

DISAGGREGATING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT FOR  
AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

The central theme of this paper is that planning and evaluating development management in Africa requires more thorough and coherent disaggregation than is usually found in the writings of academics or the formulations of practitioners. Sub-Saharan Africa itself is a highly diverse region, culturally, geographically, economically, socially, politically. There is an a priori case that standard administrative organization and practices would be inappropriate in many, perhaps most places.

But beyond this, once one begins analyzing the variety of levels, sectors, functions and objectives of development administration, it becomes evident that standard administrative organization and practices will be inappropriate for most development purposes as well.

In the literature on development administration and management, as well as in consultant reports and expert conferences, there have been repeated calls for "decentralization" of government operations, to provide more differentiated and more responsive services to the public, especially where central capacities to provide many services are weak.

But this prescription derives from social and political contexts quite different from most of sub-Saharan Africa. The constituent aspects of decentralization -- deconcentration and devolution -- do not fit the African circumstances as aptly as they apply elsewhere. Central governments often have little capacity to provide services beyond the main urban centers and little authority to remit or share. On the other hand, there are latent managerial capacities outside government that can be mobilized to support developmental activities in rural areas.

We are searching for more suitable terms to guide African development management. The overall concept we propose is that of "disaggregated" development management. We proceed empirically, invoking relatively little "theory," seeking rather to identify managerial capacities and potential wherever they can be found. Such an effort requires disciplined analysis, using concepts that are rigorous and categories that are mutually exclusive. Anything less will muddle an already confusing task.

Our basic approach is to distinguish between "state" and "societal" sectors, on the one hand, and between "national" and "local" levels, on the other. In Africa, most efforts at improving development management have been focused on the state and national ends of the two continua. In fact, for development management to become more broadly effective, there needs to be more focus on the societal and local ends of each spectrum.

Apart from the central institutions of government, which have a role in any decentralized or disaggregated program of development management, one can deal with:

1. Administrative structures which reach 'down' through bureaucratic hierarchies on behalf of the center to the district or sub-district level, responsive primarily to the directives of the government.
2. Local structures which can reach 'up' from the individual and household level to undertake collective action in response to local needs.

An elaboration and meshing of these two sets of structures, as discussed in Part III, holds the key to improved development management. For this to be done effectively requires a systematic understanding of the variations within the administrative and the local realms, so that tasks and capabilities can be disaggregated and matched. This analysis we offer cursorily in Part II, to be followed by an exploration of problems of disaggregated management that are particularly relevant in contemporary Africa.

## II. FRAMEWORK FOR DISAGGREGATING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Development management can and should be disaggregated in at least five ways -- according to the:

- (a) levels at which the management activities occur;
- (b) channels through which the management is undertaken;
- (c) sectors where management is to be accomplished;
- (d) inputs which can be utilized by managers; and
- (d) functions which are performed by managers.

In our analysis we will suggest how each of these presents particular problems and opportunities for improving development management in Africa by taking a disaggregated perspective on the tasks of management.

## A. LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Analytically one can identify at least ten levels at which development management responsibilities may be assigned. These range from the international (supra-national) level down to the level of the individual decision-maker.

1. International Level of Management (Donor Agencies)
2. National Level of Management (Central Government)
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3. Regional Level of Management (State/Provincial Government)
4. District Level of Management (District Administration)
5. Sub-District Level of Management (Sub-District Offices)
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6. Locality Level of Management (Market Town Area)
7. Community Level of Management (Village Residential Area)
8. Group Level of Management (Hamlet, Occupational or  
Other Grouping of Households and Individuals)
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9. Household Level of Management
10. Individual Level of Management

The first two levels (international and national) are highly aggregated levels for development management. Below them we come to three "disaggregated" levels -- regional, district and sub-district, which are "administrative structures," as discussed in section I. Not every country has all these structures. Some countries with little management capacity (or very small size) have only the national and district levels of administration.

What is colloquially called "the local level" in practice has three disaggregated levels -- locality, community and group.

The locality is a set of communities that have established patterns of communication, economic exchange and social cooperation, usually corresponding to what is called in regional science "market towns." (Johnson, 1970; Mosher, 1969). In not very large countries, the sub-district and locality may cover essentially the same area and population, in which case there is one less level to be considered. On the other hand, we also find very

often in African countries that the administrative boundaries (sub-district or district) do not coincide with the "natural" social boundaries set by patterns of kinship, intermarriage, or traditional authority, as discussed in section III. Thus there can be problems arising from the incongruence of social and administrative units of action.

The term "community" implies a fairly cohesive and bounded social unit, having common interests and capability of collective action. In fact, this is not always the case. In Africa, what are called "villages" were in fact often administratively defined to suit bureaucratic convenience, for tax or census purposes. One should not assume that the "community" level exists in any more than a nominal sense (as shown to be the case in parts of Botswana by Roe and Fortmann, 1982). But where it is operative, it presents substantial opportunities for devolving development management responsibilities.

The group level is a familiar and very flexible one, not necessarily defined territorially as are the levels above it. Groups are made up of members (though residence, as in a neighborhood, can be a criterion of membership). Economic interest, age, sex, and especially kinship can provide the basis for group identification and action. If groups get large enough, they can reach the locality, district or even national level, but once beyond the elementary group level they acquire a territorial definition, and the level is no longer that of a simple "group."

