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**Study of Local
Organizations
in Niamey
Department,
Niger**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE POTENTIAL OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT TO PROMOTE RURAL DEVELOPMENT: FINDINGS AND AN APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	1
INTRODUCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE	1
PART ONE	
METHODOLOGY AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGES AND THE SETTING..	5
CHAPTER 1: METHODOLOGY AND PLAN OF THE STUDY	7
CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF THE VILLAGES IN THE STUDY	25
PART TWO	
VILLAGE LEVEL ORGANIZATION IN THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT	37
CHAPTER 3: FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS INITIATED BY THE STATE	39
CHAPTER 4: INFORMAL GROUPS	63
PART THREE	
A STRATEGY FOR SUPPORTING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS	91
CHAPTER 5: THE CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO THE SUCCESS OF THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.....	93
CHAPTER 6: SUPPORTING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT	131

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STUDY OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NIAMEY DEPARTMENT:
FINDINGS AND AN APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The objectives of this study are to deepen our understanding of how local organisations actually function in the Niamey Department in order to suggest how these organisations can be involved to a greater degree in a self-sustaining development process.

The field study was conducted from January to June, 1985 under the direction of Hamidou Sidikou, assisted by Robert Charlick (Consultant for U.S.A.I.D). A combination methods were employed to rapidly survey the structures, problems and potentials of the existing local organisations. Sixteen villages (four from each of the arrondissements which the project currently covers) were selected for study in close consultations with Nigérien technical and administrative personnel at the arrondissement level. Villages were selected on the basis of several criteria:

--representation of the different ethnic groups residing in the project area;

--representation of different types of villages (grouped and dispersed; small, medium and large populations);

--representation of major ecological zones;

--inclusion of villages judged by departmental level administrators to have relatively good development potential.

Our sample of sixteen villages (including two double villages) is not random. If anything we believe it is biased toward more dynamic villages in the Department, at least as perceived by arrondissement level officials.

The analysis of the data took place in July and involved a statistical analysis (on the NDD's micro-computer in Niamey) of 500 individual questionnaires, the correlation of village level technical information with individual responses, and a qualitative analysis of interviews conducted with groups of village notables as well as with groups of ordinary villagers. Finally, an analysis of twenty small scale organisations which were discovered in the course of our village level and individual level interviews.

Following the terms of reference the study covers three major areas of concern:

1. The relationship between physical factors and the receptivity of villagers to new ideas-- particularly the technical and organisational ideas contained in the project programs;
2. A detailed description of how official local level organisations (cooperatives, the "youth organisation," or Samarya, and the Village Development Councils) actually function in the project area; and how these organisations are currently associated with project outcomes;
3. A description of the types and incidence of other forms of local organisation which play a role in the local-level economy, and how these organisations might be associated more fully with development activities in the Department of Niamey.

The full report discusses these points in detail. The following is intended to be only a summary of our main conclusions to date.

A. Physical Factors Which Condition Communication Between Local Producers and External Sources of Information.

1. Several physical factors proved to be associated with knowledge of project programs, with the adoption of technical themes, and with receptivity to potential project benefits, such as participation in the extension program for CPT trainees, use of selected agricultural inputs, use of the cooperative structure to sell crops and to obtain production credit, participation in one of the training sessions run by the project staff.

Factors External to the Village--

- a. The distance separating a village from the capital (Niamey) proved to be a significant factor in project participation (Villages closer to Niamey participated more actively)
- b. The type of soil prevalent in the village was also related to project results (villages with sandy "dune" type soils were less involved than those with more possibilities of irrigated agriculture).
- c. Proximity to a major road, however, did not prove to be decisive. Villages which were the least responsive to project programs were situated on or very near a major tarred road, while villages which were on an improved laterite road participated much more fully.
- d. Access to the mass media did not prove to be significant. Very few farmers reported that they acquired information on farming techniques from the radio or from television. On the contrary, most stated that they learned of these things from agricultural agents, or from other farmers.

Factors Internal to the Village

The study found that internal characteristics of the villages play a major role in the responsiveness of villagers to development activities.

- a. Villagers in communities which are the seat of a cooperative, or which have better physical infrastructure are more likely to know about and participate in the various programs promoted by the project.
- b. The type of settlement pattern in villages significantly affects the flow of information and the probability that villagers know about and participate in project programs. Villagers who reside in communities where housing is grouped around a core village are more likely to be involved than villagers who live in dispersed settlement patterns.
- c. The level of education of villagers, even when that education is a minimal acquaintance with basic literacy skills, is highly correlated with knowledge of and acceptance of project programs. The overall level of education found among adults interviewed in this Department, however, is exceedingly low.
- d. Qualitative analysis indicates that overall social and authority patterns of villages are related to the communication and acceptance of ideas which suggest possibilities for development. Villages which are socially and politically unified are much more dynamic in their responses than villages which are badly divided.

The following factors seem to be associated with a unified and dynamic pattern:

- i. The authority the village headman is not contested.
- ii. Islam is strongly implanted in the village, and a central mosque exists and serves as a meeting place for villagers. This is associated with the existence of an influential group of "marabouts" in the village.
- iii. A low level of social marginality due to ethnic diversity of relatively recent migrants. This factor does not appear to be decisive, however, since in several villages we noted that ethnic diversity had become a factor of strength rather than of weakness in village communication patterns.

B. The Nature and Impact of Non-Governmental Informal Associations

1. Local level society is rich in organisation, and the willingness to work together cooperatively to achieve goals is well established.
2. A variety of forms of non-governmental organisations exists which we have classified according to their principal functions and their organisational characteristics.

A TYPOLOGY OF INFORMAL AND VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT

CRITERIA OF CLASSIFICATION	FUNCTION			ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS
	CONTINUUM: UNSTRUCTURED-----HIGHLY STRUCTURED			
NON-HEREDITARY WORK GROUP	ITINERANT DAY LABOR GROUP	RECIPROCAL LABOR EXCHANGE GROUPS	MERCHANTS GROUP BRICK MAKERS AUTO-MECHANICS GROUP	
HEREDITARY WORK GROUP				BUTCHERS WEAVERS BLACKSMITHS
CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS GROUP				HOLLEY GROUP GROUP OF MARABOUTS
SAVINGS GROUP				ADASSE

In general groups which work together have well structured authority patterns with institutionalize leadership, established rules, and the capacity to action in a specific domain. But they are limited in their capacity to undertake new developmental activities by several of their characteristics.

- i. Relatively few villagers (less than 10%) are involved in structured work groups.

- ii. The groups themselves are normally quite small averaging about 10 members, and these individuals often share close kinship relationships.

- iii. Few groups own or manage corporate (collective) property. Normally revenues are shared immediately after they have been earned by the work of the group, which limits the possibility of investment and improvement of productive techniques.

- iv. It is also rare for work groups to maintain a common account, or savings fund. Only three groups with some form of shared fund were identified in the course of our study-- two groups of weavers who invest part of their revenue in a livestock fattening operation, and a group of marabouts of the Tidjania order, who use their common fund to finance the construction, maintenance and equipping of their mosque.

- v. There are relatively few multi-purpose groups, or groups which perform more than one type of activity. Groups which do have several functions are kinship groups who practice a craft considered to be hereditary. These groups often agree to work collectively as well on other activities, such as farming or building huts and grain bins. Non-kinship based groups rarely undertake additional activities. This may pose serious limitations on the efforts to use existing groups for new types of activities associated with opportunities for development.

- vi. Savings funds (or adassé) are particularly limited organizations. They only perform the single task of collecting and immediately distributing money, so that one individual at a time can amass a significant sum. This sum is then used for purely personal needs, and is rarely invested in any activity which implies the interests of a broader group. Because their function is so limited, adassé have the most limited organizational capacity noted of any of the structured groups.

There are, nevertheless a number of ways in which informal groups can be helped to produce more efficiently, and in which they can have a positive impact on the rural standard of living.

- i. Unstructured reciprocal work is so firmly entrenched in the habits of villagers in this region that this tradition should certainly be capable of being mobilized on behalf of the community in a number of

infrastructural activities which have important economic implications. In the population surveyed over 70% of the respondents stated that they engaged in reciprocal labor to a considerable degree. Apart from women, all strata of the rural population share this characteristic. A local organization called the Samarya currently calls upon this willing to cooperate to achieve goals through its activities, but we think more can be done to orient reciprocal work habits toward development activities on behalf of large groups.

- ii. Organisational patterns are well established, especially among the socio-professional work groups. Some use should certainly be made of these dispositions to cooperate in a highly structured way, although it is unlikely that these forms can be successfully applied to large scale associations, such as the local community as a whole.
- iii. Some socio-professional work groups are highly motivated to improve their productive and marketing techniques, and are likely to want technical assistance and training in this domain. The population affected by this training would no doubt be a small fraction of the total rural population, but it would not be limited to people from a given kinship or caste group, since at least some groups of this type are constituted on the basis of choice, friendship and other criteria. We believe that given the proper training and material assistance some groups of craftsmen could become true small scale enterprises which could stimulate rural production and exchange in a given area. Their impact might be much greater than that suggested by the small percentage of people who would be directly involved in these groups.
- iv. Some multi-purpose groups do exist, and it should be possible to work with them to expand their developmental activities in agriculture, particularly in irrigated agriculture which currently holds a great deal of interest for people in the project area. Such groups are most likely to undertake new activities of this sort where their members constitute a majority, or a dominant group within the local level society, and in such cases it will be difficult to distinguish between the activities of multipurpose informal groups and those of village level organizations.

Three keys seem vital to supporting informal groups in the development process:

-- associating groups in new activities based on the group's perception of its own interests;

-- enabling groups to have get access to training and material support through the institutions of the Société de Développement, which will require that these institutions acquire the capacity to recognize legitimate interests, and to support them in getting external help wherever possible;

-- A macro economic problem also exists which must be addressed in the broadest possible way, for without a general increase in the standard of living of the rural majority in the projet area purchasing power will simply be too low to support the market for the products which local groups can produce. The only alternative to policies which substantially and broadly raise rural incomes is marketing the products of these groups in urban areas, and to foreigners.

C. Official Local Level Organisations and Their Role in Development

1. The current activities of the Niamey Department Development Project, as well as those which it is expected to promote in its next phase (small scale village development schemes) seem to require local organizations which have the following characteristics:
 - a. the capability of identifying the interests of members, and of articulating them as demands to authorities at the appropriate level of society.
 - b. the capability of making decisions which truly bind members which seems to imply a broadly shared process of participation in decision making.
 - c. the capability of mobilizing both human and financial resources appropriate to addressing the problems which have been identified.
 - d. the capability of implementing actions which the group decides to undertake.
2. The principal local organization emphasized by the Niamey Productivity Project has been the cooperative, especially the basic unit of the cooperative called the Village Mutual Group (GM). Currently these groups have almost none of the organizational characteristics which they require to be effective. Even the notion of the cooperative, as a modern institution distinct from the traditional patterns of mutual assistance is poorly understood by villagers who we interviewed. Apart from some GM located in towns which are the seats of cooperatives, GMs undertake hardly any

activities at all. They have little capacity to manage the sale of agricultural inputs, crops, or long term credit- the three main tasks or cooperatives. The situation is somewhat better in some of the towns where the cooperative itself is located, and some recent training has occurred to improve management and accounting skills, but thus far this appears to benefit the vast majority villages which are not cooperative seats very little. In these towns, the GM has simply not emerged as a group which represents a local level interest, at least a fairly broadly shared interest. Many local GM members don't even know why they are members of the "cooperative."

Obviously, as the basic unit of cooperation and development, the GM structure needs considerable support and training if it is to acquire the capabilities outlined above. Future project activities, based on the assumption that GMs effectively have these characteristics and can function are destined to produce very disappointing results.

3. The Samarya, on the other hand, seems to exhibit many of the characteristics of base-level organizations necessary for them to play a developmental role. Samarya have a decision making structure which is more broadly based than that found in the GM. This is true despite the fact that relatives of village chiefs participate more in Samarya activities and decisions than do other villagers. Samarya are multi-purpose organizations fulfilling a variety of economic and social roles within the local community. They nearly always have the capability to mobilize labor and often can mobilize financial resources as well. They have considerable experience in actually managing activities which interest at least a significant proportion of villagers.

Nevertheless Samarya are limited also in their capacity to promote new developmental activities, and some of their limits can be addressed through proper organizational and technical training. Samarya do not, as they currently function in most villages, adequately represent the interests or involve certain strata of the rural population--most notably women. They also suffer from the extreme lack of formal and practical education which limits their abilities to solve new and more complex problems. In terms of their role in the Niamey Project, Samarya have not been involved, perhaps because it was thought that they had not economic role. It is now clear, however, that it is the Samarya, not the GM, which organizes and conducts most of the collective field activities, and many of the irrigated perimeter (contre-saison) activities as well. The project must begin to support these organizations at the village level if it is to broaden its developmental impact.

4. The third local institution--the Village Development Council, is supposed to be the key to the functioning of the Société de Développement at the local level. But as of the present time this institution has brought very little new organizational capability to local level society in the Niamey Department. The concept structure of the CVD are poorly understood and it is frequently confused with the other institutions which the administration has created. In reality, the decision making structure of the CVD seems simply to follow the various pre-existing forms for organizing and managing village power, rather than modifying them in any significant way. Where pre-existing forms tend to exclude segments of the population from participation and from the effective representation of their interests this constitutes a serious impediment to using local organizations for development. Where CVD do undertake specific actions, they seem to do so by working through the Samarya.
5. This study indicates that as organizations, the GM, the Samarya, and the CVD have contributed little to the success of the projet. Nevertheless, it is important to note that on the level of individual behavior an indisputable relationship exists between participation in official local organizations, and participating in the programmes offered by the project. The explanation for this relationship is not entirely clear, given the current stage of analysis, but two hypotheses seem to explain portions of the association. First, it is clear that villagers who hold positions of authority have superior access to project benefits, and specifically of long term credit, than do other villagers. This finding should be closely examined, for if viable local level organization depends on broad based participation and on relatively equal access to benefits which in fact interest people, the continuation and reinforcement of this pattern may compromise the usefulness of these local institutions for development.

On the other hand, a certain amount of the association seems to stem from individual choice. It would appear that there are some very dynamic villagers who seek not only to promote their individual interests (modernizing their farming practices, getting some education, working for cash for someone, acquiring some modern consumer goods) but who are concerned about the interests of the village (participation in collective and reciprocal work, and participating of village level institutions). Rather than appearing as a problem this tendency seems to hold out the possibility of greater village development, and speaks to the importance of opening participation in local organizations up as broadly as possible in order to encourage new interest groups and ideas to emerge.

D. Support for Local Organisations-- Some Recommendations For A Reorientation of the NDD Project

This study has led us to formulate a series of propositions for reorienting the organizational aspects of the NND. The reorientation proposed is based on the application of nine principles which we think must be respected if the project is to have a greater developmental impact in the future.

1. Support associations which group people on the basis of a concrete and real interest.
2. Encourage groups which have private interests unless these private interests clearly conflict with those of the broader public. This means working much more than in the past with groups which do not coincide with a politico-administrative unit of society.
3. Support groups by offering them training which is appropriate to them achieving specific goals. This training may be technical, organization or both, but it will rarely be abstract.
4. Support group requests for material assistance if these groups are themselves willing to invest their time and their material resources. Such support may come from a variety of sources which the project will draw upon, including direct AID support, support through interested NGOs, and support through the investment budget of the GON, when the Nigerien economy returns to a healthier position which will make such support possible.
5. Support the process of development by encouraging group requests for assistance to be directed through the appropriate institution of the Société de Développement.
6. Equally importantly, support the process by offering organizational training to the appropriate institutions of the Société de Développement (normally the CVD) in the course of developing and considering specific project proposals.
7. As a priority, work with institutions of the Société de Développement which are ready to operate on the basis of these principles.
8. Work as well with institutions which are not ready to respect all of the principles, but which have specific interests which they are attempting to achieve. Use the opportunity to work with them as a chance to begin a process of training and discussion which may lead toward the later acceptance of these principles.

9. Where local level institutions have no specific proposals to forward, and do not seem to have clearly defined interest groups, undertaken some preliminary organizational training which takes the form of self-study and self evaluation of village problems and possibilities. These studies can even be conducted with the leadership of non-project personnel. but they must essentially be village run. Only a small percentage of project resources can, however, be allocated for this purpose.

The Means By Which Specific Actions Can Be Accomplished

The means for implementing the principles outlined above are discussed in the final chapter of the report. In general the project must devote a considerably greater percentage of its total resources to training at the village level, and when appropriate at the cooperative level, than it has done in the past. This will include the training of groups and individuals which do not correspond with the interests of the entire village community. A good deal of this training will be technical, but some will be organizational as well. Project trainers must also be capable of helping CVD acquire the capabilities they need. This is a sensitive and complex task which will require skilled trainers.

We recommend that the project hire eight additional trainers, and that it employ the services of an NGO which has had a great deal of experience in village level organizational training to thoroughly train the trainers and to work with them for a period in specific actions, until it appears that the trainers have acquired the necessary habits and skills.

CONCLUSION

This study is only the beginning of what it is necessary to know about local level society in the Niamey Department. The many societies which make up the population are complex, and they are still very seriously understudied. We have far too little knowledge about existing village authority and power dynamics. There is still a great deal of far more detailed work to be done on specific types of groups. There is no magic formula to propose as to how to learn these things quickly and cheaply. But we do believe that the in-depth understanding of these societies is required if this Project and the government is to be capable of successful institutionalizing a process of development which can truly become self-sustaining.

INTRODUCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Niamey Department Development Project (NDD, 683-0240) theoretically covers four of the six arrondissements of the Niamey Department, an administrative unit encompassing 90,072 km², or 7.1% of the national territory). One of the principal objectives of this project has been to strengthen the local organizations in order to "establish a process of self-sustaining rural development" through which local people can pursue agriculture more successfully. This goal is entirely consistent with recent research in rural development which has demonstrated the importance of formal and informal organizations and of broad-based participation to the achievement of rural development objectives. It is also clearly compatible with the current policy orientation of the Government of Niger which stresses small-scale locally supported development efforts.

A major barrier to the fulfillment of this objective has been the absence of systematic, detailed information on the patterns of association which exist among the people living in the project area. At the outset of this project in 1977, very little was known about how local people associated for cooperative and mutual aid activities. Although some knowledge existed at a general level about the associational life of some of the ethnic groups involved, little information specific to this area had been gathered and processed. In any event, the general level of knowledge was insufficient to describe the patterns which existed among specific cultural groups living in the project area, such as the Hausa of the Kourfey, or the Gourmantché of the Makalondi area.

To attempt to fill this gap, the Office of Agricultural Development of U.S.A.I.D in Niger requested that a study be conducted which would permit it

and the Government of the Republic of Niger (GON) to formulate policies which could help local associations be more effective in bringing agricultural technology to a large number of local producers. This study was entrusted to a team of Nigerien researchers under the direction of Sidikou A. Hamidou with the assistance of an American consultant, Robert B. Charlick.

