agricultural extension agents in Tanzania are usually paid more than most farmers earn, and in addition receive substantial fringe benefits that give them a standard of living well above that of their clients. In both Tanzania and Kenya local staff

are usually assigned by central agencies to posts outside of their home districts and, thus, are not seen by villagers as one of the community, a distinction that many staff officers carefully maintain.

Moreover, the way in which government officials address and deal with rural people makes it clear that they do not expect them to be partners in development planning and administration. Thoden VanVelzen recalls a government extension agent at one village development committee meeting in Rungwe District telling the members: "Remember, you farmers are the chickens and we are the mother hens. If you follow our example you will survive, but if you are not attentive you will perish."<sup>47</sup> The remarks are particularly ironic because most junior extension agents are poorly trained and know little about local agricultural conditions that farmers have dealt with for generations or about the methods they have used to survive against constant adversities. This paternalism may simply be amusing to rural people or provide additional evidence that government officials cannot be trusted, but the arrogance displayed by many local administrators often creates resentment or hostility that negates the government's attempts to elicit support for development policy and adds to the uncertainty about government intentions and motivations. Thoden VanVelzen relates the remarks of a community development officer at a local committee meeting in the same Tanzanian districts:

I am new to this area, so it will be useful if I tell you something about my character. I am not a kind and polite man; I am cruel. If I see that government orders are not obeyed, I will know where to find you and how to punish you. I do not care if you hate me. The only important thing to me is that the orders of the government are fulfilled.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, the interminable delays and flagrant inefficiencies in providing government services that undermine development administration at all levels cannot be attributed entirely to inadequate administrative procedures or inappropriately structured organizations. The most numerous complaints about government officials in East Africa arise from two seemingly inconsistent sets of behavior; a slavish conformance at times to complex, detailed and ponderous procedures to accomplish even the simplest and most routine tasks, and the seeming ignorance of or deviation from established procedure at other times. Nellis notes that both situations are due to administrators' overwhelming fear of making mistakes, and to the pervasive practice of passing problems on to other levels of administration in order to lighten workloads. He argues that although "the bureaucracy is over-bureaucratized and over-routinized, it is at the same time under-bureaucratized; meaning that officials use routine to reduce rather than to expedite work."<sup>49</sup> Problems are not dealt with, but rather passed from one level or unit of organization to another, because "cases and events that are out of the ordinary contain numerous possibilities for making mistakes; even minor errors are avoided at all costs, and the result is a strict, indeed constricting interpretation of the rules."<sup>50</sup> Yet, complaints are also made of arbitrariness, preferential treatment, failure to follow established procedures, ignorance of the rules and other behavior that allows bureaucrats to cut through "red tape" when it suits their purposes. In the Sudan, the inevitable long queues in any government office can be circumvented if the client is a relative of

or member of the same village or tribe as the government official in charge, or is recognized by him as being an "important person." The ubiquitous bribe, of course, can obtain preferential service in any East African country.

### Cultural Traditions and Practices

These obstacles to effective program implementation, in turn, cannot be fully explained without understanding the cultural milieu in which they exist. Paternalism and deference to authority are extremely strong in East African countries. The behavior of field staff toward rural people, for instance, is not unlike the behavior of senior government officials toward the field staff. In Kenya, senior officers attempt to control field staff because they consider them lazy and unreliable. Thus they give them little discretion in planning or decision-making. Despite the formal structure of decentralization, senior officials are reluctant to delegate responsibility for even routine activities.<sup>51</sup> As a result, nearly all of the attention of the field staff goes to implementing higher level directives; little attempt is made to meet the needs of clients. And even when field officers attempt to comply with the decentralized planning procedures, their initiatives are generally ignored. "The poor experience with plan preparation at the field level," Trapman concludes from his study of agricultural development administration in Kenya, may be explained in part by "a lack of support in the past for proposals which field staff have taken the trouble to prepare. This has created a disillusioned attitude toward further efforts in this direction. The same applies to the preparation of estimates annually by District and Provincial staff, which are rarely given consideration in annual estimates discussions."<sup>52</sup>