When it comes to development management, the activities of the household and individual are not seen as part of the system so much as being the objective of management. The activities of higher levels of organization should assist individuals and households to become more productive, more healthy, better educated, more secure, more in control of their lives, etc.

The tasks of disaggregated development management are to be shared among these six levels (3 through 8), so that the burden of planning and supervising agricultural and rural development can be shared by representatives of rural society as well as by agencies responsible to the state. The assignment of tasks among levels would depend on the sector and function to be served, and on the social and organizational capacities existing or potential in the country.

The levels described represent options for development management but they should not be regarded as mutually exclusive alternatives. Agencies are not likely to be successful if they try to build capacity and handle operations at a single level in isolation from others. Rather, strategies should seek to strengthen complementary capacities at several levels, supporting effective vertical linkage among them. Special efforts should be made to identify and draw on the neglected managerial capabilities of the societal sectors, 6 through 8, and to link them with regional, district and sub-district agencies of government, voluntary organizations and private enterprises.

## B. CHANNELS OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The channels through which development management activity can take place are of different kinds. They range on a continuum from public sector organizations at one end to private enterprises at the other. In the middle are membership institutions which have some characteristics of both the public and private sectors, seeking collective rather than purely private benefits through group action, but acting in a voluntary way rather than relying on the authority of the state (Esman and Uphoff, 1984). The channels are of three basic types:

- (a) governmental or quasi-governmental: organizations that rely on the authority and other resources of the state; in addition to line departments, this may include agencies operating somewhat independently of the government of the day, e.g. public corporations, still accountable to the "public" directly or indirectly;
- (b) membership or self-help: organizations set up by persons to advance their interests through collective action; including cooperatives as well as functional and interest groups accountable to their members like water user associations or women's clubs;
- (c) private or quasi-private: organizations that operate on a for-profit basis, accountable to owners rather than to customers or employees (except through price or collective bargaining mechanisms), or on a charitable basis, such as Red Cross societies or religious organizations, accountable to patrons or contributors rather than to beneficiaries.

These channels represent a different way of viewing the options for development management and should be seen as complementary (Uphoff and Esman, 1974). Planners should seek to capitalize on the respective strengths of each possibility, to compensate for the weaknesses of other channels. For example, the amount of resources that can be drawn on through public channels is usually greater than through voluntary or private channels, but the flexibility of resource use through the latter is greater.

It is unlikely that development programs can succeed working through just one of these channels, since they are mutually supportive even more than they are competitive. Even co-ops and small businesses in a community may contribute to the more efficient functioning of each other. Disaggregated management involves not putting all one's development "eggs" in any one basket but rather distributing them appropriately by channel as well as level.

The analytical categories of level and channel together encompass the organizational variety sketched in the workshop proposal. Its 17 examples are shown in the table on page 6. Numbers in parentheses refer to the proposals's numbering of examples.

ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT CHANNELS

LEVELS	<u>Governmental/ Quasi-Govt.</u>	<u>Membership/ Voluntary</u>	<u>Private/ Quasi-Pvt.</u>
International	Bilateral & intl. donor agencies	Society for Internatl. Development	Multi-natl. corporations/ external PVOs (9/12)
National	National ministries/ parastatals/ autonomous authorities (1/5/6)	National cooperative federation (14)	National corporations/ national PVOs (10/13)
Regional/ State/ Provincial	State govts/ decentralized units of natl. administration/ regl. parastatals and authorities (2/3/5/6)	Regional cooperative federation (14)	Regional companies/ regional PVOs (10/13)
District	District administration/distr. local government/ bank branches (4/8)	District supply cooperative (14)	District companies/ charitable org's. (11/13)
Sub-district	Sub-distr. admin. offices/possibly sub-distr. local govt./bank branches (4/8)	Sub-district marketing cooperative (14)	Rural enterprises/ charitable org's. (11/13)
Locality	Extension service/ schools/clinics (4/7)	Wholesale cooperative society (14)	Small businesses/ service orgs. (11/13)
Community	Extension agent/ teacher/visiting nurse/ village self-government (4/16)	Community cooperative/ health committees (14/15)	Small businesses/ service orgs. (11/13)
Group	Neighborhood or ward councils (16)	Water user associations/ pastoralist groups (15)	Informal sector businesses (11)
Household/ Individual (17)	Citizen/voter/ taxpayer	Member	Customer/ beneficiary

## C. SECTORS OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

There is sometimes a presumption that "management" is a generic process that it is essentially the same for any and all activities. As discussed in section D below, there are some generic functions which can be ascribed abstractly to all management. But the profile of management activities should be varied for the different concrete requirements of the various sectors.

Since the projects to be evaluated under this program are chosen from among agricultural and rural development activities, with an emphasis on agricultural research, extension, supply and marketing, we will take this sector for our examples. The kind of development management required for agriculture is not what is needed for primary health care or for rural public works, to refer to contrasting sectors. The differences may often be more of degree than of kind, but they are significant nonetheless for choosing among the different channels and levels when searching for the best mix to implement development projects.

Let us start with consideration of personnel management and getting the best performance from staff, the focus for our workshop's second working group. In development management, relations with the "client" are very important, to get the best technical result intended and to encourage the behavioral changes implied in that particular aspect of development.