In more precise terms the study was designed to answer three major questions;

- I. How do formal institutions created by the state actually function at the local level?
- II. What is the nature of non-governmental associations which can be found in the Niamey Department and what is their economic impact?
- III. How do formal, state sponsored organizations and informal associations currently contribute to the economic development of the Niamey Department?

Each of these questions involves an examination of a number of specific issues.

- I.a How is participation in these institutions organized?
- I.b How is this participation conditioned by the social structures of the society in which these institutions function?
- I.c How do the physical constraints on communication between external sources of information and local producers condition both information reception and acceptance?
- I.d How are formal local-level institutions, such as officially-recognized cooperative mutuels (GM), village-wide self-help

associations (Samarya), and village development councils (CVD), perceived by villagers? How do these institutions actually function? What functions do they perform in linking the local level to higher levels of the political and administrative system of the nation?

- I.e How is access to participation in these official institutions conditioned by pre-existing social relationships in the communities studied?
- II.a What role do non-formal organizations play as mobilizers of savings, as facilitators of production, as stimulators of investment or as sources of emergency financial resources?
- II.b How common are specific types of non-formal organizations?
- II.c What principles govern membership and leadership in these organizations?
- II.d How many individuals are involved in each type of association?
- II.e How many functions or tasks do they perform? Does this evolve of time?
- II.f What difficulties do these organizations encounter?
- II.g How potentially adaptable are these associations to new tasks, including the improvement of agriculture in the project area?
- III.a What specifically economic roles do these organizations currently perform?

- III.b What roles do they perform in enhancing the flow of communications from external actors to village producers?
- III.c What is the relationship between participation in these governmental and non-governmental organizations and the receptivity of individual villagers to new technical information and methods?
- III.d How can these local organizations be supported so that they can contribute more toward broad-based economic development?

PART ONE

METHODOLOGY AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGES AND THE SETTING

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY AND PLAN OF THE STUDY

I. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study was jointly designed by Hamidou A. Sidikou, the Director of the study in Niger, and Robert B. Charlick, consultant to the study. A plan for the study was conceived and developed during Dr. Charlick's first consulting mission (December 14, 1985-January 14, 1985).

A. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Because of the short period of time available to conduct data collection, it was decided to employ a rapid survey technique relying heavily on questionnaires. Thus, a battery of four questionnaires was prepared. It included:

- a questionnaire directed to influential villagers: all those in the village who, under various titles, are consulted about or involved in the affairs of the village (Schedule I);

- a questionnaire directed to ordinary villagers: groups of villagers (usually 10-15 people) with no particular status or title (Schedule II);

- an individual questionnaire for a minimum of 30 people (more in larger villages) living in the village (Schedule III);

- a questionnaire aimed at members of informal groups with economic purposes in two versions, one for members of savings funds (Schedule IV A) and the other for members of groups working together to produce a goods (Schedule IV B).

Once the questionnaires were prepared, they were translated, either in part or in whole, into the Zarma and Hausa, the two main languages in the area. This was done to insure that the interviewers would understand precisely what the question was intended to evoke in the language of the respondents. These translations were subsequently tested in a first group of four villages to allow for necessary changes. These four villages are included in the sixteen villages listed in Table 1.1.

In fact, the sample really included eighteen villages because two villages in the Ouallam Arrondissement are administratively considered as four separate villages, each with its own village chief. Nothing, however, distinguishes the two components of these "double" villages apart from administrative recognition. The double villages are Dadaga, which includes Dadaga-Fataye and Dadaga-Mossi, and Bané-Béri, which includes Bané-Béri and Gabdey-Bangou. For the purposes of this report, we will call these villages Bané-Béri and Dadaga.

It was recognized from the outset that survey methods would not be totally suitable for village data collection. It is difficult to get beyond normative perspectives and fairly superficial responses with questionnaires and short periods of contact. Ideally, the rapid survey should have been complemented by four in-depth village studies undertaken by professionally trained sociology students over a period of at least 18 months. The time requirements of the study would not permit this approach. In order to fill in the inevitable gaps in our understanding, several complementary methods of data gathering were incorporated. Group interviews were undertaken with both village notables and non-notables, and more in-depth interviews were conducted with members of non-formal associations.

TABLE I.1

ARRONDISSEMENT	NAME OF VILLAGES	CANTON	COOPERATIVE	DOMINANT ETHNIC GROUP
Say	Doutouel	Torodi	Torodi	Fulani
	Bosé-Bangou	Torodi	Bosé-Bangou	Songhai
	Tchantchan Foulbé or Karaldjiégou	Guéladio	Tchantchan- Foulbé	Fulani
	Kiki (or Bomanga)	Torodi	Kiki	Gourmantché
Kollo	Gilléni	Dantchandou	Dantchandou	Zarma
	Baboussaye	Kouré	Baboussaye	Zarma
	Kokoirey-Peul	Kouré	Kouré	Fulani
	Koné-Béri	Karma	Koné-Béri	Zarma
Filingué	Louma	Kourfey	Louma	Hausa
	Tombo	Kourfey	Tombo	Hausa- Zarma+
	Aïbachi	Imanan	Fandara	Bella
	Farmas-Béri	Tondikandia	Fandou	Hausa- Zarma+
Ouallam	Mondolo-Garbey Fondo	Tondikiwindi	Tondikiwindi	Zarma
	Tolkoboy-Fandobon	Ouallam	Tolkoboy- Koira-Tégui	Zarma
	Bané-Béri and Gabdey-Bangou	Simiri	Bané-Béri	Zarma
	Dadaga (Fatayé and Mossi)	Simiri	Bané-Béri	Zarma

+ Hausa people who have adopted the Zarma language

Interviewers and leaders of each field team were also asked to collect the following additional types of information in the course of the 8-10 days devoted to each village study as well:

1. Technical information on the financial situation of village mutual groups through UNCC, the cooperative, or the Caisse Nationale de Cr it Agricole (CNCA).
2. Data on the topography, soil type and on the village communication infrastructure under the supervision of Dr Sidikou who is a specialist in socio-economic geography.
3. Data on the types of social organizations usually found in the villages and on the implications of these patterns for political organization and the economic cooperation. These data are collected through structured interviews with "key informants" which the study director and team leaders undertook in each village. At the conclusion of each village study, interviewers also discuss a number of questions pertaining to the village just completed and, using their field notes, they contribute additional information not necessarily recorded in the interviews or questionnaires.
4. Outline maps of the villages which make it possible to locate the most important areas and structures, particularly the neighborhoods, public buildings such as schools, dispensaries, mosques, Samarya facilities, wells, community gardens.

Information on types of non-governmental associations and impressions of official institutions was to be gathered through individual interviews with villagers selected according to certain criteria (see below).

B. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The study was organized so that all the important types of data could be collected by a team of four interviewers and a senior researcher in approximately 6-7 days of field work. The teams of interviewers consisted of employees of the government's "Animation" service (Karidio Omar, Boureima Manou, Igué Garba, Ramatou Bafouché, and Djibo Hindé) drawn from the arrondissements covered by the study, as well as staff members of the Project (NDD) Evaluation Unit (Seydou Douki and Omar Moussa). Each team was supervised by a senior researcher (Sidikou Hamidou for team A, and Hima Garba for team B), and one interviewer was appointed leader for each team as well.

The following approach was adopted for conducting the field work:

First the team enters the village after proper consultations have been held with authorities at the arrondissement and canton level. The interviewer team then holds a group interview with the influential personalities in the village. This session is conducted by the senior researcher or the overall study director using a long, non-directive question guide of about 20 pages (Schedule I). The senior researcher also poses additional questions to explore new points which emerge in the course of the discussions with this group. This session is usually completed in about two hours, but it may take more than four hours under certain circumstances. All members of the interview team attend and take notes on the patterns of participation observed during the meeting. This interview is designed to establish the broad outline of the history and social patterns of the village and to identify the experience of the village with past "development" activities. It also seeks to establish what villagers, who are presumably

most best informed, know and think about the modern development structure both at the village and extra-village levels.

A similar group interview (Schedule II) is then held with villagers who hold no positions of authority or influence. The goal of this interview is to establish the degree of consensus on basic village history and social patterns and to identify major cleavages and conflicts. It also seeks to compare this group's knowledge about past development actions and official development institutions with the information provided by the group of influential villagers. The guide for this session is also non-directive and quite extensive, covering some 15 pages. The amount of time required to administer it depends a great deal on the degree of cooperation received from the members of the group being interviewed.

In the process of conducting these two sessions, an effort is made to identify forms of economic cooperation in the areas of savings, investment and production which might be present in the village.

Following the group discussions, several interviewers draw a simplified map of the village. They rely on "key informants" from the village to help them identify observable physical and social features of the community. Based upon this map and the information obtained from the group interview, a strategy is developed for the selection of individual respondents. Generally, an effort is made to select individuals from each neighborhood in rough proportion to the numeric importance of this neighborhood in the village (See discussion of the sample below.) Interviewers then work in teams of two to conduct the individual interviews. Each team has male and female interviewers which makes it possible to conduct interviews with village women. Despite these plans to represent women adequately in the survey, women were seriously

under-represented because one of the two female interviewers had to leave the study early for health reasons. As a result only 70 women were interviewed, which represents only 15% of the total sample.

Individual Interviews (Schedule III) were designed to explore the diversity of villagers' knowledge and experience and to identify the types of economically oriented non-governmental associations which exist at the village level. This interview develops information concerning involvement in prior and current development activities, knowledge of the government sponsored institutions and participation in non-formal or non-governmental associations. This questionnaire is designed to produce, for the most part, closed, codable answers. One hundred fifty-three variables are included of which 15 require open codes. This interview requires between one hour and one and one half hours to complete.

Following the completion of individual questionnaires, the interviewers meet to discuss the non-governmental informal groups which they have been able to identify. They then determine which are the most important to study in greater depth. Members of these groups are then asked to assemble and the interviewers conduct a group interview (Schedule IV) designed to reveal the functions and work methods of the group.

Data on village infrastructure, on the topographical features and on the financial situation of cooperatives is recorded on a Technical Summary Sheet. This sheet is checked over during "synthesis sessions" attended by all members of the field team at the conclusion of each village study. At synthesis sessions team members also discuss a number of questions which help them summarize what they have learned about the overall social patterns in the village they have just studied. These questions are found on the Synthesis

Session Summary Sheet. The senior research director holds a discussion on each question, summarizes the conversation in written form on the sheet and tape records the entire discussion for future use. In addition, most of the group sessions with influential and ordinary villagers, and some key informants interviews are recorded.

All survey instruments were written in French. No English version was ever produced. As indicated above, the questionnaire for individuals was fully translated into Hausa and Zarma to increase the likelihood that interviewers would interpret the questions correctly when posing them in local tongues. Only certain portions of the group interviews were translated into local languages since these sessions were conducted by experienced researchers who understand these languages completely, and who are thoroughly familiar with the meaning of the questions.

C. THE SAMPLE

This study covers the four arrondissements of the Niamey Department which have been affected thus far by the actions of the Niamey Department Development Project. The population of these arrondissements is very diverse. An effort was made to assure that the study would not only represent the population, but would also reveal all the existing distinct patterns.

Several criteria were considered in drawing up the sample.

1. The arrondissement-- it was decided to have a minimum of four villages per arrondissement.
2. Ethnicity- the sample had to include villages which were as representative as possible of the ethnic composition of the population of the arrondissements studied as a whole.

3. Possibilities for Economic Development-- following discussions with Project officials, it was decided to orient the sample in favor of those villages considered to have more economic possibilities and, therefore, to villages which were more likely to be able to respond favorably to future technical change programs. This meant including villages, which, while representative in general terms of the type of local economies in the arrondissement, nevertheless, were considered to have greater than average economic potential because of their physical attributes.
4. Village size--the sample includes small as well as larger villages.
5. Accessibility--the distance from Niamey, the capital, to secondary centers such as Filingué, Baleyara, Torodi and Ouallam was taken into account.
6. Participation in the Activities of the Niamey Department Development Project--the study had to include villages close to a Center for Technical Promotion (CPT) and which were, therefore, considered directly involved in the activities of the project and villages much farther away.

To assure that all these criteria would be met it was necessary to draw a stratified, rather than a random sample. The villages were selected in meetings with the administrative authorities and representatives of the various technical services concerned grouped within the Coordination Committee of the Project: UNCC before its termination, Animation, Agriculture, Forests and Fauna. These officials then suggested village names which were later discussed with the Director of the Study. A first list of six villages per

arrondissement was established from these discussions. Some of them were then visited by the Director of the study and by the Consultant before the final choice was made.

Within the villages the selection of individual respondents was also not done in a random fashion. The decision was made to select individuals who would be drawn from all the social and political strata of the village. The assumption was that this could best be done by fixing quotas for each residential neighborhood since neighborhoods were thought to correspond with social and often ethnic differences. Filling the quotas proved to be challenging. It would have been desirable to draw the names of individuals randomly from the census lists. However, so many individuals were absent from the villages at this time of year, and so many others proved to be reluctant to be interviewed, that the interviewers simply selected from among those individuals who were available in each neighborhood, taking care to interview individuals of different ages, both sexes and from a variety of types of households. This method was far from ideal; it definitely limited the degree to which the sample represents the larger universal of all individuals in the villages studied or in the project area. Clearly this sampling technique is much more likely to include individuals who do not migrate looking for work during the dry season, and those who are relatively open to strangers than would be selected by chance.

D. ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING THE FIELD WORK

1. Organizing the staff

The organization of the field work was planned by the Director of the Study, Dr. Sidikou, working in conjunction with Dr. Charlick, the Consultant. It was decided that, in order to complete the field survey work prior to the

advent of the month of fasting (Ramadan) and the beginning of the rainy season, two field teams would be required. Each team would be made up of three male interviewers, at least one of whom would be drawn from the NDD's own evaluation staff. The rest of the interviewers, including one woman who worked with each team, were recruited from the Animation service at the arrondissement level. The choice of interviewers was further complicated by the fact that not all the local Animation agents were fluent in all of the languages required to conduct the interviews. The composition of the teams, therefore, changed somewhat as the study proceeded from one arrondissement to the next.

Each team was organized so that it had a team leader responsible for the daily administration of the team's work and for the verification of the questionnaires, and an individual responsible for the team's logistics, particularly the preparation of blank questionnaires, camping equipment and food supplies. Each team also was equipped with a cassette recorder and a Polaroid camera which proved to be a very successful and appropriate tool for creating rapport with villagers.

Supervision of the teams was assured by placing a senior researcher with each field team. Dr. Sidikou served the dual role of overall study director and field supervisor of one team. Mr. Hima Garba, a trained sociologist, was recruited to supervise the second team during the last two months of the field work when it became necessary to put two teams to work simultaneously. The team supervisors were responsible for conducting the group interviews, for finalizing the sampling strategy in each village and for organizing and conducting the synthesis sessions following each field trip.

Finally, a coder and data entry specialist was recruited in January to begin the process of data input. By July he had completed the data entry for the individual questionnaire which enabled the consultant to process the data on a micro-computer in Niger during the Summer of 1985.

2. Phases in the Field Work

The study was organized into four stages. From mid-December to late January, the study was designed, the interviewers were recruited, the questionnaires were developed, and the interviewers had a brief preliminary training in the use of the questionnaire and in drawing simplified village maps.

From January 24 to March 20, the methods to be used in the field were tested in four villages by a single team into which the interviewers chosen for the study were gradually incorporated. Each time another village was undertaken, we introduced new members to the team so that all the interviewers could get experience working with the questionnaire. Those who proved unsatisfactory were then replaced. Once this experimental phase was completed a few changes had to be made in the text and several questions had to be reconceptualized. These changes, as well as the editing and re-printing, were completed during the consulting trip of Dr. Charlick in March.

The study was then ready to be launched in the remaining twelve villages. A work plan was prepared for the studies to be undertaken in these villages between April 1st and May 31, 1985. Two villages had to be visited a second time to gather additional data. These visits were conducted from June 3 to June 6, 1985. During this phase in the implementation of the study, serious difficulties with the support of the teams had to be overcome. For most of

this period only one vehicle was available to transport both teams and their supervisors.

The final phase of the study took place during the summer when the data was processed and the researchers prepared their descriptive and analytic reports.

E. BRIEF DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SAMPLE

The population in the villages of the sample is 15,523 or 24% of the total population (654,082 inhabitants)¹ in the four arrondissements. According to the 1982 census there are 1,111 sedentary villages in these four arrondissements.² The 500 people who answered individual questionnaires constitute 3.2% of the rural population in these arrondissements. In reality, a much larger percentage of villagers was interviewed through group meetings with influential villagers, ordinary villagers and with members of economically oriented associations.

The principal characteristics of the individual questionnaire sample are as follows:

1. Demographic and Geographic Characteristics

a. Distribution by Gender- Among 500 respondents, 86% (430) were men and 14% (70) were women. This distribution obviously departs radically from the actual population.

¹Republic of Niger, 1982 Census.

²Tribes that are theoretically considered as nomadic were not taken into account. There are thirty-six such tribes in the district of Kourfey in the Filingué county.

b. Distribution by Arrondissement-

Say	= 23.2%	(N=116)
Kollo	= 27.2%	(N=136)
Filingué	= 25.0%	(N=125)
Ouallam	= 24.6%	(N=123)

c. Distribution by village-

Doutouel	= 6.0%
Bosé-Bangou	= 6.0%
Kiki	= 6.4%
Tchantchan-Foulbé	= 4.6%
Gilléni	= 5.8%
Baboussaye	= 6.0%
Kokoirey-Peul	= 8.6%
Koné-Béri	= 7.0%
Louma	= 6.8%
Tombo	= 6.6%
Farmas-Béri	= 4.8%
Aibachi	= 6.8%
Tolkoboy-Fandobon	= 6.2%
Mondolo-Garbey-Fondo	= 6.0%
Dadaga	= 6.0%
Bané-Béri	= 6.4%

The villages with the lowest percentages are those where either the residential mobility is high (Tchantchan-Foulbé and Gilléni, for example) or the population was not readily available to the investigators (Farmas-Béri is a good example).

d. Ethnicity- According to the sociological appendix to Phase II of the Niamey Department Development Project, the Zarma, who represent 57% of the population of the Department, are the most numerous ethnic group. These documents also indicate that the Fulani and the Hausa are next in order of numeric importance, constituting together 30% of the population in the four arrondissements treated by the project.

The sample gathered by this study showed the following ethnic distribution:

Zarma	= 68.1%
Fulani	= 11.9%
Hausa	= 8.3%
Twareg/ Bella	= 6.4%
Gourmantché	= 3.2%
Songhaï	= 2.0%

2. Social Characteristics.

The vast majority of people are married (87.7%, 436 people); there are only 44 (8.9%) single respondents, 3% (15) widowers and widows and 0.4% (2) divorced respondents. Contrary to the widely held view, polygamy is not a common practice: 65.8% (281) of the respondents come from monogamous families; 19.4% (83) from a household with two wives and 3.3% (14) from a household with three wives. The fact that polygamy is not prevalent, if surprising in itself, can be explained mostly by the unfavorable economic conditions.