But ironically, the hierarchical structure of government and the overt attempts by high-level administrators to exercise control mask severe deficiencies in supervision and enforcement, many of which are due to deeply ingrained cultural traditions and practices. In the Sudan for example, government employees at all levels must deal with each other in ways that stress "smooth" interpersonal relations. Conflict and criticism must be repressed. The inability of administrators to dismiss or even severely reprimand incompetent public employees accounts for the lack of discipline and widespread corruption within the civil service that extends down to the lowest levels. One regional minister in Southern Sudan, for example, who was previously a provincial commissioner, describes the case of a clerk in one of the ministry offices who continually files originals of letters, fails to tell his superiors about serious problems, and performs his duties lackadaisically. "He should be dismissed," the Minister contends. "But he has three wives and nine children and if I take disciplinary steps I will become the object of scorn, a kawaja (white man) they will call me."<sup>53</sup> Even if charges are brought against incompetent public employees, the disciplinary committee that must be formed under civil service regulations is unlikely to recommend serious punishment, because the traditional Sudanese concept of malesh requires that wrongdoers be forgiven and inhibits anyone from taking the initiative at imposing punishment.

The manner in which bureaucrats interact with each other and with their clients is therefore usually more important than the results or consequences of their work. The strong tradition of face-to-face communications heavily burdens middle- and high-level administrators in the Sudan, for instance, who spend an overwhelming amount of their time in personal meetings with other officials, superiors, subordinates and clients, rather than dispatching work through indirect or written communications, which is considered impersonal and rude in Sudanese society. Moreover, face-to-face interaction is necessary because the Moslem concept of shura requires mutual consultation to solve problems. Anyone who takes individual initiative is condemned. Thus, decision-making and problemsolving are slow, time-consuming and uncertain processes.<sup>54</sup>

High level administrators are unable simply to order subordinates to carry out directives, and thus administration in the Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania is highly politicized and organizational control is maintained, if at all, through patronage alliances between senior and junior officers. "Whom one knows and not what one does is regarded as the key to personal betterment," Moris points out. "Distrust of associates is common and many senior officials employ protective strategies vis-a-vis the younger generation of officials as a matter of routine."<sup>55</sup> Stable alliances are maintained by senior officials by transferring trusted subordinates with them when they are given promotions or new posts.

### Economic Structure

A factor that strongly influenced the ability of governments in East Africa to implement decentralization programs, but which was given surprisingly little attention in policy design, was the economic structure within which the programs would have to be managed. Decentralization policies in all three countries were promulgated without considering the impact on the economy or the implications of the weak economic structure in rural areas on the ability of local administrations to raise the financial resources to carry out the programs. Central authorities in all three countries transferred planning and administrative functions to lower levels without providing sufficient financial resources or adequate legal powers to collect and allocate revenues within local jurisdictions. These financial limitations alone raise serious questions about the feasibility of decentralization. But resource shortages at the local level were also aggravated by national economic problems.

Since the mid-1970s all three countries have faced serious balance of payments deficits, high rates of inflation, rising costs of fuel, and rapid increases in recurrent expenditures. Decentralization policies seem to have intensified rather than alleviated these problems. Even in Kenya, which probably has the most stable financial situation of any of the East African governments, the problems are formidable.<sup>56</sup> The rising costs of social services demanded by and provided to the ujamaa villages in Tanzania have increased recurrent expenditures there to a level far beyond the government's ability to raise domestic revenues. National financial problems in Tanzania have significantly slowed progress on decentralization.<sup>57</sup>

Limited resources for development not only make the decentralization of functions more difficult, but make the value of participation in development planning questionable when local citizens realize they have little or no control over financial resources with which to carry out their plans. The People's Assembly Committee that evaluated the results of the Sudan's Local Government Act in 1976 was blunt in its conclusions: "It became apparent that the insufficiency of funds was the basic cause...of weaknesses...in the institutions of the People's Local Government and of turning them into empty skeletons" the Committee reported. "It also...killed any ambitions or hope to develop present services, let alone to present new services to people."<sup>58</sup> Similar weaknesses were found in the financial and administrative capacity of Kenya's country councils and other Local Authorities to carry out development programs.<sup>59</sup>

In most of the poorer rural areas in these three countries the economic structure is simply too weak to provide adequate tax resources. In the Sudan, the forms of taxation that can be imposed on subsistence economies are extremely limited and consist primarily of personal property and herd taxes that are difficult to assess. Tax collection is generally inefficient and very costly to the Provinces because population is widely scattered in villages that are physically isolated from each other and from the province capital. The costs of recording, auditing and collection are often so expensive in relation to the amounts collected as to make revenue raising unrewarding to local councils. The problems are even more difficult among nomadic groups.<sup>60</sup>

### Spatial and Physical Systems

Finally, one of the most crucial factors obstructing the implementation of decentralization and participation programs was virtually ignored in the formulation of policy and is rarely considered in development administration theory: the spatial and physical characteristics of the country in which the programs are to be administered.