In agriculture, the "client" is usually a household or individual producer, not a patient as in health or a user as with a rural road. The institutions of government, self-help and private business are effective in promoting agricultural development to the extent they can prompt thousands, even millions of micro-enterprises faced with resource constraints, risk factors, limited knowledge, etc. to make entrepreneurial decisions which result in increased output or stability of production. The whole environment must be taken into account -- weather, prices, storage facilities, interest rates, etc. Appropriate inputs must be available in a timely way, at convenient locations and acceptable prices for higher levels of technology to be used.

Consider how this differs from health care. When it comes to giving immunizations or suturing wounds, patients need enough trust in the professional or paraprofessional serving them to come forward for treatment. But most treatments once given are more likely to work on their own than agricultural advice and inputs, which need to be used and tended by the farmer over a long period. This is not to underestimate the importance of patients' responsibility for their own health care, but the body for all its marvelous complexity operates more autonomously than a small farm enterprise. The staff and organization for development management in agriculture needs to be far-flung, accessible, coordinated, knowledgeable, responsive to a degree greater than in health, where patients more often have urgent symptoms and incentives for seeking care when needed.

Similarly, the relationship of a public works engineer with rural people concerning construction of a bridge is different from that of agricultural technicians. If it washes out later, he may lose face with professional colleagues, but the impact on the community is not the same as if agricultural advice leads to a crop failure and households are threatened with starvation. The factors that can cause crop failure are more numerous and unpredictable than those which threaten a bridge. Consequently, a "technocratic" approach to staffing and deployment may be more appropriate for public works than agriculture. Orienting staff to seek status with their professional colleagues may be a means for realizing better performance from engineers in a way that would not work for agricultural technicians, since a crop failure can be explained away more easily than a bridge failure. Getting maintenance of public works may require a still different set of managerial incentives.

In the area of financial management, we find that all three sectors, to differing extents, are likely to diverge from the modal pattern of expenditure flow which is set by the budget or calendar year rather than by seasons, though agriculture is generally the most seasonal of activities, and health the least of the three sectors.<sup>1/</sup> The pace of work not only by farmers but by the extension, supply, marketing and other staff associated with agriculture is dictated by the seasons, the timing of rains, the ripening of the crop, the onset of diseases, etc. Movement in rural areas is also greatly affected by the weather. To a lesser extent, construction and repair of roads, bridges, etc. is constrained by seasonality. Rural health follows seasonal cycles, but many of the diseases and ailments people have, and the need for nutrition and family planning advice, are year-round.

For government, private or membership organizations to be useful in supporting agricultural development, they need to be attuned to the cycle of the seasons. Government budgetary practices are commonly paced by a cycle of their own, quite different from the ebb and flow of agricultural activity. The budget year has times of "peak labor demand" usually at variance though in some countries conflicting with the equivalent constraint in agriculture. Efforts to have uniform rates of financial disbursement lead to quarterly allocations for expenditure which may have little relationship to the needs of organizations serving agriculture. (This applies certainly to rural works, where 75% of its funding may be needed during 3-4 months of the year.)

To the extent that government organizations have inflexible personnel rules compounding financial rigidities, they may be unsuited for promoting agricultural development, and private or membership organizations may be more efficient if they can expand and contract staff as needed and make available the supplies and

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<sup>1/</sup>This is a comparative statement. In fact, rural health has substantial and serious seasonal variation, as documented in Chambers, Longhurst and Pacey (1981:163-214).

needed to match the cycles of work in agriculture. A limitation on membership organizations comes because of the crop cycle. Farmers have the least financial resources at the time they need them most, at planting time and even more at the end of the season. Unless farmers associations or cooperatives can get credit from government or private banking sources, their utility in agriculture is limited.

#### D. INPUTS OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The things which development managers at any level acting in any channel can manipulate are limited. Some are very tangible and concrete, others are almost ineffable but important. We will focus here on the most tangible ones, though mention will be made of others harder to quantify and control.

The inputs of administration are commonly denominated in terms of money, but one of major problems of development management in Africa, as discussed in part III, is that money is not always convertible into the specific inputs needed and wanted. One way of taking this into account is to refer to inputs in terms of the 3 Ms -- men, money and materials. Though all can be denominated in money terms, the distinction already points out the difference between having just money and having the wherewithal of management, such as spare parts. To these three must certainly be added information, technical or more general, which may or may not be attainable with money. These are the main four "inputs" one is concerned with most of the time.

Complicating the management task is the fact that use of these inputs requires an additional resource called authority. One can have budget allocations, personnel on hand, even vehicles and stocks of supplies but not the authority to use them. Or conversely, one can have authority to do something but not the wherewithal to accomplish one's objectives. So, authority should be treated as a complementary resource, almost a super-resource, in development management, something that can be allocated just as specifically as funds, in terms of the legal right to take certain kinds of actions.<sup>2/</sup>

The resources of special concern in development management, then are:

- (a) financial resources (funds, budget, revenue, credit))
- (b) material resources (equipment, supplies, vehicles)
- (c) personnel (staff, manpower)
- (d) information (expertise, baseline data, management information, etc.)

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<sup>2/</sup>This concept of authority as a resource has been elaborated in Ilchman and Uphoff (1969) and Uphoff and Ilchman (1972).

- (e) authority (legal right to make decisions concerning a, b, c, d and other matters)

In the specialized topics for this workshop, the working groups on financial management and on enhancement of management will deal respectively with (a) and (b) and with (c) and (d) while the group on administrative processes and structure focuses on (e).