If these figures for polygamy are generalized widely through the Niamey Department, they indicate a marked evolution of the societies under study toward reduced households, indicating a change in concept toward a nuclear

family structure. This notion is supported by an analysis of the number of adult males and females, and the number of children found in the families surveyed. Over 22% (69) of these families include one working man, 27% include two, 31% include three or four and 19% include more than four. Over 30% of the families have only one woman who is economically active. The corresponding percentages of families with more than one working woman are respectively 30.7%, 31.0%, 25.7% and 12.5%. As for children, there are one or two in 30.7% of the families, three to six in 54.5% of the families and more than six in 14.8% of the families. If families are reduced in size they nevertheless continue to incorporate members of the older generation. Nearly 82% of the households included one economically inactive older male or female, and more than one elder resided in the remaining 18% of the households. In a country where life expectancy is still only 43 years, these figures for elderly residents are quite high.

It must also be noted that 87.6% (438) of the interviewees were born in the villages of their current residence, and that only 12.4% (62) have immigrated to the village. This explains why 94.6% (473) of the respondents were born in their village or have lived there for a very long time and only 5.4% (27) have been living there for less than twenty years. These figures reveal the low rate of population migration which may be explained by the difficulty of access to land in the villages and by the populations' attachment to their soil.

3. Status of individuals within the village and within their families.

Over 56% (282) of all respondents hold no title or particular position of responsibility in their village, while 43% (215) hold at least one. Does the latter figure, a fairly high one, mean that there is a definite tendency

to share responsibilities, a hypothesis which is confirmed by the fact that in 91% of the cases, the title of position held is appointive, while the title is hereditary in only 9% of the cases? The implementation of the Société de Développement and increase in the number of title-holding positions, especially within the Samarya, explain the high percentage of appointive positions. But sharing responsibilities does not mean deconcentration of power. Indeed, the fact that 60.6% (300) of the respondents are more or less closely related to the family of the village chief, and that an additional 12.7% (63) are related to other village notables, indicates at least two things: on the one hand, the families of the village chiefs are extended and, on the other hand, power still is concentrated in a few families who control the social and economic life of the village. Autocracy, which constitutes the dominant form of control in the villages, adapts to societal changes without relinquishing its former advantages. It distributes responsibilities to a larger number of people, but only within its own ranks.

More than half of the individuals interviewed (53%) were heads of households, while 47% were considered household dependents. Most of the people interviewed (83%) had as their primary occupation either farming or raising livestock. An additional 9% were primarily craftsmen, while 8% reported no occupation or stated that they were housewives. This indicates a poorly diversified economy.

4. Material or Economic Differentiation

In agriculture the means of production, particularly land, is still collectively owned at the level of the family in a great many cases, but this does not exclude the possibility that individuals also own and work their own fields. Less than 20% (18,6%) of the people interviewed worked in a farm

enterprise which had no collective field. On the other hand 53% of the people owned no individual fields of their own. Most farm enterprises consisted of two (32%) or more (35%) collective fields. Only about 23% of the respondents own two or more individual fields. This indicates to what extent the soil is a collective property, a family property first and foremost, and how difficult it would be to alter its status.

Nearly half of the people interviewed (45.8%) owned no livestock which is a preferred form of capital investment in most village communities. Cattle ownership is still considered the best form of investment, but relatively few people have the wealth needed to get into it. The high percentage of villagers who do not own animals is explained strictly by the losses resulting from a year of severe drought. The drought not only took its toll on the animal population directly, but it also forced livestock owners to sell a substantial number of their remaining animals simply to meet the minimum economics requirements of their families.

Possession of consumer goods is another measure of differences in material well-being. It is interesting to note that only 3% of the respondents own a sewing machine, an item which can be used both for consumption and investment. Over 19% of the respondents own a watch, 19.0% own a radio, 12.4% own a bicycle--particularly in the Say area--and only 1.6% own a motorbike. Watches and radios are thus common elements in the standard of living and are, therefore, status symbols in the social hierarchy because of the obvious prestige that they confer.

CHAPTER 2. OVERVIEW OF THE VILLAGES IN THE STUDY

I. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Figure 1 displays the geographical location of the villages in relation to each other. It also indicates where they are situated in relation to the principal urban center of Niamey and to the urban or semi-urban centers of Toradi, Ouallam, Filingué, Makalondi and Bonkougou.

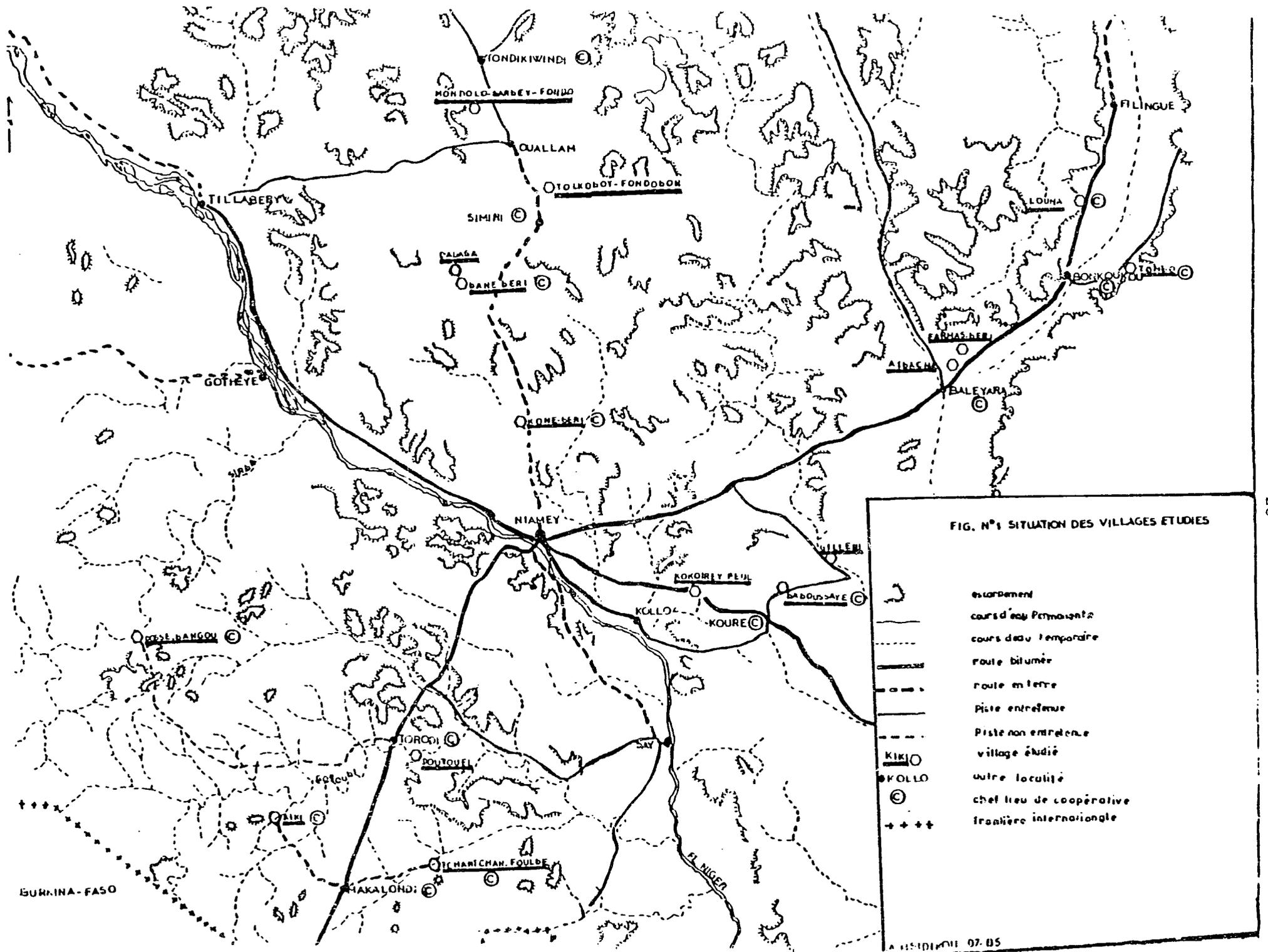
If we consider Niamey to be the main center of influence, we will note that:

- Two villages, Kokoirey Peul and Koné-Béri are located within a 50 km radius of Niamey; the second village, whose name is also that of one of the two main neighborhoods of Niamey, can almost be considered a part of the greater suburbs of Niamey.

- Seven villages, or almost half of them, are located within 50 to 100 km of the capital city. They are Doutouel and Tchantchan-Foulbé in the Say arrondissement, Gilléni and Baboussaye in the Kollo arrondissement, and Bane-Béri, Dadaga and Tolkoboy-Fandobon in the arrondissement of Ouallam.

- Five villages are located within a 100-150 km radius circle: Kiki and Bossé-Bangou in the Say arrondissement, Aïbachi and Farmas-Béri in the Filingué arrondissement and Mondolo-Garbey-Fondo in the arrondissement of Ouallam.

- Finally, two villages, both in the arrondissement of Filingué, Tombo and Louma, are located within a 50 km radius from the capital city.



Of greater interest is the location of these villages in relation to the road system, in other words their accessibility to external influences. Thus, five villages are located within 5 kms of a laterite road (Koné-Béri, Tolkoboy-Fandobon, Mondolo-Garbey-Fendo) or an asphalt highway (Kokoirey-Peul, Louma). Four villages, Gilléni, Baboussaye, Tombo and Aibachi, are located along maintained rural roads. All other villages, however, are located along rural lanes or along basic rural trails that are not maintained and are difficult to access, particularly during the rainy season when some villages can be temporarily isolated from the main economic or administrative centers. This is the case mainly of villages located along the right bank of the Niger river, most particularly Doutouel and Bossé-Bangou. The situation of Tchanchan-Foulbé and Kiki is slightly better because of rural trails to Makalondi which were built under the PARI (Projet d'Animation Rural Intégrée) project. This project was initiated by Misereor and consisted of doing rudimentary repair and resurfacing portions of trails which are readily flooded during the rainy season.

The nature of the soil, which is largely clay-like or hardpan, the relatively dense vegetation and a temporary river network, which is particularly troublesome during the rainy season, explain the isolation felt strongly by the people of this area. They attempt to minimize it by acquiring bicycles and by taking advantage of the good nature of people who own the few four-wheel drive vehicles, principally Land-Rovers whose age and condition are indeterminate.

The location of villages in relation to secondary centers, which are usually important market places, can lessen this sense of isolation. Three villages are located less than 10 kms away from a secondary center--

Doutouel from Torodi, Farmas-Béri and Afbachi from Baleyara. Seven villages are located between 10 and 20 kms from a secondary center-- Kokoiry-Peul from Kollo via rural lanes, Kiki and Tchanchan-Foulbé from Makalondi, Tolkoboy-Fandobon and Mondolo-Garbey-Fondo from Ouallam, and Tombo and Louma from Bonkougou. One village, Louma, is located between 20 and 30 kms from a secondary center, this time measuring its distance from Filingué. Finally, six villages are located more than 30 kms away from a secondary center-- Gilléni and Baboussaye from Kollo or Baleyara; Koné-Béri, which is essentially oriented to Niamey in any case; Bané-Béri and Dadaga from Ouallam, and Bossé-Bangou which is 65 kms away from Torodi, a distance which takes three hours to cover during the dry season! Furthermore, travel to the right bank of the Sirba river is extremely difficult since there is only a single "pirogue" (dugout canoe) which carries passengers across the river at this point.

From an economic viewpoint, no village is very far away from a market. Apart from the opportunities that their own village may offer, most of the inhabitants have several opportunities to purchase and sell goods in the markets they attend. Thus, the people of Kiki can shop in at least three markets a week-- their own (on Saturdays), those at Makalondi (on Mondays), at Torodi (on Fridays), at Tamboulé (on Mondays) and at Dyayé (on Fridays).

II. VILLAGE SIZE AND STRUCTURE AND SOIL TYPE.

A. Village Size

If we list the villages in order of increasing population we note that:

- Six villages have a population between 250 and 500, or 14.2% of the population of the study. They are:

Farmas-Béri	: 278 inhabitants
Doutouel	: 346
Kokoirey-Peul	: 346
Tchantchan-Foulbé	: 396
Gilléni	: 404
Tolkoboy-Fandobon	: 436

- Five villages have a population between 500 and 1000 (23.3% of the population in the study):

Koné-Béri	: 527
Kiki	: 547
Mondolo-Garbey-Fondo	: 735
Albachi	: 843
Baboussaye	: 970

- Three villages have a population between 1000 and 1500 (25.6% of the population in the study):

Dadaga	: 1079
Bossé-Bangou	: 1396
Tombo	: 1491

- One village, Bané-Béri, has a population between 1500 and 2000 inhabitants-- 1828 inhabitants, 11.8% of the population in the study.

- Finally, only one village, Louma, has a population over 2000-- 3904 inhabitants, over one-fourth (25.1%) of the population in the study and fourteen times the population of the smallest village, Farmas-Béri!

It is to be noted that the three villages with a mostly Fulani population, Doutouel, Kokoirey-Peul and Tchantchan-Foulbé, all belong in the group of small villages and that the only Hausa village in the sample is also the largest in population. The villages that are subdivided, Dadaga and Bané-Béri, are relatively large when put together. The size of the Bella village, Aibachi may seem surprising for sedentarized herders whose settlement pattern is that of scattered homesteads, giving the impression that the village is very small.

B. Settlement Patterns

The villages can be placed in two categories according to their physical appearance-- scattered or dispersed villages and villages grouped around a single site or concentrated around two distinct sites. Settlement patterns may be very significant for the responsiveness of a population to technical, change-oriented projects since it is reasonable to assume that communication is significantly impaired by a dispersed or scattered pattern of residential homesteads. Villages with scattered settlement patterns include Mondolo-Garbey-Fondo, Aibachi, Farmas, Kokoirey-Peul, Doutouel, Kiki and Bané-Béri, where 98 of the 102 heads of household live in farming hamlets. Dadaga, Tolkoboy-Fandobon, Tombo, Koné-Béri, Gilléni, Baboussaye, Bossé-Bangou, Louma, and Tchantchan-Foulbé belong in the second category. It should be noted that the type of settlement pattern is not an ethnic attribute. The case of Tchantchan-Foulbé, for example, demonstrates that sedentarized herders do not always live in extremely scattered villages.

Villages in which residences cluster around several centers and hence form "double villages" are all the products of divisions which occurred as a direct result of colonial policy. Both double villages studied, Bané-Béri

and Dadaga, are composed of hamlets which once belonged to the town of Simiri. Colonial administrators attempted to combat the dispersed residential pattern by burning all scattered farming hamlets before they recognized some of these hamlets as autonomous administrative entities with village chiefs. When a portion of the population found that the first chiefs appointed to Bané-Béri and Dadaga were unsatisfactory, they asked for and obtained separation into two administratively distinct villages. Gabdey-Bangou thus separated from Bané-Béri in 1947. One would think that it is a relatively new village when it is, in fact, an old one.

The occurrence of subdivided villages is frequent in the Zarmaganda region, especially in the Simiri canton where Niabéri-Koira and Bané-Koira are one village with two village chiefs, as is the case of the following villages in the same canton which are not included in the study: Tollo (which includes Koira-Tégui and Koira-Koukou); Fada-Kaïna and Komo-Bangou; Kano-Koira and Koira-Tégui; Sinsan-Tondi and Gollo. This aspect must be taken into consideration for planning and implementation of development interventions.

In the Zarmaganda, only Bané-Béri stands out as a village with a regional reputation owed mainly to its dynamic cooperative, as in the case of Tchanchan-Foulbé and Koné-Béri which are located in other cantons of the Department. All three are considered open villages and models of initiative in and disposition to development.

C. Soil Type

The type of soil which prevails in a given locality is intimately linked to that community's economic potential. The villages studied were classified according to the dominant and secondary types of soils in their localities.

The classification includes:

- villages with sandy soil, very often located in a large valley or between two rivers, such as Afbachi located in the Dallol Bosso region, Doutouel, and Baboussaye.

- villages with predominantly clay, and mixed clay and sandy soil, such as Bossé-Bangou, Kiki, Tchanchan-Foulbé, Farmas-Béri.

-- villages located near seasonal rivers or their tributaries, such as Kiki and Bossé-Bangou, located near the Sirba river system, and Doutouel, located on the Goroubi river. Access to water makes it possible for villagers from these communities to cultivate tree crops, to garden and to fish. These rivers offer an enormous potential which should be tapped as the 250 gardens counted at one time in Bossé-Bangou demonstrate.

In contrast, the hydro-geological situation of some villages is very disturbing. For example, in Bané-Béri and Dadaga the ground water table is not only deep, but the water is also brackish. The villagers must obtain their water supply from wells in the neighboring villages of Sini-Bangou and Niabéri-Koira, located from two to six kms away. The two semi-permanent swamps, which could have given some hope, allow, in fact, only for the tilling of halophytes.¹

A final pedologic feature which should be noted is the rocky structures which are important in the soils of Farmas-Béri, Kiki, Bossé-Bangou, Tchanchan-Foulbé and Doutouel and, in particular, Louma, which is situated at the foot of a cliff which marked the western edge of the Dallol-Bosso range.

¹Halophytes are plants which grow in salty soils.

In all villages, the method of cultivation, which is extensive as opposed to intensive and soil erosion, combined with demographic, historical and sociological pressures have led and are still leading to a dispersal of the population which is at least seasonal.² The scarcity of arable soil is particularly felt in Doutouel where fallow land exists which cannot be worked for lack of water. It is also a serious problem in Tchanchan-Foulbé and especially in Kiki, where the population is swarming to the north into the Goroubi valley.

III. THE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGES

Villages were classified according to their relative level of physical and social infrastructure as inventoried by the interviewers in the course of their stay.³ They were then grouped as follows:

- relatively well-served villages: Koné-Béri, Bané-Béri, Tchanchan-Foulbé and Kiki;
- moderately well-served villages: Louma, Tombo, Bossé-Bangou;
- villages with very little infrastructure of any sort: Kokoirey-Peul, Tolkoboy-Fandobon, Afbachi, Farmas-Béri, Doutouel, Mondolo-Garbey-Fondo, Dadaga, Baboussaye and Gilléni.

²See Arouna Hamidou Sidikou, Sedentarité et Mobilité Entre Niger et Zgaret, Niamey and Paris: IRSH, 1973 and the field observations and questionnaire data from the present study.

³Schools, dispensaries, cemented or traditional wells, foot-operated pump, public television set, millet mill, literacy centers, grain banks, presence of first-aid workers and trained midwives, markets, religious places, Farmer Training Centers (CPT).

With the exception of Koné-Béri, none of the villages in the study is equipped with a dispensary. The need for this facility is sharply felt among the population particularly at Bané-Béri, Dadaga, Tombo and Louma, and at Tchanchan-Foulbé, Kiki, Bossé-Bangou whose inhabitants must go to the distant center of Bolsi to get medical care. A village like Kokoirey-Peui still does not have a school. People in a large village like Baboussaye must be discouraged by the water supply problems in an area where the water table is 65 m deep. Their motivation level must be quite high, however, since, despite this drawback, some have attempted successfully to grow off-season irrigated crops.