One of the strongest arguments offered for decentralized planning and administration in East Africa is that the countries are large and heterogeneous and that many of the peripheral areas are too physically isolated from the national capital to allow effective central planning and management. Yet these same physical conditions that make central government ineffective--size of the country, the heterogeneity of regions, distance among administrative centers--are also obstacles to effective decentralization. They are not conducive to national integration and unity, to promoting efficient service delivery, or to allowing communications and interaction among local administrative units within regions.

Physical inaccessibility and lack of communications facilities within rural areas plagued the implementation of decentralization programs in Tanzania and Kenya from the beginning. In Tanzania, a country of vast size, only about 10 percent of the less than 34,000 kilometers of roads were of all-weather construction in 1979. Existing roads are not well-maintained and

those areas that are not directly connected to a paved road are virtually isolated for much of the year. Only a small percentage of all farm families live within a day's walking distance of an access road, making the distribution of government services or information difficult if not impossible in many rural areas.<sup>61</sup> Although roads and transportation facilities tend to be better in Kenya, they are not well maintained because of scarcities in equipment and trained personnel. Trapman notes that "accessibility is one of the major problems of providing an extension service to a mass of small-scale farmers, with only a limited number of extension staff, who lack proper transportation facilities and supplies."<sup>62</sup>

Lack of physical infrastructure and low levels of transport and communications access are symptomatic of a larger problem that obstructs decentralized planning and administration in developing countries. The settlement systems in all three East African nations are poorly articulated; that is, they do not consist of large numbers of "central places" of different sizes capable of supporting a wide range of services and facilities. Moreover, existing settlements are not well integrated into regional and national economies. Poorly articulated and weakly linked settlement systems, resulting from overconcentration of public investment in the largest metropolitan centers, create obstacles to the decentralization of planning and administrative functions. Under these conditions, it becomes nearly impossible to coordinate decision-making units and establish effective interaction among localities or with the central government. Moreover, they create enormous difficulties for local administrators in mobilizing resources, supervising field personnel, distributing services and disseminating information. Unarticulated and unintegrated spatial systems foster political isolation as well. Political linkages between local jurisdictions and higher levels of government, and between citizens and local decision-makers, are crucial for decentralized planning and management. "Without well-developed linkages--which we define as valued and stable networks of communication and exchange of resources--between government and the members of society, public policy cannot be formulated to respond to the needs of the population," Barkan insists. "Nor can the population be expected to comply with such policies as the state seeks to carry out if its members do not understand the rationale behind these policies and the benefits they might bring."<sup>63</sup>

#### IMPROVING IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING AND ANALYSIS: SOME BASIC DIRECTIONS AND PRINCIPLES

If program implementation is to be substantially improved during the 1980s, planners and administrators in developing countries must begin using more effective methods for analyzing potential obstacles, identifying preconditions for change, specifying administrative requirements and coping with the environmental factors that influence the management of development policy. Development administration as a field of intellectual and professional inquiry must therefore become more concerned with devising and testing the analytical procedures needed for implementation planning and for dealing with the complexities of program administration. This clearly requires a deeper understanding of the variables that affect program implementation in developing

nations, especially the political, behavioral, cultural, economic and physical factors that were so crucial in the East African cases. It also requires the development of a "grounded" theory of management that is useful and applicable in developing countries.

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the dimensions of such a theory in detail, the lessons of experience with decentralization in East Africa provide the basic outline for a "strategic" approach to implementation planning. They point to a concept of development administration that is more applied than the administrative modernization and institution-building theories of the 1960s and 1970s, but more broadly defined than the tool-oriented approach of the 1950s. Such a concept of development administration would be less concerned with grand schemes for administrative reform or the transfer of techniques and institutions from industrialized nations, and more with increasing the analytical ability of Third World planners and managers to assess and cope with the administrative and environmental complexities of setting and achieving policy goals. The elements of such an approach would include: broad reconnaissance as the basis for strategic analysis and intervention; sequenced, incremental action; "engaged planning"; use of simplified management procedures and indigenous resources; and a facilitative style of administration.