Having authority may also entitle one to disposition over an additional resource in development management -- coercion. But this is often not a very productive resource for achieving developmental change. Behavior may be modified in a desired direction by the use of coercion, but maintaining the change then usually requires continued expenditure of coercion, which is itself a scarce and often costly resource to use.<sup>3/</sup>

The other "softer" resources which development management can have are status and legitimacy (Ilchman and Uphoff, 1969). These are in effect "produced" by members of the public and accorded to persons in positions of authority or to private actors like businessmen or professionals. To the extent that persons undertaking development management tasks enjoy status and legitimacy, they will get more compliance with their decisions than otherwise.

We do not want to emphasize these resources, though legitimacy in particular is crucial for "institution building," which is the concern particularly of the fourth working group in this workshop (Esman, 1972). It would be a mistake to think that development management involves only men, money and materials, or also information and authority, and maybe coercion. The effectiveness of any institution in carrying out tasks of development management will be conditioned by the extent to which its actions and values correspond to the needs and norms of the population being served, so that these soft resources of status and legitimacy are generated.

## F. FUNCTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

In addition to considering levels, channels, sectors and inputs, one should analyze the various functions which cut across all sectors, utilizing inputs at each level and within each channel. We are not going into these in any detail but will just

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<sup>3/</sup>Von Vorys earlier put the problem very aptly when he wrote that "the resources of coercion in Asia, Africa and Latin America are in short supply. They are too scarce to be effectively dispersed throughout the countryside. They are too scarce to be easily extended into the villages where most of the population resides." As important, "coercion is primarily a negative instrument...suitable for the prevention or suppression of deviant behavior. Force is much less useful and may even be dysfunctional as an incentive for positive, constructive activity." (1967: 54)

mention them to complete the analytical framework, since these functions are generic and need to be managed effectively to promote agricultural or any other kind of development. These are things that fall particularly in the area of concern for the third working group, on administrative processes and structure.

Some of the major functions deal with the inputs just discussed.

- (a) Financial management is a function all organizations, public or private, need to discharge by disbursing and accounting for the funds involved in their activities.
- (b) Equally ubiquitous is personnel management, handling the staff of the organization, maintaining discipline and morale, upgrading skills, deploying talents, etc.

Other functions deal more with process than with inputs:

- (c) Planning of some sort is required for all organizations and for all projects and programs.
- (d) Communication within the organization and with relevant sectors of the public must be attended to in all organizations.
- (e) Monitoring and evaluation represent a generic activity to gain feedback, more or less formally, to guide the performance of the organization. It may or may not be undertaken in a systematic way, but should be regarded as a basic function.

Still others deal with both processes and inputs:

- (f) Resource mobilization is done differently in public, private and membership organizations, and the range and amount of resources needed can vary greatly, but good performance of this functions is essential.
- (g) Maintenance of equipment and facilities, one of the most neglected activities in Third World management, perhaps because it is not regarded as "developmental." Project breakdowns and waste of capital commonly result from maintenance failures, many of which can be attributed to failure of the donor agencies to provide for this management functions.
- (h) Establishment and maintenance of linkages is a generic function, not entirely separable from the others listed but deserving special attention. It includes relations with the public and with other public and private organizations that provide inputs and support. This function is critical for institutional development.

This listing of functions could be elaborated. Its purpose is to indicate a further disaggregation of development management analysis. Any effort to evaluate development management needs to have such a listing of functions to be assessed in the field, to pinpoint areas of strength and weakness -- for any organization, at any level, in any sector. Evaluation should establish how satisfactorily the organization is performing these various functions, and should identify reasons for superior or inferior performance.

### III. PROBLEMS OF DISAGGREGATED DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT, OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE IN AFRICA

Here we will probe some of the practical problems that are likely to emerge in the design and management of agricultural and rural development projects in the African context. We shall indicate how the disaggregated approach should help in identifying problems, strengthening management capabilities both in the state and in the societal sectors, and in working out effective management strategies and practices.

#### A. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEDENTARY AND PASTORAL SOCIETIES

The literature on agricultural development is usually preoccupied with growing and marketing crops, and this is no less true for the literature on agricultural development administration. When animals are noted, they tend to be treated as ancillary to the main task of crop production. -- Development administration has invariably assumed that the publics to be served are spatially fixed, in more or less permanent residences and associated with working on specific landholdings.

This may be a reasonable approximation for project planning and management in many parts of the world, but in Africa there are large and significant populations which are not sedentary. These include not only the declining communities that practice shifting cultivation but more importantly, the pastoralists who comprise as much as 20 percent of the rural labor force in sub-Saharan Africa. We expect that Michael Horowitz's paper for this workshop will give more background on this subject than we can or should try to offer, since he has much more expertise than we. Our comments here are intended to tie that subject into the consideration of management issues.

Governments and foreign donors tend to understand better and thus to orient their services to the circumstances of settled, crop-growing societies. They have more difficulty relating to the social structures and mobile economic activities of pastoralists in part because they do not know how to reach them. These societies are underserved also because reaching them is very costly per person. It is also often true that governments would prefer that pastoralists settle down and become sedentary farmers.

in some countries also, pastoralists are politically outside, even far outside the "core combination" of sectors that rule, whereas sedentary interests are at least within the "ideological bias" of the regime. Such considerations may be elaborated in the paper for this workshop by David Leonard.