From certain points of view, a few villages seem to be relatively over-equipped and served as is Koné-Béri which has a CPT, a school, a public television set, and two foot-operated pumps (out of order) besides the cemented well of the village and that of the CPT. Such may also be the case of Louma which has six foot-operated pumps for almost 4000 people and three retail stores including that of the cooperative. Over-equipment is relative, however, since neither village has a millet mill or a grain-bank which are especially important to rural women.

In contrast, some villages are extremely under-served. Such is the case of Doutouel where the only infrastructure consists of several wells for market-gardens, one mosque, an unfinished cemented well and four paraprofessional health workers. It is also the case of Farmas which has only ten traditional wells, one cemented well and one mosque.

Finally, Kiki, Bané-Béri, Koné-Béri, Louma, Tombo, Bossé-Bangou, Baboussaye, and Tchanchan-Foulbé are the central villages of a cooperative

and, therefore, have the cooperative store and warehouse in their community. The remaining villages are only village mutuals (GM) which are affiliated with a cooperative. As such they have no cooperative infrastructure. These GM villages, therefore, are dependent on the following cooperative centers to some degree: Dadaga (Bané-Béri cooperative); Mondolo-Garbey-Fondo (Tondikiwindi cooperative); Tolkoboy-Fandobon (Tolkoboy-Koirategui cooperative); Gilléni (Dantchandou cooperative); Kokoirey-Peul (Kouré cooperative); Aïbachi (Fandara cooperative); Farmas-Béri (Fandou cooperative); and Doutouel (Torodi cooperative).

V. LOCAL AND REGIONAL IMPORTANCE OF THE VILLAGES IN THE STUDY

Some villages in the study are virtually unknown (Farmas-Béri, Aïbachi, Kokoirey-Peul, Tolkoboy-Fandobon). Other villages, on the other hand, have enjoyed, at some point in their history, widespread renown, if not prestigious influence, which contrasts with their present situation. Such is the case of Baboussaye, the former seat of a now abolished canton; of Gilléni, formerly a fortified village and important population center for the Zarma people; and of Bossé-Bangou, a Songhai pocket of resistance to colonial rule. Bossé-Bangou is still an important center which, in the absence of another town of equal importance, commands a widespread influence because of the low population of this region. Recently, it has attracted more inhabitants because of its potential as a gold-producing area.

The regional importance of Louma, a very large village, seems to suffer from the proximity and influence of other commercial centers such as Bonkougou, Filingué and Baleyara. The village of Tombo, however, seems to

be growing in regional importance because of its reputation as a religious center and influence of its marabout village chief. Its role as a religious center seems to be a key element in its dynamism and relative prosperity, a pleasant surprise at a time when most villages lack grain.

The case of Kiki is surprising on more than one count. First of all, Kiki, located in a predominantly Gourmantché area, is a village where a number of ethnic groups, Gourmantché, Fulani, Mossi, Zarma, Hausa, Songhai and even a Kanouri family, live and get along well. Second, it is an important village in terms of its economic relations in this region. It is best known for sugar cane production which is marketed as far away as Niamey with intermediary markets such as Makalondi and Torodi. For a number of reasons Kiki is a village whose influence spreads over a 20 to 25 km radius and overlaps that of Makalondi.

PART TWO

VILLAGE LEVEL ORGANIZATION IN THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT

CHAPTER 3
VILLAGE SOCIAL PATTERNS AND FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS INITIATED BY THE STATE

I. INTRODUCTION- PRINCIPLES OF VILLAGE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

Considering the purposes of the study, it was essential to gather data on the factors indicative of social conflict or integration at the village level. It was necessary to obtain information as well on the channels through which information circulates in village communities, since this information can be an important factor for motivation and participation in development activities.

While it was relatively easy to detect elements of solidarity in the villages, in several cases it was difficult, given the research methodology and the short period of field work in each village, to identify with certainty the elements of conflict which could affect the outcome of a given development activity. A case-by-case analysis of elements of solidarity observed in the villages provided a rather exhaustive view of the situation, but did not lend itself well to developing a systematic classification of the patterns of similarities and differences among villages. Instead, the villages will be classified according to a few criteria which represent positive signs of social integration.

In villages which display favorable signs of solidarity, the following elements seem to be important;

- the authority of the village chief or one of his relatives is strong and his behavior is valued if not considered exemplary;

- the Moslem religion is often well established and the mosque is a preferred meeting and discussion place, serving as an important forum for

exchanging both ideas and information;

- on the whole, the population is ethnically homogeneous, though ethnic diversity can be overcome to the point where it is a strength rather than a weakness;

- the vitality of certain organizations such as the Samarya or the cooperative structure, which is usually related to the village authority structure and to the initiative or reputation of the leaders of these groups, often cements the feeling of social integration.

The villages which manifested a high level of social solidarity in this study were Tombo, Doutouel, Tolkoboy-Fandobon, Bane-Béri, Kone-Béri, Baboussaye, Kiki, Tchanchan-Foulbé, Kokoirey-Peul, Dadaga, Afbachi and Mondolo-Garbey-Fondo.

In villages which are less socially unified, the elements indicated above are either non-existent or barely visible. In any case, they are clouded by attitudes traceable to the historical experience of specific groups within the village such as the marginality of former slaves or cast members, blacksmiths in particular, political power struggles which have divided families, struggles over religious leadership, or even to economic conflicts arising from the problems of controlling livestock and preventing animals from doing damage to a neighbor's property. Villages studied which seem to have low levels of social integration and solidarity were Bossé-Bangou, where conflicts of interest in the development of gold mining have exacerbated social tensions, Gilléni, where a particularly quarrelsome woman has really poisoned social relations, Farmas-Béri, where the village chief's personality and behavior have been questioned, and Louma, which seems divided to such an extent that part of the population

settled in farming hamlets and established their own Samarya.

The main channels of information which this study identified are as follows:

- administrative or traditional authorities and agents of the government's technical services.
- Leaders of the Samarya and cooperative organizations;
- radio and public television sets where they exist;
- markets which have a very important social role;
- certain civil servants, teachers in particular.

Teachers play a very uneven role in the positive evolution of the villages. Some of them really take part in the village life and help in the implementation of certain activities, as in Gilléni, where they played an important role in the development of market-gardens. Others are reserved and sometimes even distant. Villagers who have traveled to seek work elsewhere might be expected to be of assistance to the village as well. But these seasonal migrants, especially those who come back from abroad, may not play a very constructive role since many have a tendency to consider themselves superior because of their experience of life and their supposed open-mindedness.

Information may not spread through a village very effectively, however. The study revealed two barriers to the flow of information in the villages studied-- the social and economic status of women, and the settlement pattern of the village. Most of the time women do not take part in the organized life of the village because they receive little or no information. This is due, no doubt, to a combination of their own reluctance to participate and to the control of information by male leaders. The gender barrier is not universal, however, since in some villages women seem to get

the information they need to to participate fully in certain activities. In Kiki and in Gilléni, for example, women monopolize the production of off-season irrigated crops which the Government of Niger has been promoting very vigorously.

The settlement pattern can constitute a serious barrier to the circulation of information and to the implementation of development activities. This is particularly true in Aibachi and Bane-Béri where families are so far apart from one another physically that it hinders the flow of information from external sources, such as administrative authorities, as well as social solidarity and opportunities for people to work together.

In certain areas, specific mentalities, such as extreme individualism and the need jealously to preserve one's freedom of action in the Zarmaganda villages, or the pride in and feeling of wealth from the gold mining in Bossé-Bangou, are added barriers to village solidarity and the flow of information.

II. FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS: THE MANDATE OF THE SOCIETE DE DEVELOPPEMENT

The formal organizations investigated are mainly those authorized by a series of governmental decisions which created a new organizational structure in Niger known as the Société de Développement. As part of its policy of revitalization and reorganization of the national life within structures designed to involve the population voluntarily and actively, and to give it major responsibility for development, the government of the Republic of Niger established a National Commission for the Implementation of the Société de Développement (Decree No. 79-165 of October 29, 1979). This Commission, which included representatives of all active social groups

in the country, was charged with formulating, within two years, a proposal for nationwide development which would be appropriate to the needs of the people and harmoniously adapted to the physical, economic, social and cultural conditions of the country. The Commission, whose motto became "Consultation, Concertation and Participation," proposed a pyramidal structure of development, paralleling the Nigerien administrative structure, with the cooperative organizations and the Samarya organization at its base.

Both base-level institutions pre-dated the Société de Développement. Cooperatives had been created in 1966 and the Samarya had been restructured in 1975. The Société de Développement, however, proposed integrating these institutions into a system of councils as instruments for popular participation in development activities reaching from the village to the highest levels of the state. The Société de Développement is now capped by the National Council for Development. Its President is the second highest official in the Nigerien State. He is aided by the National Council of Samarya and the National Association of Cooperatives. Between the village and national levels is a series of intermediary institutions, composed, from top to bottom, of:

- The Department level (7)-- the Regional Council for Development (CRD) with sixteen to thirty members, subsuming the Regional Council of Samarya and the Regional Association of Cooperatives.

- The arrondissement level-- the Sub-Regional Council for Development, (CSRD) with twelve to thirty members, subsuming the Sub-Regional Council of Samarya and the Sub-Regional Association of Cooperatives.

- The Canton level for the sedentary population or "Groupement" level for the nomadic population-- a Local Council for Development (CLD) with twenty to thirty members, subsuming the Local Council of Samarya and the Local Association of Cooperatives.

- At the level of the village, or neighborhood for the sedentary population, or the tribe for nomads-- a village or neighborhood or tribal council for development (CVD) with six to sixteen members, including mainly representatives of the Samarya and the cooperative Mutual Group (GM).

At each level representatives of government agencies and a number of "socio-professional organizations" are also represented. These socio-professional organizations include the Women's Association of Niger (AFN), the Islamic Association, the Association of Traditional Chiefs, the Veterans Association, the Parents Association, the Students Association, the Merchants and Truckers Association and representatives of the Niger Workers Trade Unions (USTN).

The National Council for Development (CND), which advises the government on the fundamental options of the development policy and which can be assigned by the government to work on any problem of national interest, is composed of the following committees: rural development; education and professional training; society and cultural; political affairs; economics and financial affairs; administration; justice, with its special ad-hoc committee; information and training; and the committee on the National Charter.

Theoretically, the various organizations in the hierarchy of the Société de Développement are all integrated. Their official status is clear and they

have coordination offices at their disposal.

III. DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURES AND PARTICIPATION

From the start, the Niamey Department Development Project emphasized the cooperative structures though allowances had to be made as new structures were developed to support those that already existed at the level of the village community. Indeed, there were virtually no cooperatives in the Niamey Department when the first phase of the project was implemented. In principle, the new structures of the Société de Développement and the cooperatives were organized at the same time. In reality, the Samarya received a new and strong impetus in the areas close to Niamey, and especially in the city of Niamey itself, where they initiated and completed public projects such as the building of classrooms to replace straw hut classrooms. Other organizations for community mobilization, by contrast, were established slowly in the Niamey Department. Village Development Councils in this area, for example, have yet to enjoy the benefits of a training or public information program. This is, in fact, the main reason why there is a tendency among villagers to confuse the various development institutions which, if considered together, could play an important role at the village level. This is also why this study tried to identify the role of these new institutions and the level of participation on the part of villagers in each one of them. These institutions will be examined separately before their global and qualitative impact is studied.

A. THE SAMARYA

The Samarya is conceived of as the framework for participation in development activities at the village level. Modelled on the traditional youth organizations, the Samarya was forbidden during colonial times, used

as a political structure in the struggle against the colonizing nation in the late 1940s and 1950s and was re-habilitated in 1975 by the military regime that took over after the coup d'etat of April 1974. The new Samarya differs structurally, however, from traditional organizations in that it attempts to unify all the different forms of youth organizations found in the diverse societies making up the country. This has led to a considerable increase in the number of leadership positions but a decrease in the responsibility of each.

The Samarya also differs from traditional organizations in its objectives which extend to the economic and political realms in addition to the traditional objectives which were mostly social and cultural. Therefore, the re-habilitated Samarya has a fundamental role in mobilizing all young people and, through them, the entire village community by creating and developing a spirit of fraternity, solidarity and mutual aid. Its methods are persuasion, raising people's awareness and information. The executive committee of the Samarya (Bureau) is composed of at least five members, two of whom must be women. Committee members hold titles and precise job descriptions. Additional members with new titles can be added as the need arises.

According to the June, 1981 report of the National Commission on the Implementation of the Société de Développement, at that time there were 1220 Samarya organizations for the 1546 villages in the Niamey Department. The distribution of Samarya in the four arrondissements included in this study was as follows:

TABLE 3.1

SAMARYA IN THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT

ARRONDISSEMENT	NUMBER OF VILLAGES OR TRIBES	NUMBER OF SAMARYA
FILINGUE	377	281
KOLLO	271	252
OUALLAM	237	196
SAY	232	190

Villagers have diverse views as to why the Samarya was re-established. The survey of 500 villagers conducted indicated that 11% of the respondents have no idea on the subject, while 25% state that it is designed to strengthen mutual aid. Another 18% state that its role is to strengthen the spirit of solidarity in the village, while 16% say that it is to encourage development activity. While these views are vague and seem ideological, their meaning is somewhat clarified by the fact that 17% of the respondents state that the role of the Samarya is explicitly to undertake collective work. It is, therefore, not surprising, when villages discuss the specific activities of the Samarya, that 41% think that the Samarya activities are related mainly to the farming of collective fields, whereas 15.4% mention the building of classrooms, 5.8% mutual aid and 5.4% mention public health activities. About 75% of the people interviewed stated that the Samarya actually carries out programs, while 19% say that it rarely or never does. About 21% of the respondents could mention no specific Samarya activity in their village.

Based on the responses to the individual questionnaire, we created an index of participation in the Samarya. This four point index relates more to its management and decision-making structure than to involvement in implementing its development actions. The index is composed of the following elements:

1. Awareness of the presence of the Samarya (Question 111, Schedule III): Nearly everyone (98%) was aware of the Samarya at this very basic level.
2. Participation in the meetings of the Samarya (Q 114, III): According to 92% of the interviewees, the Samarya holds meetings whereas 2% think it does not and 6% do not know. The rate of participation in these meetings is in the medium to high range. A little over half of the population in the study (54%) say they often attend the meetings whereas 44% rarely attend them and 2% never do.
3. Knowledge of the positions in the Samarya Executive Committee (Q 115). The villagers do not seem well informed on the exact composition of the Samarya Committee in their village. Indeed, 71% know it only partially, 16% know it thoroughly and 13% do not know it all. Therefore, less than one person in five knows the members of his/her Samarya Committee. This could be explained by the fact that the Samarya was traditionally run by its head, the Samari, or Sarkin Samari, the person responsible for youth activities and a few other people. Now, as a result of a concern for cultural uniformity, numerous positions and functions have been added to the Samarya.

Overall, the Samarya seems to be more dynamic than any other local development organization. Over three-fourths of the population in the study insist that the Samarya is very active. According to the index of participation development, 90% of the people classified as being the most involved with the Samarya could identify at least one concrete project initiated by the Samarya. The activities most frequently mentioned by this group were collective fields, the construction of village facilities, such as classrooms for the school, and public health activities.

B. THE MUTUAL GROUP (GM) AND THE COOPERATIVE

The first cooperative in the Niamey Department was established in Kollo in 1956. After independence, the cooperative movement was intensified especially with the creation in 1962 of the Union Nigérienne de Crédit et de Coopération (UNCC), an organization abolished in 1985. However, the cooperative movement had little if any effect on the Niamey Department. It did not take off until the Société of Development was implemented. Especially important was the promulgation in 1979 of laws bearing on the status of rural cooperative organizations (Ordinance No. 78-19 of October 12, 1978, Decree No. 79-05/PCMS/MDR of January 18, 1979, governing farmer cooperatives and Decree No. 18/MDR of April 3, 1981, bearing on the organization of herder groups).

These ordinances established the Mutual Group (GM) at the level of the village, neighborhood or herder group (campement). The GM is composed of all the producers, whatever their main activity, grouped to develop their activities. Several mutual groups make up a cooperative, an essential link in the new structure, because it acts as a partner for the technical

agencies of government and for the credit institutions. Each GM or cooperative has its own management structure made up of a general assembly which is, in principle, the decision-making body, an Executive Council and a board of auditors. The general assembly determines the programs of the organization, establishes and modifies its internal regulations, elects its officers, determines management positions and decides which ones are salaried. It also hears requests from members for permission to take loans since it is the GM which must guarantee these loans. Finally, it elects its representatives to the higher levels of the cooperative organization. The executive council prepares short, medium and long-range development programs. It chooses a general manager, who sometimes has advisers, for each GM or cooperative.

Two points in these arrangements must be remembered: first, in general, the status of membership in a GM is acquired through adhesion; second, the study showed that farmers have a concept of only one leadership group and do not distinguish between the general assembly and the executive council.

In June 1981 there were, in the Niamey Department, a total of 744 GM and 133 cooperatives for 1546 villages or tribes. The distribution in the four districts of this study is indicated in Table 3.2. below.

Villagers are much less clear about why the GM was established than about the Samarya. Nearly one out of five interviewed had no idea. Of those who could provide a explanation, 18% gave the very vague reason of "undertaking development programs," while another 13% said that it was to help people band together to help each other in some unspecified way. A

¹Rapport Général de la Commission Nationales de Mise en Place de la Société de Développement, Niamey, Niger: Juin, 1981, p. 123.

number of villagers associated the GM with one or more specific activities such as providing food aid (15%), selling retail consumer goods in a cooperative store (11%), making loans for agricultural equipment (10%) or selling agricultural inputs (3%).

TABLE 3.2
COOPERATIVE AND VILLAGE MUTUALS IN THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT

ARRONDISSEMENT	NUMBER OF VILLAGES OR TRIBES	NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES	NUMBER OF MUTUALS
FILINGUE	377	24	127
KOLLO	271	25	127
OUALLAM	237	21	104
SAY	232	16	160

It is notable that provision of agricultural "inputs" is accorded such a limited role given the importance of this activity in the NDD Project. This is not in itself surprising. It simply reflects the conditions of poor information and poor preparation in which the GMs were established. This is also why only 31% of all interviewees think that the GM carries out specific activities. Slightly over half the people asked stated that the GM had no activity and another 19% did not know if it did. Whereas nearly 70% do not know anything of the activities carried out by the GM, only 6% think it purchases agricultural produce, 5% know that it sells agricultural supplies to farms and 4% are aware that it can help farmers obtain credit for agricultural purposes. These are, after all, the major official tasks of

official cooperatives. Another 8% of the respondents associate the GM only with peripheral activities such as cultivation of a cooperative field (3%) and construction of a cooperative warehouse (5%). This is the level of information concerning cooperative activities in the villages studies. It is consistent with the fact that only about one-quarter of the villagers interviewed state that they attend the meetings of the GM (either General Assembly, or Executive Council) regularly.