Together, these elements form an approach that is quite different from that taken in the design and implementation of decentralization programs in East Africa. Two of the most glaring problems with that approach were the narrow reconnaissance that was done of the environment in which the programs had to be carried out, and the sweeping scope of the reforms that were undertaken. Indeed, the scope of administrative reform in all three countries was so badly defined that effective management would have been extremely difficult under any conditions. The success of large-scale government intervention to promote social change is problematical even in industrial societies where leaders have access to far more resources than are available to policymakers in developing nations. A more effective approach would reverse these emphases: it would undertake a broad reconnaissance to analyze environmental conditions, potential obstacles and administrative requirements, and use strategic, sequenced and incremental interventions to establish the preconditions necessary to set economic, social and political changes in motion. Moreover, it would depend on less complex and more clearly defined administrative procedures that use and transform indigenous resources and that attempt to facilitate and guide, rather than dominate and control, administrative behavior.

### Broad Reconnaissance

Planners and administrators in developing countries have sufficient experience with comprehensive macro-level development planning to discount this approach to formulating implementation strategy.<sup>64</sup> Broadly based but more refined methods of analysis are needed. The ability of planners and administrators to identify and understand all of the potential obstacles to program implementation is, of course, quite limited in any society. Hirschman is basically correct in pointing out that all development programs and projects--no matter how

carefully designed--are attended by unanticipated threats to their success that are often met with unsuspected remedial actions. Problems of implementation cannot be entirely anticipated and planned for in advance. Implementation will inevitably remain what Hirschman calls a "long voyage of discovery in the most varied domains."<sup>65</sup>

The problem in most developing nations is not that implementation planning is too comprehensive and detailed, but that it is often not done at all, or done only superficially. The "long voyage of discovery" is usually embarked upon without maps or charts of the terrain and with only vague notions about destinations. In all three East African countries, for example, decentralization was attempted without assessing the capacity of local administrative skills of local officials. In the Sudan, for example, functions were devolved from central ministries to provincial councils and commissioners en masse. It was simply assumed that capacity for development planning and management existed, or that it would expand as functions were decentralized. Both assumptions, thus far, have proven false. Similar problems arose with decentralization in Kenya because the post-colonial government simply made Local Authorities responsible for the same functions they had during colonial rule. But Local Authorities had lost the benefits of colonial administrative and technical skills and were subsequently unable to perform many of the functions allocated to them.<sup>66</sup> Although in all three countries, some of the functions decentralized to local administrations are "permissive"--that is, local administrations have the authority to perform them only when they have sufficient resources--many of the functions are mandated, even though local capacity or resources to carry them out may not exist.

There are methods that have been used successfully in developing countries to assess the conditions under which programs must be implemented. They emphasize broad reconnaissance of the environment and focus on factors that are crucial for successful implementation. One such method of design and analysis is the Logical Framework, developed by Rosenberg and Posner of PCI in 1969 and adopted by USAID, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and more than a dozen developing nations to plan and evaluate programs and projects. The Logical Framework requires planners and administrators to address explicitly the hierarchy of objectives of a program, to identify the resources needed to attain the objectives, to define and establish measurable indicators of results, and to delineate and describe assumptions about the controllable and uncontrollable variables that might influence the success of a program. It provides a procedure for broadly scanning the environment in which the program will be undertaken and for more systematically identifying the political, social, cultural, behavioral, and physical assumptions about program design. Moreover, the Logical Framework explicitly recognizes the inevitable uncertainty involved in program implementation and focuses attention on the actions that must be taken to increase the probability that program objectives will be achieved. The description of assumptions also allows administrators to monitor the progress of programs during implementation and to decide when plans must be redesigned to cope with unanticipated events.<sup>67</sup>

A similar form of analytical reconnaissance was developed by Practical Concepts Incorporated for assessing the viability of institutions in developing countries to carry out new programs and missions. Adapting and

simplifying the institution-building approach, PCI developed an "institutional viability model" for evaluating the capacity of existing organizations to operate efficiently and effectively in new situations or to continue functioning productively with new missions or objectives. Three essential properties of institutions--image or the cognitive dimensions of what people think about an organization, morale or the affective dimensions of the attitudes clients and staff hold about an organization, and money or resources that can be acquired with money--are examined to assess the viability of institutions for implementing new programs and policies.<sup>68</sup>