Since we are not experts on pastoralist societies, the following comments should be taken only as observations of persons who have studied field administration cross-culturally. Michael Horowitz and others can elaborate on or qualify these views in the workshop. There is also, fortunately, an excellent book-length treatment of this subject now available (Sandford, 1983).

If governments intend to reach pastoralist communities, which constitute a significant share of their public and which often cover a large share of national territory, they and the foreign donors assisting them must:

- (1) take account of the details of their migratory cycles; even semi-nomadic populations present very complex and poorly understood patterns of economic and social activity as our colleagues Roe and Fortmann (1982) showed in the case of Botswana;
- (2) establish effective communication with their social organizations in order to gain more accurate appreciation of their needs and of the timing and methods by which these needs can be attended to;
- (3) employ and train persons from pastoralist communities to provide services in the vernacular language; and
- (4) increase the ability of pastoral people to provide a wide range of services through their own social organizations, by their own management practices and through persons who remain in and move with their communities, e.g. by training, equipping and supporting paraveterinary personnel and community health workers (Esman et al., 1980; Esman, 1983).

Relations between governments dominated by sedentary sectors and the pastoralists become exercises in cross-cultural diplomacy. There is a marked reluctance among many African governments to modify their standard management practices in dealing with the pastoralists, yet the pastoralists are too important economically to be ignored, and national security questions may also come into play. As a practical matter, it is necessary to draw heavily on the management capabilities within pastoralist societies and to use persons with pastoral backgrounds as intermediaries between the state bureaucracies and pastoral communities.

It makes sense to capitalize on the flexible capacities of private sector suppliers and traders to overcome the rigidities of public bureaucracies in relating to mobile societies.

Also, although formal membership organizations of herders have not been very successful in Africa, this is largely because of the way they have been introduced from outside.<sup>4/</sup> Range user organizations appropriately conceived, introduced and structured remain an important part of any disaggregated development management "mix." (Sandford, 1983). We would note also that USAID has now a particularly promising experiment going on now in Niger (see Wall, 1983).

## B. INCONGRUENCE BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATURAL BOUNDARIES

This is a common problem in field administration, by no means unique to Africa. Administrative boundaries are generally delimited in territorial terms and determine the area for which particular administrators and technicians are responsible. Frequently these boundaries have been arbitrarily defined and may have little relationship to the so-called "natural" boundaries, either physical/geographic or social/cultural. Areas that have a common water source or that are inhabited by a single community may be divided for administrative purposes among two or more districts for extension, credit or public works.

The same tribal chief or cooperative society may have to transact with two or more district officers and two or more public works engineers, each having an impact on the same set of people. The disinterest of bureaucrats to communicate horizontally in the interest of their common clients can produce inefficiency and inconvenience at a minimum and stalemated, failed programs when boundary problems become extreme. The burden of integrating services gets placed of necessity on local communities which are in most African contexts ill-equipped to accomplish this.

Some divergence between administrative and "natural" boundaries is found in every country. But in Africa the problem is demonstrably greater. When administrative boundaries were demarcated by colonial officers decades ago, little of the area had been surveyed. Much was common property, and officials were not familiar with significant local landmarks. For the sake of clearly drawing boundaries, roads or rivers were often chosen, thereby dividing communities down the middle or putting users of a common water source in two different districts. No better was the drawing of abstract straight lines on maps which were likely to cleave communities, tribes or kinship groups. Such lines put into the same district then persons with different language or ethnic backgrounds. Such characteristics are more often salient in African countries than elsewhere.

Bureaucracies are predictably reluctant to change administrative boundaries, even in order to accommodate natural or social realities. Rather than adjust bureaucratic lines,

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<sup>4/</sup>For two examples of inappropriate approaches, see Odell and Odell (1980) on Botswana, and Gooch (1979) on Upper Volta.

governments and donors more frequently decide to establish special or project authorities with ad hoc jurisdiction for a particular activity outside the framework of normal departmental operations. These special agencies can concentrate on a single set of tasks, are often exempt from normal financial and procurement regulations, and thus are better funded, better supplied and able to pay better salaries than normal government agencies. In solving one set of problems, however, the special authorities create more serious, long-range difficulties. They breed envy and animosity with the line departments, erode the latter's capacity and morale, multiply the problems of program and policy coordination, and frequently collapse when outside aid is terminated or when political patrons leave office.

Though categorical statements on this subject should be avoided, experience indicates that the burden of proof should always be on those who would create special authorities. What should take precedence is the gradual improvement of the managerial capacities of the normal agencies of government, especially at the operating level in the field. Concomitantly, the managerial capacities of the localities, communities and groups which speak and act on behalf of their members should be strengthened. To the extent that responsibilities are devolved to localities, communities and groups, which are more "natural" in their scope and membership than most higher-level administrative entities, the problems of incongruence of boundaries will be mitigated.

### C. THE VULNERABILITIES OF FIELD ADMINISTRATION

A closely related set of problems is the weakness in functioning of government bureaucracies outside large cities. This is a particularly difficult problem in Africa where central governments lack the financial means, the trained manpower, the physical infrastructure, and the experience to manage operations over large territories with great natural variations and ethnic heterogeneity.

The conventional prescription -- to decentralize so as to overcome the obstacles of poor communication and inflexible rules and procedures -- is usually resisted by central staff who fear the loss of control and have little confidence in the capabilities and often the integrity of field personnel. This reluctance is not overridden by political leaders who fear that centrifugal political forces may alter the government structure.