This study established an index of participation in the GM activities which does not attempt to investigate the meaning of such participation in qualitative terms. The index of participation in the GM programs is based on the following factors:

1. Awareness of the existence of the GM: 78% of the sample state that they know of the existence of the GM. This very basic information is not as widely known as is the existence of the Samarya. Moreover, only 59% know who is the GM president.
2. GM membership: This question is fundamental because it reveals the knowledge of the cooperative structure at the level of the village. Only 72% say they are members of the GM, despite the fact that in theory all villagers are members.
3. Participation in the meetings held by the GM: In our sample, only 25% regularly attend the meetings, 46% do not attend them and 29% rarely do.
4. Use of the cooperative structures to sell produce. This is one of the main tasks of the cooperatives established by the Niamey Productivity Project, yet only 12% of our sample use this channel while 88% made use of other channels.

5. Use of the cooperative structures to obtain credit for agricultural equipment and supplies. Only 17% of our sample have used this channel, while the vast majority of farmers (83%) have not. Of those who have applied for credit about one-third made only one application, while a small group has used the credit facility on two or more occasions.

Even with so limited a conception of cooperative participation it must be noted that the overall level of participation in the GM is very low. Scores on the index we created varied from 0 for no involvement at all, to a high of 4. Almost one-fourth of the population surveyed scored a 0 on the index, and another fourth scored only one, which can be obtained merely by knowing about the existence of the GM.

C. THE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (CVD)

Theoretically, the duties of this body cover all economic, social and cultural development programs at the village level. This body is supposed to constitute the base-level unit of the Société de Développement. The president of the CVD is normally the chief of the village or neighborhood where the CVD is established. The council also includes representatives of neighborhoods, Samarya representatives, GM representatives, delegates from the socio-professional organizations, if they exist in the village, and a secretary. Theoretically, half the seats on the council are reserved for the Samarya and the GM. Civil servants and other State agents on duty in the village can also take part in the activities of the Council in an ex-officio capacity. According to the regulations creating the Société de

Développement, towns or villages with less than 8000 inhabitants, in all the communities studied, must have twenty members on their CVD.

The index of participation in the CVD had to deal mainly with awareness of its activities instead of with direct involvement with the organization since its membership is limited and defined in such a manner as to exclude most villagers. Awareness of the CVD is comprised of the following factors:

1. Awareness of the existence of the CVD: This is obviously a very basic level of information. 66% of the population is aware that the CVD exists, but that fact is unknown to over one-third of the villagers studied.
2. Reasons for the creation of the CVD: A great many villagers (47%) simply do not know why the CVD was created. Most of those who gave answers responded in a very vague manner stating that it was supposed to advise on development issues (17%) or undertake development actions (14%). A few villagers thought that the CVD was supposed to help transmit the opinions of local people to higher level authorities (3%), and 2% of the respondents stated that it was designed to help villagers work together better.
3. Knowledge of the make-up of the CVD: This element is very poorly understood by the interviewees. Only 12% of the villagers can correctly cite the entire composition of the CVD. Another 40% can cite some of the elements of CVD membership, but not all. Nearly half the villagers surveyed totally lacked information on the composition of the CVD.

4. Attendance of the CVD meetings: Not everyone is invited to the CVD meetings. Only 28% of the target population attend the CVD meetings. Perhaps more significant is the fact that about one-fourth of the respondents state that CVD meetings do not take place. Nearly 58% affirm that they do take place in their communities.
5. Knowledge of CVD Activities: Nearly four out of five villagers interviewed have absolutely no idea of what activities the CVD undertakes. Of the 20% who express an opinion on what the CVD does, the most common view is that it "helps resolve conflicts within the community." Only 2% cited that the CVD "undertakes development activities" or gives its counsel on such activities.

Such is the idea that the population has of the state structures. But, before going into an analysis of the factors relating to the knowledge of and especially to the participation in these organizations, we must clarify what these quantitative indications of participation mean in terms of the significance of these organizations as driving forces for development.

The proof of the importance of the various structures lies in what people think it accomplishes. Here the differences between the Samarya and the other institutions are striking. Only 30% of the population say the GM undertakes activities while over half of the people who are aware of its existence and sensitized to the way it works could name no activity it undertakes at all. The best known activities of the GM are not basically developmental in nature. They involve the sale of basic retail commodities and, to a lesser extent, the provision of food relief. Only the sale of farm supplies and the purchase of village grown production, known to less than 12% of the respondents, could be interpreted as having a developmental

impact. The situation is even more worrisome for the CVD, since about 80% of the interviewees could not name any of its activities. Of those who did name specific CVD activities, most timidly ranked as the CVD's most important activity its role as a mediator in the village social life. The only specific development role cited seemed to be closely associated with the exceptionally poor climatic conditions at the time of the study; a small percentage of the respondents cited its part in promoting off-season cultivation. Apart from the low percentage who state that the CVD carries out no activities at all, the failure to appreciate the meaning of the CVD is almost complete. This seems to indicate that the institution is not very well rooted in the life of the villages even though these villages are located within the zone of influence of the capital city. What then of the villages located at a distance?

The best known organization is still the Samarya, almost certainly because it is the oldest of the three institutions. Nearly three-quarters of the population surveyed believe that it is functional, and 80% of this group can mention specific activities undertaken by the Samarya, among them the farming of collective fields, the building of infra-structures such as classrooms in the village and sanitation activities. Although these activities are relevant mainly to social rather than economic investment, they are clearly among the most important indications of the role local organizations play in "development" found in this area of the country.

IV. OVERALL PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMS OF STATE ORGANIZATIONS

An overall index of knowledge of state institutions and of participation in their programs was obtained by adding the scores obtained

from the indices of participation in the Samarya, the GM and the CVD. The fact that the distribution of scores for this index was later normalized gives a somewhat erroneous idea of the actual situation because it seems to indicate satisfactory participation. In fact, as we have already noted, participation is low except in the specific case of the Samarya.

Therefore, for the 20% of the population who actively take part in the programs of the various organizations, the rate would be close to reality. It is over-estimated, however, for those who fall in between the very low and the very high range. It is possible, nevertheless, to deduce from this index the characteristics of the population whose rate of participation is high as well as those of the group which is virtually excluded.

Statistical calculations and the analysis from cross-tabulations of the sample establish the following facts:

1. Participation in formal organizations implemented by the State is essentially a male reserve. Women are highly under-represented (Chi² = .001, Somer's D = 0.53).
2. Participation of the population native to the village is a lot higher than that of the people who have immigrated to the village, even when immigration dates back ten or more years. Social integration is therefore relevant to participation, but integration is loosely defined. Kinship ties to the village chief, for example, are not statistically associated with higher levels of overall participation in state-sponsored organizations.
3. Those who hold positions of authority participate a lot more than anybody else (Somer's D = 0.40), probably because they feel more responsible and because failure may tarnish their reputation. This relationship was, of course, anticipated.

4. Rates of participation and awareness are slightly higher for individuals with higher economic standing, measured by such crude indicators as livestock ownership and possession of industrial-type consumer goods. These relationships, while statistically significant, were quite weak (Somers's D = .15-- .25).
5. Those with some minimal education, being literate and having the ability to do simple arithmetic, are more likely to participate in state sponsored organizations (Somers's D = 0.30).
6. Finally, there seems to be a difference in the level of participation according to geographic location. The level of participation of villagers in the Filingué arrondissement is considerably lower than that observed in the other three arrondissements. 53% of the population studied in Filingué have no or virtually no connection to the state organizations, whereas this percentage varies from 25% to 33% in Ouallam, Kollo or Say. We have no clear explanation, at this time, for this variation. It may be attributable to environmental differences, or differences, in administrative policy and implementation.

V. DIFFERENTIAL PARTICIPATION IN DIFFERENT STATE-SPONSORED ORGANIZATIONS

The factors associated with the level of participation in the various state organizations, Samarya, GM and CVD, are generally common to all. Nevertheless, a few differences emerge from the analysis.

1. The Samaryas usually attract a population more diversified in terms of age and marital status. Several generations participate in the Samarya, and there is no difference in the rates of participation

of married and unmarried people in this organization. This is in contrast to the findings for the GM and CVD.

2. Participation in the Samarya programs, however, is more closely related to family links with the village chief than is the case of other institutions. We noted that, in most of the villages in this study, the Sarkin Samari is often a close relative of the village chief and that the Samarya is a source of conflict among the various factions struggling for power in the village. This is especially true in Louma where the Samarya is divided and composed of two entities corresponding to the two politico-social groups opposed in their struggle for power. We must keep in mind that, in the case of the traditional Samarya, the village chief appointed the Sarkin Samari who in turn could choose a deputy, or at any rate a "gofer."
3. The level of wealth seems a little more closely associated with participation in the Samarya than with participation in other institutions. This can be explained by understanding that a primary role of the Samarya has always been social, the improvement of social relationships between villages and within the same village. The Samarya provides hospitality and refreshments to visitors, a function which can be quite expensive and can be better handled by those with more resources.
4. The relationship between some type of education or training and participation is somewhat stronger for participation in the Samarya than it is for other institutions (Somer's $D = 0.33$).

5. The level of participation in the GM is more restrictive than it is for other local state-initiated organizations. It is also more restrictive in sociological terms. Although this is not true for the Samarya, participation in the GM is largely limited to heads of households. One could easily suppose that this difference is attributable to principles of membership in the cooperative regarding the sale of agricultural produce. Since the head of the household is the one primarily concerned with raising revenues for taxes and a certain number of other needs of family members, he is the one most likely to be involved in cash crop marketing through the cooperative. This explanation is not very convincing, however, since cooperatives in the Niamey Department have never played a significant role in the sale of agricultural commodities and where, until recently cash cropping has not been an important part of the local economy.
6. Although the overall level of participation in CVD programs is lowest this participation is in some ways more open in sociological terms. Unlike the Samarya, participation in the CVD is not statistically associated with kinship connections to the chiefly family. A simple explanation for this is that the CVD is the only one of the three organizations where positions of responsibility have been defined and set beforehand by policy decision. This policy excludes de facto or de jure monopolies subtly established to benefit certain social classes, usually the family of the village chief. Such rules do not exist in informal groups, which are usually organized on the principle of freedom of association.

CHAPTER 4

INFORMAL GROUPS

Informal groups, unlike the formal state institutions discussed above, are established by the population itself for economic, social, cultural or religious reasons. They are characterized, first of all, by their duration which is determined by their structure. Depending on the specifics of the group, they may be permanent, periodic or temporary. They are also characterized by conditions of membership, more or less implicit governing rules, meetings, in most cases, and recognized leaders.

The focus of this study will be on two specific types of socio-economic groups:

- groups formed to perform a task jointly;
- groups, such as the "tontines" (asusu in Hausa, adassé in Zarma)

which perform a savings or capital accumulation function.

I. TPOLOGY OF THE GROUPS STUDIED

The groups studied can be classified according to two criteria:

- their organizational principles;
- their function.

A. TYPES OF GROUPS ACCORDING TO THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Non-governmental groups which function in the Niamey Department fall along a continuum ranging from very informal and unstructured to quite formal and structured. Structure and formalism are indicated by the presence or absence of the following characteristics:

1. The frequency and predictability of group activity
2. Formal leadership with some recognized authority
3. A known membership, with a clear definition of who is and who is not a member.
4. The existence of Staff; members charged with the performance of particular roles who may be compensated.
5. Meetings of the group on a more or less regular basis.
6. Rules for the functioning of the group
7. Sanctions to enforce adherence to the rules
8. Corporate or group assets or property.

It is possible that these eight characteristics may combine in a variety of ways creating a variety of structurally different organizations. Each characteristic may be present but in differing degree. Some may have very few working rules, for example, while others may have well articulated rules covering a variety of behaviors. No effort was made in this study to analyze different combinations or degrees. Instead, while recognizing that all groups fall on the continuum, we classified all the organizations into two general types:

- a. Unstructured groups- those which have no formal leadership and often no clear definition of membership, which are temporary or at best unpredictably periodic, which have no common assets, no official staff and very few working rules, even at the implicit level;
- b. Structured groups-- those which possess some of the attributes of structure, usually including recognized leadership and membership, and regular, if not presumably permanent activity.

It may be presumed that structure is related to the second criterion, the nature of the activity being undertaken, since it may require a more formalized structure to manage common assets than simply to undertake periodic work activities with willing volunteers. The two criteria are distinct, however, and their relationship must be tested empirically.

B. TYPES OF GROUPS ACCORDING TO THE FUNCTION OR INTEREST OF THE ASSOCIATION

It is possible to identify three main types of groups:

1. Socio-professional groups divisible in turn into two types;
 - a. socio-professional groups whose occupation is hereditary;
 - b. economic groups whose activity is open to members on a voluntary basis. These groups range from those which are regular enterprises with clear working rules to those which are extremely casual, such as the groups of itinerant field-workers who travel and seek work together.

2. Cultural or religious groups, also subdivided into two different and, at least in principle, antagonistic types:
 - a. performers of various arts (dancers, singers, various musical instruments players, etc.) linked to possession cults, such as the Holley cult or the Bori cult.
 - b. Muslem associations.

3. The Adassé, or rotating savings groups.

Table 4.1 summarizes the various types of groups studied. The roman numbers in the table next to each group indicate the section in the remainder of this chapter where that type of group is discussed.

TABLE 4.1

A TYPOLOGY OF INFORMAL AND VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT

CRITERIA OF CLASSIFICATION	!			
FUNCTION	!	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS		
	!	CONTINUUM: UNSTRUCTURED-----HIGHLY STRUCTURED		
NON-HEREDITARY WORK GROUP	!	ITINERANT DAY LABOR GROUP (IIB)	RECIPROCAL LABOR EXCHANGE GROUPS (IIA)	MERCHANTS GROUP (IIIC) BRICK MAKERS (IIIC) AUTO-MECHANICS GROUP (IIIC)
HEREDITARY WORK GROUP	!			BUTCHERS (IIIB) WEAVERS (IIIB) BLACKSMITHS (IIIB)
CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS GROUP	!		HOLLEY GROUP (IIID1)	GROUP OF MARABOUTS (IIID2)
SAVINGS GROUP	!		ADASSE (IIIE)	

II. NON-STRUCTURED WORK GROUPS

A. RECIPROCAL LABOR EXCHANGE GROUPS

We are mostly interested here in the forms of reciprocal labor exchange that may exist within one or several communities. These activities are characterized by a fairly regular rhythm at certain times of the year and

they are organized more or less spontaneously. Participation is completely voluntary, though it is, no doubt, based on a combination of self-interest and social integration. Participating in labor exchange expresses solidarity for one's friends and even for the community, but it also can be personally beneficial when an individual needs to have a difficult job done, such as building a hut, digging a well, building granaries, or weeding a large field in a hurry. Although some farming operations are done through labor exchange, field preparation and sowing are usually excluded.

Reciprocal labor exchange, generally known as bogu in Songhai-Zarma country and gaya in Hausa, is not usually performed by a structured organization, although the same terms are used to describe collective work efforts by official organizations like the Samarya. In the latter instance, the bogu or gaya is an important expression of community concern and solidarity, undertaken for certain specific occasions. Exchanging work with a self-selected group of people and helping the community by donating labor are two distinct forms of group activity. Only the former may be considered an expression of an informal socio-economic organization.

The incidence of participation in this activity is extremely high. 71% of the population in this sample are involved in a good deal of reciprocal labor exchange, while 21% are involved a little and only 8% do not participate in this type of group at all. The most common types of labor exchanges discovered in this study were clearly in the area of construction. Nearly two-thirds of the population interviewed participated in group construction of huts and granaries. About 15% participated in groups which clear and weed fields. Reciprocal labor exchange must be considered important to agricultural production, however, when one

considers that 43% of the interviewees use it frequently to work their fields and another 31% use it occasionally.

Most of the villagers interviewed (76%) stated that they thought reciprocal labor exchange is much more common now than it was ten years ago. Combined with the 6% who think it is somewhat more common, there is overwhelming consensus among those interviewed that this practice has somewhat increased over the past few years. This could be a direct consequence of the economic situation resulting from the drought which leads to strengthened ties of solidarity. It could also be the positive result of the implementation of the structures of the Société de Développement, particularly the Samarya.

In this study two indices of participation in reciprocal labor exchanges were created. The first measures behavior as reported by those interviewed. The second incorporates a psychological dimension as well, the individual's desire to join with others to work. In reality, the first index measures the rate of participation in a variety of types of labor exchange and community construction, indicating the individual's disposition to join with other people in work as opposed to his or her preference to work alone.

The rate of participation in reciprocal labor exchange activities as revealed in the interviews is considerably higher than expected. 38% of the population in the study participates a great deal in one form of labor exchange or another and 18% of them wish to increase their participation. Non-farm forms of labor exchange involve over three persons in five. Given this high rate of participation, the addition of the psychological

dimension, the predisposition or desire to work in a group, does little to improve the analysis.

Five socio-economic factors were selected to determine what the salient correlates of participation in labor exchange networks were. These factors are gender, ethnic origin, social status within the village, involvement in remunerated work (which seems to run counter to participation in labor exchange where no one works freely) and standard of living measured by possession of industrial-type consumer goods.

1. Gender: It is obvious that this type of participation is male dominated. Gender is highly related to scores on the index of participation in labor exchange (Somer's $D = 0.55$). This situation is not unlike that of state-sponsored groups where women are also very seriously under represented. The reason is less apparent for voluntary and unofficial forms of association, however. The explanation could be that the most common tasks performed by labor exchange groups are essentially men's jobs. As for field work, the plots which women work are usually very small for millet fields or they are devoted to commercial crops which are rarely worked by labor exchange arrangements. Women, however, clearly work in groups to support male labor exchange and community labor tasks by supplying the water and preparing the meal required for the activity, as well as beating the earth to create floors for new huts.
2. Ethnic origin: the Gourmantché and Songhaï populations are the most likely to engage in labor exchange. The study also established

much less inclined to take part in labor exchange. These forms of association are virtually unknown among the Bella.

3. Social status within the village: The people related through marriage or kinship to the family of the village chief are more likely to be involved in reciprocal labor exchange than people who have no connection. People from this family have a sense of working for the good of other villagers, of setting a good moral example for them and of motivating them to work for the village. From this they derive a certain prestige. Relatives and close associates of the chief also usually control the Samarya, which is the most important instrument of group work on behalf of the village.
4. Degree of involvement in gainful work. It might be anticipated that people who are more involved in gainful work would be less available for labor exchange activity or group work on behalf of the village. This is clearly not the case in the villages studied. In fact they are even more likely to participate than others (Somer's $D = .47$ for the correlation between wage earning and participation in village labor exchange). The number of people who do find jobs that pay a wage or day rate is fairly substantial in this area. Approximately one out of four (26%) said that they did this type of work often, and another 22% did it occasionally.
5. Possession of modern manufactured consumer goods. Although the relationship is not strong statistically (Somer's $D = .25$), there is a clear association between a higher standard of living, reflected by ownership of these goods, and the likelihood that the individual engages in reciprocal and village group work.

B. GROUPS OF ITINERANT FIELD-WORKERS

These groups are a rather unique case, a transition group which is not really a socio-professional group but meets some economic needs for certain individuals, particularly Songhais from Bossé-Bangou and Zarma from the Zarmaganda. The groups are informal, loosely associating twelve to fifteen independent people. These people gather mostly for security reasons and go out to sell their services from place to place. They look for paid work weeding fields in villages of regions which have not been so hard hit by the drought. The "members" of these groups are farm workers from a variety of families. Other members of their families stay behind in their native village, and the itinerant laborers attempt to bring them assistance in cash or kind from their earnings.