### Strategic Analysis and Intervention

Because all of the factors that will influence program implementation cannot be anticipated and controlled in advance, implementation planning must be strategic; that is, it must specify incremental interventions that are manageable with the resources available. Charles Lindblom, the foremost advocate of this approach to policy analysis, describes three fundamental characteristics of strategic analysis and intervention. First, analysis is limited to alternative policies or programs that differ only incrementally from current policies. This makes the tasks of analysis and implementation more manageable in a number of ways: it reduces the number of alternatives to be examined, focuses analysis on those alternatives with which planners and administrators are already familiar and about which they have some knowledge and information, and permits them to isolate those environmental variables that are most likely to impinge on successful program implementation. It begins with what is known and attempts to specify interventions that will set other changes in motion rather than beginning with sweeping changes about which little is known or can be predicted. Second, strategic analysis focuses on converting "the problem" into a sequence of problems that can be solved with available resources. This reduces the complexity of analysis, allows better use of information and feedback and permits the reconsideration of goals and means as administrative and environmental problems appear during implementation. Third, the analysis focuses on examination of goals and values in close connection with the means available to achieve them and with empirical investigation of alternatives and their possible consequences.<sup>69</sup> This allows planners and administrators to examine alternatives in light of the values imbedded in current attitudes and behavior, cultural practices and traditions and economic and political structures.

The failure to do this kind of implementation analysis in East Africa allowed policymakers to overlook or ignore a wide range of preconditions for decentralized planning and administration. Strategic interventions to create these preconditions would have made implementation of the reorganization programs easier and more successful. The failure to build up the financial and administrative capacities of local governments, for example, and to establish supporting institutions at the local level prior to deconcentrating functions, obstructed implementation of decentralization programs in all three countries.

### Incremental and Sequential Action

Strategic analysis should identify a sequence of incremental actions that can be taken to implement policies and programs. Implementation then becomes a series of "successive approximations" toward problemsolving that are manageable and more controllable than large-scale, sweeping reforms. The division of large-scale programs into incremental and sequential tasks can be done in either of two ways: by identifying actions that will gradually overcome deficiencies and create preconditions and requirements for successful program implementation, or by designing programs as policy experiments to reduce over time uncertainties and unknowns about program execution.

Had the first alternative been used in designing East African decentralization programs, for instance, policy analysts would have delineated specific tasks aimed at overcoming deficiencies in local governments and creating the preconditions that would have allowed lower level administrative units to absorb increasing responsibilities. Government reorganization might have been preceded by intensive personnel training and manpower development projects for local officials in functions that would have subsequently been transferred to them from central ministries. Analysts would then have identified programs and projects designed to build up the financial and administrative capacities of local governments. Decentralization would have proceeded only as local units acquired the capacity to perform larger numbers of functions more effectively.

The second alternative would have allowed policy analysts to view program design and implementation as experimental activities. Programs would have been disaggregated into a series of experimental projects dealing with aspects of decentralization about which relatively little was known: the most appropriate forms of decentralization for provinces or districts with different levels of administrative capacity; the effectiveness of different forms of planning and administration procedures at the local level; the amounts and types of inputs or resources required to make decentralized administration work; and the acceptability of alternative organizational arrangements to the rural population and local leaders. The experiments would have been designed to test alternatives in different districts and provinces to reduce the uncertainties and unknowns about decentralization and participation in rural areas. Pilot projects would then be used to test the results of the experiments under less controlled or a greater variety of conditions, and to adapt or modify methods, techniques and organizational arrangements proven successful in the experimental projects. A series of demonstration projects would then be designed to exhibit the effectiveness of arrangements tested in the experimental and pilot projects and to increase the acceptability of new procedures and arrangements on a broader scale. Finally, when unknowns and uncertainties were greatly reduced and more information and experience had been gained with implementing these programs, decentralization would be extended on a larger scale and institutionalized at the local level throughout the country.<sup>70</sup>

### Engaged Planning

Moreover, if implementation is to be improved, policymakers in developing countries must begin to practice what Jon Moris calls "engaged planning." Moris argues that policies and programs often cannot be implemented successfully by existing bureaucracies through routine administration. Special arrangements must often be made to protect and promote new programs and to guide their institutionalization. He contends that in East Africa "development does not occur under either private or socialist auspices unless someone regularly puts in a large margin of extra 'intelligence' effort of a managerial nature."<sup>71</sup> Either specific individuals with a high degree of motivation to achieve program goals must be placed in charge of these activities within each organization that has implementation responsibilities, or special implementation units must be created to administer the programs outside of the regular bureaucratic structure. In any case, Moris argues that:

Somebody must keep the daily activities of distinct but vertically interlocked services under surveillance, must frame contingency plans, ...must indulge in bureaucratic politics in order to secure the commitments implied in action programmes, and must be prepared even to break the rules in an emergency.<sup>72</sup>

Semi-autonomous or functional authorities, and "task groups" or field teams of professionals and technicians were needed to assist local organizations with performing the functions transferred from the central government to localities in East Africa, for example, if decentralization policies were to be implemented more successfully. Because the central ministries were reluctant to support decentralization, there was the need in all three East African countries for mobile teams of planning, finance and technical experts who were not tied to the civil service system to help build up the capacities of local governments to assume the functions transferred to them. In the Sudan, such teams were needed to provide assistance to local and provincial councils and development committees with project identification, plan formulation, annual budgeting and revenue raising. Assistance was also required to institutionalize those functions once local councils and development committees attained a minimum level of competence.