Bereft of the means to perform their tasks, unable to respond to local needs, and lacking in self-confidence, field staff fall back on formal routines and strict conformity to regulations. Quite possibly, they may pursue their own business interests, not frequently misapplying government resources for their own benefit or that of their kinsmen.

The services provided by government usually flow through specialized, vertical bureaucratic hierarchies.<sup>5/</sup> The degree of specialization tends to be modelled after the sophisticated structures of metropolitan centers in Europe and sometimes this specialization is inspired by well-meaning donors who seek to replicate internationally recognized "standards" in the African environment.

Frequently such specialization has perverse effects. In the agricultural sector, governments which are capable of only superficial coverage of rural areas provide services that are unsuitable or available only to a small proportion of the better endowed farmers, especially those producing export crops. An analogy is the ultra-modern national hospital in the capital city where government officials and the urban middle class have access to sophisticated medical care while the great majority, especially in rural areas, receive only rudimentary health care.

When governments can afford to extend services to rural areas, staff generally operate in water-tight compartments. The extension officer, the veterinary officer, and the marketing agent seldom coordinate their advice and their schedules because each is responsible to an official at a higher level who manages his specialized program independently of others according to rules established by his own professional hierarchy.

How, then, can the necessary horizontal coordination be achieved? By informal adjustments among field staff? This is possible only if all the agencies agree or are compelled to deconcentrate their staffs and devolve decision-making to field personnel. By formal councils under a senior official, such as the district officer? This may itself create new formalistic rigidities, but in any case, it is better suited to one-time construction jobs than to on-going operations. By vesting multiple functions in a single field officer? This may create integration at the cost of technical expertise. By pressure from local groups of farmers or local councillors, who can demand that government technicians integrate their services for the benefit of the public they are supposed to aid? Less concerned with bureaucratic "turf," local representatives may be able to have some impact on service delivery if they can have influence with higher political and administrative levels. Local businessmen if brought into negotiations, always concerned with the health of their enterprises, may be able to work out informal relationships that result in more effective coordination of services.

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<sup>5/</sup>Such specialization was carried to its absurd extreme in Ghana during the mid-1960s when there were separate ministries for animal husbandry and for animal health. The animal scientists and the veterinarians, who were locked in a professional feud, thus each had their own bureaucracy and could operate without regard to what the other was doing. "Urban bias" was evident in the posting of the 11 veterinarians in government service; seven were in Accra or Kumasi, spending most of their time on dogs, cats and (race) horses. Reported in Uphoff (1970).

Each of these methods may be more or less workable under some circumstances, and none can be prescribed as inherently superior. They represent alternatives available to program designers and managers who must find ways to counteract the low performance level of existing management systems, especially those dealing with agricultural and rural development.

#### D. THE TWO CULTURES IN RURAL ADMINISTRATION

Most agricultural and rural development programs require collaboration and sharing of management responsibility between the bureaucratic agencies of the state and organized representatives of rural society. The quality of this contact between them (this "interface") determines how effectively their joint resources are used. It is an inherently difficult and problematic relationship because even if the same language is spoken on both sides, it brings two different "cultures" into uneasy contact.<sup>6/</sup>

The cultures of African peasantry and of African bureaucrats intersect only at the margins. Each has its unique "calendar," neither being the calendar year one usually thinks of. For the farmer, the relevant cycle of activity follows the coming and the ending of the rains, while the official is preoccupied with a different "cropping cycle" known as the "budget year." The pace of activity and "peak labor demand" are thus divergent, or if they overlap still greater problems can arise between the two. The farmer regards money as something scarce and valuable, for which he or she has to labor long and hard, with no certainty of success. The official gets money, in effect, "for the asking." His money comes from a flow of paper rather than a flow of sweat.

The bureaucratic culture is governed by specialized roles, formal rules and hierarchical patterns of authority different from, but no different in their "traditionalism" from the inherited roles, informal rules and evolved patterns of authority found among the rural population. Officials have formal educational credentials, steady pensionable jobs, and aspire to a western life style. Many are from the urban areas, speak a European language and look upon "backward" peasants and peasant life with ill-concealed condescension. Consequently they spend as little time in the field as possible.

The career advancement of officials depends more on satisfying their bureaucratic superiors than their peasant clients. The rigid rules to which they are subject in matters of finance, procurement of supplies and availability of transport distance them even further from the publics they are expected to serve.

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<sup>6/</sup>This concept of contrasting "cultures" in the delivery of rural services was proposed in an analytical paper prepared for the 1973 USAID Spring Review on Small Farmer Credit by Cynthia Gillette and Norman Uphoff, "The Credit Connection: Cultural and Social Factors Affecting Small Farmer Participation in Formal Credit Programs."

Often they have too little in the way of resources to help more than a handful of rural households, and often the information they have to purvey is not relevant to the specific needs and capabilities of small farmers. Relatively little agricultural research has been done in Africa, and most of this has focused on export crops, not on the crops and practices of most concern to resource-constrained small farmers (let alone pastoralists).

The burden of adjustment whenever cultures conflict falls on the weaker party, on the peasant, if they wish to derive any benefits from the services of the state. If these are irrelevant or unreliable, there is no incentive even to make allowances. The long-run objective is to increase the compatibility of these two cultures, so that the resources of government, including those provided by foreign assistance, can really contribute to rural development.