Groups of itinerant workers are not structured per se because they do not join forces for group remuneration, but work for individual payment. They recall a type of group called "esquad," common in Haiti, organized according to a quasi-military model. It is rather interesting to note that the Bossé-Bangou group bears the name "soldiers group."

The associational principle of these groups seems to be that of age or generation. Friendship is, no doubt an additional tie. Nearly 90% of the people interviewed who participate in this type of group are young and single.

These groups are very informally organized, but as in the case of other groups, they have a "leader" designated for his personal qualities. The group lacks any regulation and makes no joint investments or savings. The search for daily paid work is the fundamental link among its members.

Individuals do a variety of things with their earnings but rarely them. To illustrate, 49% of those involved "do nothing" special with their money; 42% use it to acquire consumable goods, 5% to help their parents and 5% invest it.

III STRUCTURED GROUPS

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Structured groups include the whole range of groups which have economically significant functions, whether they work together or save jointly, are motivated mainly by economic reasons or are organized essentially to perform a cultural or religious function. What distinguishes these groups is their more formal structure. Participation in groups of this sort is low. Only 12% of the villagers interviewed belonged to any structured group, and if we add those who have expressed the desire to join them, the percentage is still only 20%, or one person in five.

Nearly all of these groups (90%) have a recognized leader. The size of these groups varies from three to over fifty people, with a median size of ten members. These groups are, therefore, relatively small. For the most part membership in structured groups seems to be motivated by personal interests. The joint work groups in Bossé-Bangou and the group of prophets in Kiki, whose key figure is the old village chief himself, are interesting to note because they are the only groups in our sample whose association principle is social solidarity among the various members.

For the purposes of analysis two indices, similar to the indices employed for the unstructured groups above, were created which measure participation in structured groups. The first is based solely on the

behavior within a group, while the second takes into account a psychological factor, whether the interviewee is open to association with other people in structured groups for a specific goal.

An analysis of the participants of these groups discovered several socio-demographic factors associated with participation. The only factors which proved to significantly related statistically ($\chi^2 = .05$) were the following:

1. The arrondissement where the village is located. Participation in structured groups is highest in the Say district and lowest in that of Ouallam.
2. Ethnic origin of the individual. The Gourmantché and the Songhai are more likely to associate on a regular basis for joint work or savings, while the Kourfeyawa and the Bella are the least likely to do so. The Zarma and the Fulani fall somewhere in between.
3. Level of training or education of the individual. Training or education in this study means having some literacy skills, however limited. Only 1.4% of the interviewees say they are literate in French; another 3% state that they have a minimal acquaintance with written French. Literacy levels are not much higher in indigenous languages. Only 7% claim to be literate in a local language; another 5% have had some exposure to literacy skills in that tongue. For Arabic, a principal language of worship in this area, the corresponding figures are only 12% and 5%. There seems to be a weak but statistically significant connection between the predisposition to associate and, therefore, to participate in organized groups and the level of training.

4. Standard of living measured by possession of manufactured consumer goods. There is a strong correlation between belonging to a group and possessing industrial-type consumer goods. Those who have the most possessions are indeed those who are the most likely to participate in these groups. There may be a problem of causality in interpreting this relationship, however. It is possible that participation in these groups helps an individual acquire the wealth needed in order to acquire such goods.
5. Degree of involvement in gainful work. The degree to which an individual makes money from selling his labor to others is probably related, though not strongly, to the factor just mentioned. This factor also proved to be significantly associated with participation in structured groups.

B. HEREDITARY SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

These are groups whose activity can be ascribed or considered to be reserved to a caste (blacksmiths, weavers and sometimes butchers). These groups are more or less permanent and are relatively small, normally numbering seven to twelve.

1. Associational Principles- The principle governing association is inheritance, and, therefore, kinship or membership in a specific clan. It is interesting to note, however, that those involved argue that they do not have exclusivity in their trade and that they may welcome external members provided they want to practice and know their trade. This disposition is more theoretical than it is practical since, unlike Hausa society of Zinder or Maradi where such groups are frequently

Meetings are a common practice in these groups whose life calls for continuous consultation to discuss production problems and, above all, sales strategies (determination of pricing, decisions about where to market, etc.).

Sanctions against defaulters are rare. This is, no doubt, because of the kinship basis of these groups which makes them a kind of family enterprise in which profit and personal interest are not the most important issues. In fact, the activity of some of these groups whose members are related goes beyond the main activity; solidarity is expressed in the form of labor exchange for weeding fields and building huts. The one observed case of the use of a sanction occurred within a butchers' group in Koné-Béri. This group is not only new, but its members are also not related. Butchers' groups are somewhat different in general, however, since their activity is reduced during the rainy season when all of them are in their individual fields. In addition, butchers are often strangers in the village, or at least they constitute a group of people who are not very well integrated in the village life. This is explained mostly by the fact that the trade was unknown and not widely practiced in this area for sociological and ethical reasons and also by the fact that most butchers' ethnic origin is different from that of other villagers.

C. NON HEREDITARY SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

These are groups formed by individuals who voluntarily choose a trade corresponding to an identified need in a potential market, and are rather rare in the villages studied here. Apart from the case of the gold mining groups in Bossé-Bangou, formed only months before the study began and, therefore, too new to study seriously, only three groups were identified.

open in sociological terms, the study found no specific case of non-clan membership in these occupations in the Niamey Department. It would appear that the sociological constraints are still strong and continue to tie the practice of certain trades to social status.

2. Organizational principles- The organizational principles of these groups distinguish them from the saving associations (adassé). Structured work groups are better organized and their range of activities is broader since they are concerned both with production and sales.

These groups always have a leader designated from among those who lay claim to the heritage. He is usually the oldest and most active in the trade, but he is also considered the most competent since the elders control the transmission of knowledge about the craft and they choose the one they think best suited to perpetuate family traditions. Sometimes, however, the leader is designated by the members, as was the case with the relatively recently organized blacksmiths' group at Kiki. This group is entirely composed of former serfs (Rimaibé) of the Fulani.

The "leader" is not formally remunerated for his responsibilities, but as revenues are distributed his share is normally larger. Sometimes his associates also perform supplementary services for him.

Division of labor is common in these groups. It is determined by the difficulty of the work and by experience which is the basis for compensatory payments. In principle, however, revenue is shared out equally among all members.

These groups were:

-- A group of merchants from Tombo who deal in grain and manufactured consumer goods;

-- A group of brick-makers from Bossé-Bangou;

-- A group of automobile mechanics working part-time in Bossé-Bangou.

Its members also repair bicycles and mopeds which are very common in the area.

The groups identified are very small, having only three to five members. They rather resemble tiny private enterprises.

1. Associational principles-- These groups are formed through personal contacts with people interested in the same activity, although, like the grain merchants in Tombo, they may also be related. The group can also be formed on the basis of friendship. Most frequently, however, the most important links in this type of group are those of economic interests. Here family ties are not sufficient to gain membership, and even close relatives who are candidates for admission must participate on the same financial terms.

2. Organization principles-- These groups are informal and have no particular structure. They have a leader who is recognized as such and has usually initiated the activity. As such, he is like the "head of a business" whose profits are higher than those of others because of his experience and the fact that the tools usually belong to him. Other members of the group, however, are not his employees, but rather are partners or co-workers. The only case where the person in charge does not receive direct financial compensation related to his responsibilities is in the group of brick-makers among whom some degree of kinship exists.

Meetings in these groups are informal and not very common except for the group of merchants who have assets to manage jointly and financial strategies to establish. The members in the other groups can discuss their problems at any time since they are constantly in contact in the workplace.

Some of these groups undertake activities outside the main purpose of their organization. Basically, they consist of labor exchange and help in doing field work and in building huts.

D. CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Although this study is not primarily interested in groups whose functions are only peripherally economic, cultural and religious organizations still bear brief examination. Numerically they are the most important voluntary associations in the area covered by the project. They are also interesting in terms of their organizational principles. There are two distinct types of groups:

1. Holley Cult or Bori Groups

Holley or Bori groups in this area of Niger were products of the need to adapt to living conditions under the colonial regime. They are also associated with strong resistance to the spread of Islam. It is for this reason that the Marabout groups oppose the practice of this cult and, in principle, membership in one group bars one from membership in the other.

In rather schematic terms these groups developed three principal functions:

- to cure psychological illnesses, to control and cure manifestations of madness within a specific context;

- to predict pluviometric conditions and indicate measures to be taken to improve them;

- to sponsor artistic and cultural events (dance, music) whose proceeds go to the artists.

The associational principle of possession dance groups is usually kinship. In only one out of nine groups identified, that of Kokoirey-Peul, was the association principle based on friendship and interest. Membership, however, is not hereditary. Only those relatives who are interested join, and other individuals are free to start up their own groups if they wish.

These groups seem to have well-defined structures directed by their concern for correctly preparing their performance and the rituals which must touch their adherents deeply. They always have leaders chosen for their seniority in the profession and also for certain qualities or powers assumed to be personal. There are both male and female groups which are independent in their organization though they can work together during rites. There are also mixed groups because certain aspects of the rites can be performed by men only (use of various musical instruments, for example). The leaders of the groups are not remunerated by the group members but they usually receive a larger share of the proceeds, especially in case of treatment and cure of an illness, since they are the ones who possess the cure secrets. The other members in the group are paid according to their degree of participation and seniority. Revenues are never jointly invested or held by the group. In every case they are shared as soon as they have been collected.

The Holley groups get together to discuss specific patients and to organize events. Meetings take place only to prepare for an event.

Sanctions are rare in case of non-participation, though the Dadaga-Mossi group says that members who do not attend events must pay a symbolic fine in the form of purchasing kola nuts for the members. If they pay the fine they then receive their part of the proceeds as if they had attended.

Several of these groups carry out other activities which are not related to the primary purpose of the group. Among other things, they help each other with field work or hut gardens. This is especially the case of the "zima"¹, a female group in Mondolo-Garbey-Fondo and in Bané-Béri.

2. The Group of Marabouts

Marabouts not only are teachers, they are also spiritual guides to the precepts of Islam. It is not uncommon for a number of them to form a group to further their study and teaching. One such group is the Marabout association at Tombo which is affiliated with the Tidjania Brotherhood. This group of religious leaders gets together to read and recite verses from the Coran, to maintain a beautiful mosque that they built themselves and to run a Coranic school.

Organizationally, groups of Marabouts base their association on their common faith, but kinship seems to be an important link as well for the Marabouts of Tombo and Koné-Béri. This is because members of a single family often acquire a reputation that spreads beyond the village. These groups always have a leader who commands respect because he is educated, wise, pious and often considered endowed with exceptional powers. For this reason as well, the organization is not considered an economic interest

¹The "zima" are traditional healers of madness and psychological illnesses which are thought to be associated with possession by jinnis.

group, and the person in charge does not receive direct remuneration. Other members, however, often organize labor parties to weed his fields during the rainy season. In Tombo, the group receives donations in cash from the congregation every Friday. These funds are managed jointly and the members decide on their use at regular meetings. A part of these funds is used to cover the costs of equipping and maintaining the mosque.

The members of these groups state they do not have activities in common other than their religious functions. However, the Marabout group in Tombo has clearly expressed a desire to organize economically in order to undertake, among other things, off-season irrigated gardening. The impetus to undertake this new activity stems from the head Marabout. This orientation of the group is an indication of how a religious group can have direct relevance to the goals which the NDD and this study are attempting to further.

D. ADASSE-TYPE SAVINGS GROUPS

Very few villagers are involved in rotating savings associations of this sort. Only 3% of the our sample actively participated in them at the time of this study. It should be understood, however, that the study was conducted during a very difficult economic period which considerably reduced the availability of capital. It is possible that in better periods these groups are much more widespread. Savings associations are more common in big villages or in villages close to secondary centers which are also important markets with varied economic activities. There people find more opportunities for making money on trade and for work paid in cash.

The membership of the seven groups identified varied from seven to forty-eight people (the Adassé of Torodi). The weekly rate of contribution to the fund varied from CFA F50 to CFA F2,500. The most common sum contributed was 500 CFA, a figure maintained by half the individuals interviewed who were savings group members.

1. Associational principles- Adassés are formed by grouping several people who agree to contribute a fixed sum of money within a pre-determined period of time, usually one week or one month, so that each can take his turn receiving the entire sum. Turns are normally established by the order in which the person joined the group.

This association is usually based only on economic interests, but kinship can play a secondary role in determining who joins, as is the case with the adassés at Bossé-Bangou and Tchantchan-Foulbé. Adassés which also involve kinship ties function in a different manner from the others due to the level of sociological integration of the members.

Some adassés have both male and female members. Members may live in different villages, as is the case of a woman from the village of Doutouel who participates in an adassé in Torodi. The main difference between the various adassé groups is the rate of contribution. Several adassés with different rates can co-exist in the same village, as in Kiki where there are groups whose fee is fixed at F100 and others whose fee is F500.

In most cases the money collected is used only for needs which the individual member may have at a particular moment, regardless of the needs of the community. That is why members may agree with others to go out of turn depending on particular circumstances. This happens mostly in groups

based on kinship in order to help a member take care of a pressing need for medical care or for a major social expenditure such as a wedding or baptism. In this sense the adassé serves as a kind of emergency fund for its members.

2. Organization principles- The adassé can be very loosely structured since the number of activities it must manage is limited, which simplifies the task.

All funds, with no exception, have a manager, often a woman, called "adassagna" (word for word, "the fund mother"). The manager or leader is the person in charge who has the responsibility for collecting fees and for paying that amount to the one member whose turn it is to receive the money. The risks that the manager takes mean that she is often paid by the member who receives the money. This payment, however, is not mandatory. The informal commission that she receives is roughly equivalent to 2% of the total amount collected, but there are cases where kola nut is the only compensation received by the "adassagna." Sometimes the adassagna must make up for a member who is behind in his fee payments. In this case, she always agrees to a short-term loan and, sometimes upon a member's request, she changes the turn of a member to receive money in agreement with the two parties involved in order to allow one of them to meet urgent needs.

Adassé members rarely hold meetings. They may do so, however, at the end of a cycle of turns. As long as everything has run smoothly and defaults did not occur frequently, the association goes on. However, sanctions which can go as far as temporary or permanent exclusion are taken against defaulting members. Sometimes the sanction is limited to the loss of a turn and to its rescheduling in the collecting order.

The adassés do not usually carry out activities other than collecting money and distributing it in turn. Their interest lies in the opportunity to collect, without interest, a relatively large sum of money at one time and to use these funds to meet personal needs, such as investing or building capital.

IV NON-STATE INFORMAL GROUPS AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

There are two areas in which a careful study of existing informal groups can be beneficial to promoting government development activities. First, it is important to know whether existing local organizations have any capacity to accumulate and manage capital, if they are to be asked more often to finance and administer their own development. Second, it may be possible to learn how to design state-sponsored organizations which correspond more closely with the structures and norms villagers have already adopted and which are therefore more likely to be viewed as true local institutions.

A. JOINT MANAGEMENT OF ASSETS

There are very few groups which manage their assets jointly. In all groups with an economic purpose, income and profits are immediately distributed according to the criterion agreed on by the group. This criterion may be equality, seniority or the contribution the individual makes as a function of his abilities and skills. Some socio-professional groups, such as blacksmiths groups in Kiki, jointly own their tools although revenues from the sale of their products are individually distributed by family. The blacksmiths of Baboussaye, however, do not even own tools jointly.

Common funds are also rare. The only case identified is that of the Marabouts in Tombo where the capital is used mostly for the maintenance and the equipment of the mosque (carpet, speakers and an electric generator). The brick makers in Bossé-Bangou have established a rotating fund to acquire raw materials but not equipment. Therefore, it is really not a savings or investment fund. The weavers' groups in Kiki invest part of their profits in animals which they fatten and then resell to meet the economic or social needs of the groups' members. This can be considered a true joint capital investment, or a form of joint savings. In any case, it should be noted that the creation of joint savings or investment funds is very rare, if not the exception. It is not a practice which rural people have developed over the years to any degree; as economic conditions have deteriorated, there simply has not been enough surplus capital available for such a practice to take root.

B. ASSOCIATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Kinship ties often underlie the preferred basis of association in this area even when they are not obvious and even when the nature of the activity is clearly not hereditary. Therefore, social solidarity seems a dominant factor when it comes to using resources for occupational and economic as well as social needs. Furthermore, kinship based groups seem more inclined than groups based on other principles to broaden the range of their activities. Kinship based craft groups may also help each other with agricultural activities, for example.

The adassé is a major exception to the rule of kinship, simply because its purpose and efficacy exclude restrictions of any kind. There are other exceptions which are also interesting, such as associations based on a

combination of economic interest and friendship. This may be an important evolution toward the development of rural enterprises which require skills that are not traditionally learned or passed on within a single clan. However, the number of cases is small and does not allow for generalizations.

Cultural or religious associations also seem to be less determined by kinship than are most associations based on occupational interests. They can, therefore, expand faster if conditions are favorable. The economic aspect of their existence must not be underestimated, however, if only because of the amount of money that they may come to manage which may represent a significant transfer and circulation of wealth in a rural environment. The simple fact that these groups exist in response to a demand for services indicates that some capital is available for mobilization in rural environments when villagers believe that it will be put to an appropriate use.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The concept of a recognized leader is widely accepted by almost all the groups we have studied. This leader usually receives financial remuneration from other group members, either directly or, most often, indirectly, except where the group is considered a family business based on kinship solidarity.

Leaders are selected based on a variety of criteria which vary depending on the purposes of the group. These criteria, however, are usually based on a connection between qualifications and seniority. Each type of group tries to have a leader with certain human qualities of which the ones mentioned

most often are patience and the seriousness of professional purpose. Since membership in most groups implies the necessity to work with the same people for a long time, recourse to severe sanctions seems useless. It is replaced by self-discipline which is more conciliatory and consists of giving the person in default a symbolic fine, kola nuts, rather than discouraging him with a reduction of his profits. This symbolic fine, practiced in all associations in the study, is more easily and willingly accepted than a sanction of another kind which could hurt the person's ego and deprive him of his financial gains, placing the very existence of the group in question.

We have not gone deeply into the decision-making structure within the different groups because it would require a fairly long observation time. Since most groups regularly hold meetings, it would be desirable to observe this process in order to know better how responsibilities are really shared and how active participation is encouraged.

The lessons drawn from the series of interviews with villagers leaders and with members of local organizations leads to the view that a new method of working with local people is apparently needed. Indeed, a way must be found to promote a more dynamic response at the village level to the problems of development, since attempts to organize the village, which have been state-sponsored through official organizations, seem only to strengthen the monopoly position of a few village authorities.