Clearly, provisions must be made in implementation strategies for "engaged planning" to bring development programs through the initial stages of dissemination and execution and to institutionalize them in organizations that can carry them on when special implementation arrangements end.

### Simplified Management Procedures and Use of Indigenous Institutions

It is also clear from the experience in East Africa that new administrative procedures and arrangements must be relatively simple and uncomplicated; and their purposes must be clearly defined. Complex planning and management methods rarely work at any level of government in developing countries, and especially at the local level in rural areas. Rural people either ignore complex administrative procedures or are exploited by government officials who can use the

confusing processes to manipulate them. Moreover, skills and resources for management are in short supply in rural areas and administrative capacity is relatively weak. Chambers and Belshaw concluded from their experience with the management of rural development programs in Kenya that "in designing management procedures, the temptation is to introduce more and more requirements and measures, more and more complicated techniques and more and more elaborate relationships. But such an approach quickly leads to a drop in output and eventually to paralysis."<sup>73</sup>

Ambiguity in the administrative procedures and arrangements used to bring about decentralization in East Africa also led to serious problems of implementation in all three countries. Public pronouncements in Kenya, Tanzania and the Sudan often implied that the administrative reforms initiated in the early 1970s would create systems of local government. Indeed, the language of the decentralization laws--and even their titles--used the term "local government," whereas in reality leaders in the three countries only intended to create systems of local administration that would be controlled or influenced from the center. Ambiguity in the political rhetoric led both to confusion and to resentment in some rural areas because the implied promises of local governance could not be fulfilled.

Equally important, implementation strategies must make provision for using and eventually transforming as many existing institutions as possible in executing developing programs. To the extent that it is feasible, administrative changes should incorporate those indigenous resources and traditional procedures that can be effective in implementing new policies, rather than unnecessarily displacing them or destroying their potential utility. In areas of Tanzania where decentralization displaced traditional leaders, it sometimes destroyed indigenous authority and informal relationships and eliminated men from village decision-making who had been effective at mobilizing local resources for self-help projects. Such programs can often be administered much more successfully where traditional leaders and groups can be convinced to participate and are given a meaningful role.<sup>74</sup>

### Facilitative Administration

Finally, the lessons of the East African experience point up the need for a more facilitative style of administration in Third World nations. An important challenge to development administration is to assist in identifying and testing administrative procedures and mechanisms that rely less on central control and more on incentives and exchange to achieve development objectives. This does not mean that policies should be aimed at weakening or dismantling central government ministries and bureaucracies as was done in the Sudan, but they should seek to reorient the role of central bureaucracies from one of domination and control of development programs to one of facilitation and support for decentralized implementation. In developing nations the resources of all levels of government are needed to ensure the success of development efforts. As David Leonard correctly points out in his study of agricultural administration in Kenya, "in a decentralized

administrative structure the center needs to be every bit as strong as in a centralized one, but the reorientation required is one of technical service rather than of hierarchical control."<sup>75</sup>

A wide range of managerial techniques exist to guide and facilitate local decision-making that do not depend primarily on hierarchical control, and that give local groups more latitude in formulating and implementing development programs. Central agencies can often set off desired development activities simply by using indirect intervention--through prices, subsidies or rewards--that benefit local officials and rural people rather than punishing them for failure to conform to national development plans and central directives. Information dissemination, educational, and persuasion techniques are often more effective than threats, pressures and punishments in eliciting cooperation and generating innovative approaches to problemsolving.<sup>76</sup>

In brief, an important and exciting challenge lies ahead for development administration in the 1980s to begin formulating a grounded theory that provides the analytical methods and administrative arrangements for improving policy and program implementation in developing countries. The goals of development policy for the remaining decades of this century have been clearly stated--development must be more equitable, more participative and more effective in reaching the vast majority of the people who have been excluded from the benefits of economic and social progress in the past. Finding ways of improving the implementation of programs to achieve those policy objectives can be one of the most important contributions to international development in the next decade.

## FOOTNOTES

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