The solution cannot be found simply in rapid expansion of the agencies serving rural publics, or in the creation of new agencies and programs. The severe budget constraints facing all African governments, further constrained by their urban bias which will not be quickly redressed, mean that the growth of capacity within the rural arms of government administration will be slow and at most incremental. In addition to improving their performance by internal reform -- which will be discussed in the last section -- program designers should address themselves to bridging methods which can reduce the gap between the two cultures.

One method is by empowerment of local communities, by making it possible for them to exert more influence or even direct control over the field staffs of government agencies. To the extent that they contribute to salaries, or influence promotions, or determine work priorities, local communities or groups can compel field staffs to be more responsive to their concerns. Though administrators (and most foreign aid agencies) abhor political interference, local politicians can sometimes be useful in directing civil servants to the needs of their constituents and in prodding officials to make adjustments to the priorities and convenience of the public.

Another method is to increase the number, training and support of paraprofessionals who are part of the community and who, in addition to providing simple but needed services, can help to interpret the needs of the public to government officials. Conversely, they can convey more effectively to the public the conditions of government assistance (Esman et al., 1980; Esman, 1983). Methods for bridging the gap between the two cultures should be an explicit concern of those who design management structures for agricultural and rural development in Africa. Putting into place the management capabilities encompassing the levels and channels sketched on page 6 would supersede the "gap" with a "matrix" for development management.

## E. DIFFICULTIES IN CONVERTING 'INPUTS' INTO 'OUTPUTS'

To turn to a problem of "process" more than "structure," we would take up a difficulty referred to in part II. As noted, African governments even more than other LDC governments are facing severe fiscal crises in the 1980s. Much attention is now focused on how to get for governments the needed financial resources to operate existing programs, let alone make progress with new initiatives in agricultural and rural development.

There is a danger that preoccupation with aggregate levels of financial inputs will mask the major management problem of converting money into what is actually needed to make development programs run. This problem once stated is obvious, but it is commonly neglected, because in principle, with funds (and authority), work should proceed. In fact, in African circumstances the equation of money with capacity to accomplish results is quite mistaken.

The first problem arises when funds and authority are not matched. It is quite common for a manager in the public or quasi-public sector, and possibly in a cooperative, to have money available but not the authority to spend it, or conversely, to have authority to spend money on a certain activity but no budget allocation. Money must be matched with authority to be made useful.

Second, it is often difficult to get the personnel needed even if budget for them is in hand. Persons with the particular skills needed may not be available, either because they are not willing to work in the position that is open, or because they may not be willing to accept the salary which is authorized, or because there are simply not such persons in the country.

For personnel to be productive, they must be able and willing to work at the assigned tasks. Personnel are often too poorly trained or too poorly motivated to accomplish what is wanted. Civil service rules and regulations frequently make the life of a manager almost impossible by denying him or her the needed hands and minds. A principal advantage of private sector channels is the flexibility they have on personnel matters. Also their managers usually have authority to spend whatever money is available as long as they can produce results (profits) from it.

Third, money does not necessarily translate into the required material support. Even if one has the funds and staff, for example, one may not be able to get results from them because needed equipment is missing, or one cannot get spare parts for it if broken.<sup>7/</sup> Or there may not be enough vehicles, or they may be broken down or have no fuel. We know for certain that rural development management requires mobility of staff.

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<sup>7/</sup>We know about how the work of one animal research station in West Africa was impeded for several years by the lack of a scale to weigh newborn calves as part of its breeding program.

Fourth, and contributing to the third, is the frequency with which foreign exchange constraints intervene in management. One can have local currency in the budget but not approval of the Central Bank for spending it on spare parts or technical assistance from overseas. Complicated procedures for authorizing foreign exchange use, justified perhaps as a means of rationing, are very costly in terms of administrative effectiveness.<sup>8/</sup>

Fifth, effective management requires information and this is frequently hard to come by, even with money. Some information takes time (as well as personnel, equipment and foreign exchange) to acquire, such as an adequate mapping of soils. Other information may not be attainable, such as a 50-year record of rainfall or of flooding frequency and levels for a river. Having money is no guarantee one will be able to know how to use it productively.

Sixth, even if one knows what would be good to do as a manager, and has the funds and other wherewithal, there is no assurance he or she can get compliance with decisions judged to be technically correct and politically advisable. States in Africa are notoriously unable to enforce decisions on their publics. Coercion as we have noted is a scarce resource, and cooperation from the public seems to be getting more rather than less difficult to acquire.

All of these considerations of how money does not necessarily translate into the concrete needs of program operation point up the need to disaggregate resource constraints when assessing bottlenecks in African development management.

If reforms could be introduced which gave managers in the public and quasi-public sectors the kind of discretion (ideally) found in the private sector, this would contribute to getting more value from the very scarce financial resources which governments and donors can make available for agricultural and rural development.

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<sup>8/</sup>An unhappy situation which one of the authors witnessed in Ghana occurred when the director of irrigation for the Northern Region had to forgo a whole construction season because he could not get both the budget expenditure authorization from the Treasury and the foreign exchange approval from the Central Bank at the same time. He needed to import a replacement for a broken fan belt for the low loader which transported his construction equipment from one dam location to another. He had funds in his budget, but they were released on a quarterly basis, and by the time he could get Central Bank approval, his Treasury authorization had lapsed. Several million dollars worth of equipment consequently lay idle during the non-rainy months when they could have been used. The staff were drawing their salaries, but no work was accomplished. The director had made several trips to Accra (600 miles) to try to expedite this transaction but with no success (Uphoff, 1970).