D. POSSIBILITIES OF INFORMAL GROUP MOBILIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

It is obvious that the societies studied here do not lack a sense of organization. In spite of the specific economic context which prevails and which limits the possibilities for associations, there is a whole array of

associations which operate independent of external intervention. These associations function and fulfill economic, social, cultural, spiritual and psychological roles which are important to the population. The question is how to encourage these associations to undertake development actions. Is it possible and desirable to steer these associations toward new tasks, or would it be better to encourage the creation of new groups based on already existing principles detailed to a greater degree following more in-depth studies of certain associations? The key to the problem probably lies in the explanation for the existence of these groups. What is clear is that two elements are very important:

- the interest in profit, which is strong among some people in rural communities;

- the possibility of taking advantage of opportunities for profit.

One of the basic principles of any rural development strategy is that the activities undertaken must be attractive enough and appropriate conditions must be sufficiently present if part of the population is to engage itself in the process. The attraction of a rural development activity need not always be economic, but it must address an interest which is actually felt by the population. This means that we should not expect to get uniform answers and reactions at the beginning and that any development implies the possibility, if not the certainty, of creating social inequalities. Besides, we should not expect the population to commit easily their human, intellectual and financial resources if the goals are not clearly stated or desired. But, even if these conditions are met, it will not necessarily be enough to provoke a positive reaction because there may be other possibilities of action and mobilization.

Obstacles to involvement are sometimes psychological and therefore difficult to identify as, for instance, the reaction of villagers to opportunities to learn new and apparently profitable skills which they traditionally associate with low prestige and status. It may be necessary, in certain cases, to start with already existing socio-professional groups, even if they are a minority, and to use them as a basis for stimulating interest in a profitable economic opportunity. Nearly all craftsmen want to be trained to improve their technique. They are already motivated and work within specific structures.

The major problem which non-agricultural rural workers confront, however, is the general economic depression of the rural area. The standard of living is currently so low in villages that craftsman can barely find enough clients for their goods to support themselves at their present level of technology. Any effort to promote rural welfare through the stimulation of rural craft industries must deal with this lack of markets directly. It must either assist craftsman to find new markets in urban areas or must tie their development into a general strategy for improving the standard of living of most villagers so that they can afford to purchase the products and services of these craftsmen.

Thus the essential question is posed: How can villagers be persuaded to play an active part in the development process in a way that makes full use of both existing informal associations and those organizations expressly designed by the state to involve them.

PART THREE

A STRATEGY FOR SUPPORTING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

CHAPTER 5

THE CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS
TO THE SUCCESS OF THE
NIAMEY DEPARTMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

I. INTRODUCTION

The objective of phase II of the Niamey Department Development Project (1980-85) was "to establish a self-sustaining rural development process through the creation of self-managed village organizations capable of assisting rural families to be more productive." The project was conceived, however, more as an effort to create a process than to enhance productivity. This is clearly revealed in the Phase II Project Paper which indicates that the success of this project should be measured above all "with reference to the progress made in establishing an on-going development process, rather than with reference to the exact number of farmers reached." (NDDP, Phase II, p. 14).

The key to this process was to be the cooperative movement whose village-level component was the Village Mutual Group (GM). Although this project recognized the embryonic nature of cooperative institutions in the Niamey region, the authors of the Phase II Project Paper declared that one of the principal goals of the project would be to assist these organizations in becoming truly functional actors and to associate them much more in the planning and implementation of the project. (NDDP, Phase II, p.19).

The second institution on which the project design laid considerable emphasis was the Centers for Technical Improvement (Centres de Perfectionnement Technique, or CPT) where a fairly small number (1480) of male and female villagers would be given intensive training. It was hoped that the impact of this training would be spread by associating the home villages of

trainees with the centers on a continuing basis and through the on-going contact between trainees and other villagers once the trainees returned to their homes and farms. Although these centers were not really local-level institutions, since they depended almost entirely on the authority and support of the Nigerian government, they were expected, along with the cooperatives, to play a special role in the implementation of the project. It was perhaps even possible that, as village-level cooperatives became stronger and more institutionalized, they could play an increasingly important role in the management and eventually in the financing of the training centers (CPT).

When one considers the specific tasks which the project had to accomplish, it becomes evident that a great deal depends on the proper functioning of cooperatives and the CPTs. In addition to having as a goal the creation of a participatory development process based on cooperatives, Phase II of the Niamey Department Productivity Project called for the following activities:

1. To promote the adoption of a number of agricultural techniques designed to improve small farmer production mainly through improvements in yields of cereal and leguminous crops (principally cowpeas). The most important technical improvements with regard to rainfed agriculture were to be
 - a. The use of improved seed stock
 - b. The use of chemical fertilizers
 - c. Improved cultivation through the use of animal-traction

The adoption and use of animal-drawn farm carts was seen as an important complementary technology since it seemed to hold promise for improving the profitability of the entire technical package. Finally, the project encouraged villagers to adopt several practices which permitted them to improve the production of cattle, sheep and fowl.

2. To promote the extension of these techniques through the recruitment and training of villagers in the CPTs.

3. To establish a complementary system of agricultural credit and input supply in order to support the goals of the extension program.

In the absence of both of these systems it would be impossible for the yield-oriented agricultural extension program to be successful. For this reason, and for a host of additional technical and financial reasons, it was clear that the success of the productivity objectives depended on the proper functioning of the local-level cooperatives.

To insure the success of the cooperatives, the project provided for the training of cooperative officials. This training was designed to improve the capacity of cooperative members to manage the systems of farm credit and agricultural input supply and to participate fully in the implementation of a variety of project activities through their ability to make decisions based on the real interests of the local population.

The NDDP had two additional objectives, as well.

4. The creation of a craft industry capable of manufacturing and selling spare parts for the farm equipment which was being promoted for adoption. A number of studies conducted for other productivity projects

which were dependent on animal-traction technology had shown that the absence of this capability and the related difficulty of getting spare parts explained some of the maintenance problems which local adopters experienced and the difficulty they therefore had in amortizing the investment in this equipment. To promote this craft industry the project foresaw the need for an ambitious program in which 58 improved blacksmith workshops based on cooperative principles would be created and in which blacksmiths would be given professional training through the CPTs.

5. Finally, the project foresaw the need to increase the participation of women in a variety of activities. The Project Paper never provided a very clear explanation of this aspect of the project. It is evident, however, that a program which fails to involve directly half the potential producers and cooperative members must be expected to fall far short of its intended goals. In reality, in the social systems involved in this project, women seem to play a major role in agriculture (household plots, irrigated gardens, and rainfed food and commercial crops), animal husbandry and craft production.

To sum up, the project had five main objectives, which depended for the most part on the creation of a process of development linked to the reinforcement of local-level organizations.

II. Indicators of the Impact of the Project

This study is not intended to be an overall evaluation of the Niamey Development Productivity Project. Instead, it focuses specifically on the role which local organizations can play and have played in contributing to the results of the Project. For this association to be clear, however, it

is necessary to conceptualize and measure, in as precise a manner as possible, the various intended impacts of the Project.

Based on an understanding of the objectives of the Project, described above, and on interviewing project officials, we constructed a survey instrument which attempted to measure six impacts. Subsequently, 500 people in 16 villages were interviewed to determine the actual impact of the project. The six impacts were conceived in the following terms:

1. Index of Adoption of Proposed Agricultural Practices

The indicators selected are quite imprecise and do not measure whether the practices were employed correctly or whether it was reasonable for local producers to adopt them on the basis of clear evidence that they were agronomically and financially sound. Instead, an effort was made to measure the approximate degree of usage of the practices.

- ADOPTION = a) Use of chemical fertilizers (Q. 251)
- + b) Use of improved seed stock (millet, cowpeas, sorghum, groundnuts Q. 31)
 - + c) Use of animal-traction equipment (plows Q. 29, farm carts Q. 30 2)
 - + d) Use of animal-traction equipment for cultivation of rainfed or irrigated plots (Q. 27)

The results of the survey indicated that, even in villages which were all "involved in the project," "belonged" to a Cooperative and which were

¹The symbol "Q" refers to the number of the question posed in "Questionnaire 3--the Individual Questionnaire" in the study. The questionnaire is available upon request.

²Animal traction in this area of Niger is principally equipment designed to be drawn by a pair of oxen.

recommended by representatives of the project at the "arrondissement" level, the overall level of adoption of the agricultural practices was modest.

--About 20% of the population have used chemical fertilizers on more than one occasion, and another 16% have used fertilizer only once.

--The same approximate rates of adoption and use pertain to improved seed stock. The level of use seems to be attributable largely to the fact that, in several villages, the Agricultural Service experimented with small-farmer seed multiplication programs, whereas, in other villages, seed loans were provided.

--Only 3% of the people interviewed used the animal-drawn plow; only 12% employed the animal-drawn farm cart.

---Only about 9% of the respondents had used animal-traction equipment to cultivate their fields; about half this number had used the equipment for such purposes only once.

2. Index of Knowledge of the CPT Extension Program

The measures adopted to indicate the impact of the CPT extension program are limiting case measures. They do not consider how effectively those sent to the Centers are trained, nor do they take into consideration the utility of the techniques promoted at the centers and presumably modeled by the graduates at the village level for small farmers in actual on-farm conditions. Instead, they assume that, for the program to have an impact, villagers must know about it.

KNOWLEDGE OF CPT EXTENSION PROGRAM=

- 1) Knowledge of who the trainees are (Q. 36)
- + 2) Knowledge of how trainees were selected (Q. 37)

- + 3) Awareness of goals of CFT program given by government agents (Q. 38)

- + 4) Awareness of the role that CFT trainees are supposed to play once they return to the village (Q. 40).

About 50% of the people interviewed gave responses which indicated some familiarity with these aspects of the program.

3. Index of Involvement with the CPT Extension Program

Here again, we adopted a very limited definition of "involvement with" the CPT program. The measures selected simply indicate exposure to the information which the trainees might have tried to convey to ordinary villagers, without indicating the value of this exposure in terms of information imparted or accepted. Our point is that, in the absence of this exposure, it is difficult to imagine how the extension program could have had any impact beyond the changes it may have provoked in the trainees themselves.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE CPT EXTENSION PROGRAM =

- a) Observed the graduate of the CPT at work (Responses were scaled by the degree of intentionality in observing the "demonstration." (Q. 43)

- + b) Used services of the graduate trainee for farm work or transportation (Q.44-Q46)

The survey revealed that a little over half of the individuals interviewed had observed the graduate trainees working on their agricultural enterprises and that there was a fair amount of intentionality involved in these observations. In addition, 28% of the respondents stated that they had employed the trainees, although twice as many used them to transport

materials than employed them to do plowing or weeding with their animal-drawn equipment.

4. Index of Interest in Development Training Programs

This index constitutes a synthesis of the opinions expressed in Questions 51, 54 and 55 of the Individual Questionnaire concerning the degree of interest which the respondent had in agricultural, craft, health, literacy and cooperative education programs. No effort was made to determine whether the knowledge gained in the course of these training sessions addresses the real needs of villagers.

Overall, 14% of the population studied had attended a training session of some kind. This relatively high level of participation confirms our view that the sample is somewhat biased toward those villagers who hold positions of responsibility or who are the most active in village affairs.

5. Index of Participation in the Activities of the Cooperative Mutual Group

Mutual Groups (GM) have two activities in which villagers can be directly involved: the provision of agricultural credit, and the marketing of farm produce. An additional indicator was included which attempts to measure, in a very general way, interest or awareness of additional activities which the GM undertakes at the village-level. Once again, these indicators are not very precise, and the consequences of participation in GM activities is not suggested or ascertained here. It is not at all clear, for example, that receiving a loan from the GM or marketing one's production through the cooperative structure produces

benefits for the small-holder, as compared to alternative sources of credit and to alternative marketing channels.

PARTICIPATION IN GM ACTIVITY =

- a) using cooperative marketing structures (Q. 99)
- b) Obtaining a loan through the cooperative (Q. 100)
- c) Awareness of other GM activities at the village-level

As we have seen above, the level of participation in cooperative activities at the GM level is very low. Only 12% of those interviewed stated that they used cooperative structures to market their farm production. About the same percentage had received at least one loan through the cooperative. No effort was made in the individual interviews to establish how well cooperative credit was being managed and how effective the repayment process was. However, according to the data obtained from the CNCA in July, 1985, the rate of repayment of cooperatives loans for the 16 villages studied averaged less than 33%.

6. Overall Index of the Impact of the Project on Villagers

This index is a simple summary of the previous five and is computed exclusively to simplify the statistical analysis when dealing with all the impacts on the project by providing a single summary measure. But the reader is advised to use such an index with caution, both because it aggregates a variety of different things measured in different ways, and, perhaps more significantly, because it cannot be demonstrated with certainty that in some instances the behaviors observed are consequences of activities of the NDD. This is particularly problematic for the adoption of

specific agricultural techniques promoted by the Project, since a variety of other factors play a role in awareness of these techniques and in their eventual adoption.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PROMOTION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NDD

A number of recent studies have demonstrated that rural development implies more than the simple increase in production and more even than an increase in rural revenues or the standard of living. If it is to be on-going and viable, it requires the creation of a process in which local organizations acquire a certain number of characteristics. In one sense, progress toward developing these characteristics is more revealing of the overall impact of a rural development project than are the usual statistics compiled. Frequently quantitative goals in production and income seem to be associated with this organizational process.³

In general, it seems highly desirable for local organizations to develop the following characteristics:

1. To be capable of identifying the interest of their members and to be capable of communicating these interests to those with authority.
2. To be capable of making decisions which engage the commitment of members and thus to be able to mobilize their participation.
3. To be capable of mobilizing sufficient resources to contribute to local solutions to the problems identified.

¹This section draws heavily on R. Charlick, Animation Rurale Revisited: Participatory for Improving Agriculture and Social-Services in Five Francophone Nations, Ithaca, N.Y.:Center for International Studies, 1984.

4. To have a decision-making process which is broad enough to motivate members to contribute their resources and their energy to the organization.
5. To be capable of managing the activities decided upon.

One factor which often seems to be associated with the characteristics mentioned above is the degree of equality in the distribution of benefits and risks among members.

It is also clear from earlier studies that not every activity undertaken by a development project needs to be done using the same type of process or the same structure.

The best method for exploring the relationship between the characteristics of organizations and the response of a population to the activities promoted by a development project seems to be to examine exactly what these activities imply, and then to see how the organizations which are in place, or those which the project intends to promote, respond to the requirements of these activities.

A. THE ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

1. A communication system-- The extension of agricultural or non-agricultural techniques is especially dependent on a communication system which is both efficient and broad-based. Effective communication is not necessarily dependent upon working through local organizations, if it is established that the technology being introduced is clearly superior to traditional practices in economic terms, and if its adoption does not require major changes in the working habits of the population. In such a case technology seems to spread spontaneously and often quite rapidly.

Frequently, however, the technical change being proposed is not easily accomplished, because of either the complexity of the new tasks and the fact that they may require significant changes in the behavior of the rural population or because the superiority of the technology is not readily apparent. In this case, it is imperative to have a consciously planned diffusion process. In most instances, this requires local partners who can express their views, adapt the technology to their needs and interests and communicate to a broad audience the results of their experiences with the new technology with a minimum of structural blockage to the flow of information. In addition, it seems essential to have a local partner who participates actively in the experimentation phase and in the training program if the desired results are to be achieved. It seems desirable as well to associate an organization which has the capacity to mobilize resources and to engage its members in the desired activity through a fairly broad-based, decision-making process.

2. A system to assure the supply, distribution and management of the "inputs" which the new technology requires. If the new technology is profitable, or if this appears to be the case, these functions may be accomplished without associating a base-level organization in this phase of the extension process. Normally, in this instance, private actors will seek to fill these roles.

The need for a local partner becomes more evident when it appears both preferable and feasible that the new technical practice be adopted by a large percentage of the producers, not just by those who are better informed and more economically secure. This might be the case where it is desirable that the technology spread rapidly or where the project designers

are concerned about equity in the distribution of benefits. In this case, a local association can promote the role of distribution of inputs by opening up the communication process and by assisting in the management of stocks and funds locally.

3. A system for the effective management of credit-- If supply of "inputs" implies the need to manage and guarantee credit, the task is much more demanding since the local partner must have the capacity to mobilize resources, manage accounts and, above all, to select and follow up on borrowers. If the "input" is not readily available, or if its use does not appear to result in broadly shared benefits, it is quite possible that the interests of members of a local organization can diverge. In this instance, the decision making structure of the organization becomes very important because, if it is important to have widespread involvement and support in order to assure that credit can be effectively managed, decisions will have to be made which will permit a more equitable distribution of benefits.

4. The capacity to initiate and implement small-scale, self-help types of activities. If the project is oriented more and more toward these types of activities and linked to financing through the Rural Development Fund, local partners will have to have characteristics conducive to engaging in such activities. The capacity to mobilize local resources seems to require, at a minimum, the ability to involve members in processes of communication, discussion, and decision making.

B. THE COOPERATIVE MUTUAL GROUP AS A BASE-LEVEL ORGANIZATION

According to the reports and evaluations of the NDD which have already been cited, the cooperative is a very immature institution in the geographic area treated by the project. Its organizational characteristics are not yet well developed or solidly institutionalized. Thus, a critical analysis of the GM can seem premature. Nonetheless, so many the project's activities seem to depend on this institution that this study must attempt to take into consideration the characteristics of the GM as they appear to us at the present moment.

1. The characteristics-- In reality, the GM, which is charged with administering the farmer training program, the system of agricultural credit, and the stocking, distribution and sale of agricultural "inputs," has very few of the characteristics it requires to be successful.

2. In most of the GMs observed, the structure of participation and communication is very narrowly-based. Our interviews with influential villagers lead us to the view that even the leaders of the village sometimes lack such basic information as the existence of the GM and its relationship to the Cooperative. This was the case in three villages (Farmas-Béri and Aïbachi in Filingué arrondissement, and Tolkoboy Fondobon in Ouallam). Village leaders knew even less about the ascending structure of the cooperative-- that is to say, the Local Cooperative Union (ULC) and the Sub-Regional Union of Cooperatives (USRC). Even the most elementary facts concerning these institutions were unfamiliar to leaders in over half the villages studied.

Group interviews held with ordinary villagers confirmed this impression. In 11 of the 16 villages studied, non-leaders were incapable of identifying what the GM was, even in the vaguest and simplest terms. In only 6 of the 16 villages could non-leaders identify what the Local Cooperative Union was, despite the fact that this institution is theoretically the key to performing many cooperative functions since it groups 5 to 8 local communities.

Interestingly, our interview data show that, with the exception of women, who are almost totally excluded from cooperative affairs, information about cooperatives and participation in the GM are largely unrelated to sociological factors. The fact, for example, that an individual is closely linked through kinship to the chief of the village seems to play no role in influencing his/her level of information or involvement in the GM--not even the likelihood of having received a cooperative loan.

What differentiates the level of participation in the GM seems to be the overall level of activity of individuals in village life. People who hold any kind of position have a clearly higher level of information and of access to the benefits of involvement in cooperative activity than do ordinary "cooperative members." For example, people who are highly involved in village affairs are twice as likely to get cooperative loans as villagers who are not involved. But it should be noted that, with the exception of credit, differences in access to benefits is not very great. Even for credit the implications of unequal access are not very profound since what this means in concrete terms is that 18% of the village leaders got loans compared to 9% for non-activists.