## F. INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS FOR IMPROVED MANAGEMENT

There are two standard kinds of prescription for improving management in bureaucratic structures: structural reforms, such as decentralization, better internal communication, and more efficient procedures; and improved staff performance, primarily by enhancing technical and human relations skills through training. These are important needs in the African administrative environment. But the success of structural changes and skill development depends on suitable motivation for persons to behave in ways that are instrumental to desired program outcomes. In African agricultural administration, this implies a commitment to serving rural publics even under difficult working conditions, to accommodating their needs and convenience, and to working with and through local community institutions (Korten and Uphoff, 1981).

How to accomplish this form of behavioral change? By combinations of incentives and sanctions, by systems of rewards for desired behavior and penalties for failure to perform. Government employees can emerge from training experiences full of enthusiasm for the service ethic, only to find that in the administrative environment to which they return, such behavior is not rewarded and may indeed be penalized. Or they may be overwhelmed by the impedences described in the preceding section. In either case, they elapse into familiar behavior that is accepted according to conventional bureaucratic norms.

Training may help to develop more appropriate skills and understandings, but applying these on the job requires a compatible regime of rewards and sanctions. Tangible and intangible rewards -- in the form of recognition, praise, salary increases and promotions -- can be allocated according to different criteria within the bureaucracy, and they can be affected by the organized publics with which members of the bureaucracy interact. This suggests that local organizations be invited to participate on a continuing basis in influencing rewards and penalties. In this way, civil servants become dependent to a degree on public good will as well as on the evaluations of their official superiors.

The criteria of bureaucratic evaluation need to change, from strict conformity to rules and routines, toward service to the public. Promotion needs to shift from pure seniority to demonstrated performance. The greater the influence of organized publics, the more likely that standards applied within the bureaucracy will reflect these new criteria.

Reporting systems and inspections which enforce bureaucratic discipline should be oriented to developmental achievements so that field staff get the message, that they will be rewarded for bending the rules and taking initiative that meets the needs of the public. Alternatively, they will be faulted for adhering to rigid routines and formal rules if these stand in the way of meeting reasonable demands from the public.

This does not mean that rules and routines are to be lightly superseded, but that they should be interpreted and applied in ways that enhance the use of scarce resources for development, rather than be treated as ends in themselves. Personnel who understand this difference and behave accordingly should be encouraged and rewarded. Donor agencies could in turn encourage and reward bureaucratic leadership that promotes such a reorientation.

Management performance in non-governmental organizations is not inherently immune to corruption, nepotism or incompetence, "populist" ideology notwithstanding (Montgomery, 1979). In these organizations, where face-to-face relations more directly influence behavior, the more participatory the procedures, the more likely that corruption and nepotism can be contained. And when government funds are involved, inspections and audits by government agencies provide another form of accountability.

Managers of local-level institutions need to be doubly accountable, downward to their constituents and upward to government and the law.<sup>9/</sup> In the disaggregated approach to development management, project designers should provide for skills training for managers from local organizations and also training for the lay leaders of these organizations in how to control their managers, since local managers are no less vulnerable to temptations than higher-level bureaucrats.

#### G. CONCLUSION: DISAGGREGATED JUDGMENTS

By definition, disaggregated systems of management defy the kind of broad generalizations which have dominated the literature on development administration. Indeed, overall assessments of whether a project or a management system is "good" or "bad," a "success" or a "failure," make little sense. The question always has to be asked: good for what? successful in what? Of particular relevance for this workshop is the realization that evaluation of disaggregated management requires disaggregated judgments.

Successful development management requires putting together many components of organization and technology. Some may be stronger than others (*ceteris paribus*), and some combinations may be more robust than others. But attributing the will-o-the-wisp called "success" to any particular element is risky, as we seldom find conditions that qualify as either necessary or sufficient -- things which must always be present for "success" to occur, or which in and of themselves will cause "success."

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<sup>9/</sup>We have discussed methods for improving the performance of local-level organizations in Chapter 7 of Esman and Uphoff (1984). These suggestions have been incorporated in the A.I.D. Policy Paper on Local Organizations in Development, Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, March 1984.

An appreciation for the complexity of change processes should lead to a willingness to think more instrumentally, to identify objectives, to hypothesize what will most likely and most economically contribute to their achievement, and to assess continually whether the presumed means are promoting the proximate desired ends. This is the essence of a "learning process" approach (Korten, 1980).

Given the difficulties that we know confront agricultural and rural development in Africa, we should look for those practical combinations of inputs and approaches which produce results (or more realistically, which move in the right direction). "Progress" is a more tenable criterion than "success," because we know there are no permanent successes in development work, and we hope there are no permanent setbacks.

How many previous "success stories" became discredited with a change in government, an outbreak of ethnic turmoil, a shift in export prices, a breakdown in the transportation system? For this reason, projects which move in the right direction and have sustained momentum are to be valued and studied. How do they develop human capabilities as they go, and acquire the kind of linkages, respect and legitimacy associated with the process of "institutionalization"?

Such disaggregated considerations will get evaluators into more complicated considerations than conventional approaches. But the task before us has many "bottom lines," not just one.

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