Barriers to communication of information concerning the GM, obstacles to participation in the decisions of the local cooperative mutual group and even access to the advantages of training and credit available through these groups do not appear to be systematic. This study, nevertheless, was not able to ascertain the real bases of influence and power in the various types of villages surveyed. Only an in-depth study, using participation-observation techniques over a considerable period of time, could accomplish that. Based on the statistical analysis of the responses which individual villagers provided, we can only conclude that a relatively strong association exists between holding an official position of responsibility in a village and probability that an individual will attend GM meetings. On the other hand, we could identify only one sociological factor which proved to be associated with exclusion from participation in the village mutual group, whether the individual was native to the village where he or she currently resided. In villages where a significant proportion of the villagers had immigrated to the village within the past 10 to 15 years, factional conflict seemed more intense. These relatively recent arrivals seemed to be less well integrated socially and, hence, to be more politically marginal.

3. Apart from the problems of communication and participation in cooperatives which may be associated with sociological factors, the local cooperative mutual group cannot be expected to function according to cooperative principles since, at the time of this survey, most villagers had not learned about these principles. An analysis of the survey and group interview data leads to the conclusion that the cooperative and the GM have not succeeded in being "schools for cooperation" in training potential members in the meaning of this approach to economic organization.

These observations go beyond those of two earlier studies which concluded that local people interviewed could at least convey a general impression of what a cooperative was. Our group interviews with non-leaders demonstrated that the level of understanding about the principles of cooperation, even in the vaguest terms, is very weak. For the most part, people responded in very general terms and were unable to distinguish between cooperatives and other local institutions. The distinctions which they could make were based mainly on the functions which the institutions are supposed to perform, rather than on the principles which guide them. Most of the time, villagers associate the "cooperative" with the function of providing agricultural supplies (inputs) or with the function of supplying consumer goods at advantageous prices. In several cases the cooperative simply came to mean the existence of a retail store located in the central village of the "cooperative," which groups 5 to 8 villages with GMs.

In only one village, Tombo, did the people interviewed convey a sense that they understood the basic idea of cooperation. These people stated that the cooperative is "an association of people united for a common interest, who can, through their association, help each other and gain a mutual benefit." As we have already seen, Tombo is a village which has been organized by a powerful religious interest group, where people not only understand the principles of cooperation but also their application in concrete terms.

4. At present the GM has neither developed the experience and capacity to initiate action nor can it decide how to manage a range of needed activities. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the GM undertakes very

few activities apart from its role in the distribution of farm inputs, the supervision of the cooperative retail store and the management of farm credit. In reality, almost all of these activities are concentrated at the level of the cooperative, the central village, and are not likely to be performed at all in the surrounding GMs. It is easy to see why many people confuse the GM and the cooperative. Normally, "cooperative" decisions are made by the leaders of the GM in the central village without consulting members of the other GMs. But even in the central village there is little to decide. Most of the significant decisions, such as the terms of sale of agricultural inputs, are determined at the level of the Productivity Project without prior discussion with the representatives of the GMs. Nevertheless, in some instances, officials of GMs make decisions which are at odds with the conditions set by the Project. For example, officially there has not been any short-term credit provided for the purchase of seasonal agricultural inputs for the past three years. Yet our studies found that farmers in the villages of Kiki, Gilleni, Mondolo, Tombo and Farmas-Béri do receive these supplies on credit. It appears that the officials of certain GMs or cooperatives take it upon themselves to provide the credit terms despite the fact that they are clearly in violation of the rules set forth by the Project and risk serious consequences for their actions.

The most important responsibility which the GM has, however, is to assure that the farmer training program at the CPTs and the extension program which depends on the graduates of these centers function well. GMs have three principal responsibilities with regard to this program:

- a. The recruitment and selection of trainees;
- b. Guaranteeing the loans for farm equipment contracted by the graduate trainees;

c. The management of the village level extension program involving graduate trainees as "pilot farmers," or auxiliaries, in a way which assures the interests of the cooperative.

It is here that the lack of experience of the GM is clearest. Interviews with influential villagers and with non-leaders indicate that both GM members and even the officials of the GM have hardly any role in the decisions as to how the extension program is to work. At the time of this study, 13 of the 16 villages surveyed had recruited trainees. Louma had recruited two for the 1985 training session who had not yet been trained, while no trainees had yet been selected in Farmas-Béri and in Bané-Béri. Nevertheless, we learned in discussions held with village leaders that in only two cases, Tombo and Gilléni, had they received all the vital information they required to undertake intelligently their responsibilities for the extension program. In only these cases did they learn what criterion was to be employed in selecting trainees, what responsibility the GM undertook for supporting trainees after their graduation and what financial obligations they accepted in guaranteeing the equipment loans for the trainees. In four other villages local authorities acknowledged having received information on the first two points but not on the all important question of the credit obligations of the GM. In the other villages (Bossé-Bangou, Kiki, Tolkoboy-Fandobon, Kokoirey-Peul, and Dadaga), both the leaders and the non leaders agreed that there had been no information on these points and that the trainees had simply been named by the village authorities.

No effort was made in this study to confirm the recollections and statements of village leaders; however, if their recollections are correct,

it is difficult to understand how the GM could be responsible for administering the agricultural training and extension program.

Even a rapid analysis of the data leads to the unequivocal conclusion that GMs lack any real responsibility. This study produced very little information about how GMs select farmer trainees, apart from the observation that most of the time this seems to be done by village authorities. To go beyond this observation and to illuminate the decision making process in local organizations of this type would require an in-depth study. But the poor repayment rate of loans, even taking into consideration the particularly difficult economic conditions in the region this year, seems to indicate that GMs do not take their role in the management of credit very seriously. Interestingly, the two GMs which had the highest level of repayment of the 16 villages studied, Farmas and Louma, the only GMs where repayment levels reached 60%⁴, had little or no involvement to that point with the farmer training program. This may suggest that it is not so much the inability of the GM to manage credit, but the lack of information and the subsequent difficulties which have arisen around the animal traction equipment loans that are at the heart of the failure of the GM to fulfill this role.

It is difficult to distinguish the role of the GM from those of the CVD and Samarya with regard to other small-scale self-help projects. Villagers often confuse these three local institutions when they discuss the various activities which have been undertaken. Given the current state of the GM as a local institution, it seems much more likely that these self-help activities are organized by the Samarya or by the CVD than by this association

⁴Based on information provided by the CNCA, July 1985. No CPT trainee from Louma had yet received a loan for farm equipment, and in the case of Farmas there had been only one loan of this type.

which is specifically charged with cooperative activity. The study of 16 villages turned up a single instance of a local self-help activity which was clearly initiated by a GM-- the case of Kiki, where villagers reported that the cooperative (which they had confused with the GM) had decided to build a warehouse to store foodstuffs. Apparently, this warehouse was financed through an assessment (of 500 CFA) which the GM levied on all household heads. This case is all the more exceptional since it is the only instance documented in this study where a GM mobilized and managed resources locally.

5. The GM is poorly suited to managing credit and self-help activities due to the lack of proper training of its officials. As has already been mentioned, the level of training and of literacy skills in the villages in this area is extremely low. It is true that for the past two years some training has been given at the cooperative level to local cooperative officials who must manage the warehouses, the retail stores and the grain banks. This training may eventually be of value at the GM level as well. For the moment, however, this program has reached only 20% of the cooperatives and hence only a tiny fraction of the GMs.

6. Conclusions on the GMS

At the present time GMs have virtually none of the characteristics and resources needed to undertake meaningful development actions. They are certainly not in a position "to enable the population to take charge of their destinies." The possibilities for action, for management, for decision-making and for the expansion of participation in cooperative affairs is practically non-existent in all but a few GMs, confused with the cooperatives in the largest villages. Nonetheless, it is striking to note that, at least according to the data gathered by this rapid survey

technique, participation in GMs does not seem to be impeded by fundamental sociological factors, apart from gender. This might mean that, with a proper organizational development strategy, participation in cooperative activities could expand dramatically.

C. THE SAMARYA AS A LOCAL LEVEL ORGANIZATION

The Samarya is frequently considered to be a political organization while cooperatives are thought to be the principal economic instruments of all development actions⁵ From this point of view, the Niamey Development Project should rely on the GM and support its development while virtually ignoring the possibilities that the Samarya might offer. Since the articulation of the new development policy for Niger based on the Société de Développement and its village-level institution, the Village Development Council, it is now essential that all three local institutions, GM, CVD, and Samarya, be taken into consideration. Until now, with the exception of a few recent efforts to promote small-scale, village development actions, the NDD has limited its consideration of local organizations to the GM.

Although it is true that the modern Samarya movement was instigated by the state as a way of mobilizing popular involvement and support, the Samarya as it presently functions seems to be a somewhat more appropriate instrument for carrying out development activities than the GM.

1. The Samarya is structured to encourage wider participation in decision making than the GM and is, therefore, more likely to be able to promote consensus on local level activities. As we have seen in Chapter 3,

¹P. Boyle. "Développement Institutionnel du Projet Productivité Niamey." Institute of Development Anthropology, 1984, p. 74.

the modern Samarya is no longer an organization which groups village youth as was true of it traditionally in most of the societies comprising the population of the Project area. At the initiation of the national leaders, it has become an association of all the "active" citizens including both young people and adults, men and women. To promote this more inclusive structure, a large number of new offices and titles was created in the Samarya. Despite the fact that the "Sarkin Samari," or head of the Samarya, dominates the organization, the multiplication of titles and officers has had the effect of broadening participation somewhat.

2. The modern Samarya performs a number of different roles including several which address interests shared by the majority of the villagers. Specifically, it is called upon to play two distinct roles at the village level. First, it is supposed to help mobilize villagers to undertake activities decided upon by the national authorities. In this sense the Samarya is primarily a political instrument because the village chief, whose authority derives from the national political system, relies heavily on the Samarya to help him conduct the activities which he, as a public official, has been asked to undertake. It is certainly for this reason that this study found that the Samarya functions best in the villages where the authority of the village chief is widely accepted. Villages which are divided into factions which are struggling for power, the Samarya seems to be either paralyzed, divided into two distinct groups, as is the case of Louma, or effective in mobilizing only the allies of one of the political actors-- usually the village chief. This is entirely understandable if one considers the importance of this institution to the chief's ability to satisfy his superiors. Villagers no doubt consider it foolish to help a chief look good to the national authorities if, in the

context of intra-village rivalries, they are, in fact, trying to bring him down.

Second, the Samarya is also called upon to play a number of roles which are important to life within the village. These roles are similar to those performed by the traditional Samarya (Youth Association) but may be much more extensive in scope. According to the information gathered in group interviews, most Samaryas play an important role in providing hospitality to visitors, such as supplying kola nuts or food and furnishing lodging if it is needed. They also help organize festivals and other ceremonies that take place within the village. Even though these activities do provide vital support to the village chief by underwriting some of the expense, they also address interests of most villagers and not just those interests which have been determined by external authorities. Village interest in the activity of the Samarya is even more evident where this organization provides a social service, such as financial assistance to the destitute, as is the case in Bané-Béri and Tombo. In some instances the Samarya is an instrument for organizing labor to work on projects which villagers themselves have decided are important, such as the construction of a school room or first aid facility.

3. The modern Samarya has the capacity to mobilize both human and financial resources. Most of the Samaryas studied (13 of the 16) had regularly cultivated collective fields whose production was used to serve various community needs such as supplying food for ceremonies, for visitors and, in several instances, as assistance to the destitute. Of course the scope of these activities has been curtailed in recent years by the economic

and environmental conditions generally prevailing in this area. In most cases, they have persisted, nonetheless.

Over half of the Samaryas, 10 of the 16, also had group funds, replenished in a variety of ways decided upon by the officers of the organization. These methods included regular periodic assessments, fines levied for a variety of infractions and the sale of produce harvested on the collective field. Despite the fact that, even in relatively good years, the sums mobilized in these funds are not very large, the existence of this mechanism is important. It represents the only example of public investment of funds and the only group savings scheme which we were able to identify in the villages studies. Several other types of organizations were identified in the chapter on non-formal groups which mobilize savings or resources, but the funds mobilized by these organizations are either entirely for individual use or for the use by a group involving only a small number of villagers.

4. The Samarya has a fairly advanced capacity to implement local development projects. A glance at the list of activities which various Samaryas have undertaken demonstrates that, within the limits of technology available at the village level, this organization often exhibits a considerable ability to organize work and to mobilize resources. Even more interesting is the fact that the methods of organizing work differ significantly according to the tasks undertaken and to the way the village itself is structured. This fact implies that the decision on the organization of labor must in fact involve local people. In certain villages, Louma, for example, neighborhoods (quartiers) take turns providing labor for the construction of their school. In other villages, Bané-Béri and Baboussaye,

each family or each neighborhood is expected to contribute a certain quantity of labor and materials. This management system demonstrates the possibility of addressing the needs of a village through methods which are more acceptable to most villagers. Thus, even though the modern Samarya is not strictly speaking an organization based on purely "traditional" principles, it has been able to adopt a management policy based on habits and understandings which already exist.

5. The Samarya, nevertheless, has numerous limitations as an instrument of local development. First, its structure of participation is not always very open. Although it encourages the involvement of young men who are not heads of households and thus goes much further than the GM to broaden participation, members of the families of village chiefs tend to monopolize the most important offices. Our study indicated that people from chiefly families participated much more in the Samarya than was true of villages with no kinship ties to the chief.

In addition, the level of rural education is so low in this area that the Samarya often lacks personnel capable of adequately planning activities and maintaining accounts. Nor have Samarya leaders benefited much from leadership and organizational training. Finally, the amount of capital and the level of technology available in most villages are simply too low to address effectively many of the problems which simultaneously assail village-level society.

6. Conclusions on the Samarya

As an instrument of local level development the Samarya seems to offer many more possibilities than the GM. To the extent that the Village Develop-

ment Councils (CVDs) function, they undertake most of their concrete actions through the Samarya. But the Samarya also has a number of serious limitations which must be considered. Some of these limitations are the result of the generalized poverty of the people in this area and the lack of mass education. Others are associated with socio-political factors. The Samarya cannot address the specific needs of certain groups, particularly of low status socio-professional groups, if these groups cannot hold any real power in the village.

D. THE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AS A LOCAL ORGANIZATION

As we have already seen, the CVD is not yet well institutionalized in the Niamey Department. It would appear that villagers have received only very incomplete information on the structure of the Société de Développement as illustrated by the fact that leaders in three of the sixteen villages, Farmas, Baboussaye and Mondolo, knew almost nothing about the nature of the CVD. There is an even lower level of knowledge about the "ascending" council institutions, such as the Local Development Council and the Sub-Regional Development Council. Leaders in only 9 of the 16 villages studied had any information about these institutions and this information was very incomplete. Of course ordinary villagers know even less about the council system. In 6 of the villages non leaders whom we interviewed were uninformed even about the nature of the CVD and had almost no knowledge of the next level of institution for "popular" consultation- the Local Council which is located at the canton seat.

Given this low level of information, it is hardly surprising that the CVD has not really evolved very far as a base-level organization; hence its exact characteristics are difficult to describe. At the present time the

CVD is, in fact, indistinguishable from the traditional and administrative structures which previously guided the various societies incorporated in this Department. The rapid survey technique employed in this study relied heavily on questionnaire data and did not permit a detailed description of the principles of power and management of Zarma, Hausa, Fulani, Twareg/Bella, Gourmantche and Songhai villages. An in-depth knowledge of the different types of authority in these societies would require field studies using participant and observation techniques over an extended period of time.

It appears, however, that CVDs which function at all include representatives of the local chieftaincy, the Samarya, the GM where this institution exists and often representatives of the neighborhoods, particularly in the larger villages. In addition, the personal advisers of the chief are, without any question, represented in one way or another, as is the custom. Women, on the other hand, are rarely represented in the CVD. In only one of the villages studied, Bané-Béri, were women asked to participate in the CVD meeting convoked to respond to the questions posed by this study. It appeared that representatives of socio-professional groups were also not invited to attend in most cases.

The characteristics of CVDs can be sketched in only the most preliminary fashion based on the brief period of observation and study afforded by this study.

1. The decision making structure of CVDs seems to be very diverse in terms of its capacity to include various social strata of the village.

Some villages are quite homogeneous, such as the villages of marabouts unified by their faith, or villages of one extended family. In such villages it may be assumed that CVDs represent the entire village. Other villages are divided by ethnicity. Often members of one ethnic group hold the positions of power and authority. Even in this case, however, the distribution of power and authority isn't always the same. In some villages, such as the Fulani village of Doutouel, former slaves play a major role in running the Samarya and, as a result, in the meetings of the village council (CVD). It is not evident in this case that their participation includes the right to contribute to decisions as well as the duty to implement them, however. In some villages, particularly in certain Zarma villages which are stratified by socio-occupational status, members of some occupational groups are considered to be social inferiors. This is clearly the case of weavers and blacksmiths who were traditionally organized as castes and who, consequently, had no traditional right to political power. This tradition is carried over somewhat into the current CVD structure. On the other hand, individuals who practice these same occupations in Songhai or Gourmantché society can be very influential in village affairs and can even, as is the case at Kiki, hold the village chieftaincy.

Still other villages are divided by other principles, such as hereditary social status, which is not based on occupation. In large villages, such as Louma, where such groups tend to live in fairly homogeneous neighborhoods, they may constitute political factions which the village chief cannot ignore in the decision making process. In such cases, neighborhood leaders will always be represented in CVDs.

Given the variety of patterns observed in just 16 villages, it is

difficult to generalize about the entire project area. What emerges from our brief survey, however, is the view that, as village power structures are currently constituted, there is no assurance that all social strata or all interest groups in a local community will be represented in its CVD. This can have an important impact on the type of development action which village councils may eventually propose and on the consequences of these actions.

2. The capacity of village councils to identify the needs of the local population and to initiate a plan of action is quite variable as well. According to the information obtained in interviews with groups of village leaders and non-leaders, it is clear that villages differ a great deal in terms of their level of collective activity.

Some villages which are highly divided due to a challenge to the authority of the chief, such as Farmas, seem incapable of organizing and undertaking the least collective action. Other villages respond to possibilities or duties brought by external authorities, but always wait for these external authorities to initiate action. In a few cases, village authorities seem to identify clearly the needs of the village, formulate plans of actions which begin with local-level activity and then try to attract resources from the government to help them complete the project. The most important example of this pattern has been the village of Tombo, where village leaders initiated a school construction project and then requested that a teacher be assigned to their school, followed by a similar scheme to create a local health facility. Other villages, such as Kiki and Koné-Béri, fall somewhere between the second and third patterns. They have initiated school construction projects by assembling building materials,

but then have waited for the authorization of the government to proceed in the hope of getting support for the construction work.

3. The CVD often makes use of the Samarya, rather than the GM, to carry out its development activities. Despite the fact that members of the GM are represented on CVDs wherever GMs exist, it is to the Samarya that the village council most often turns. This seems to be because the Samarya has a far greater capacity to mobilize both labor and material resources. In the study of 16 villages we could find only one instance of a village development action organized and undertaken by a GM- the case of the food storage facility at Kiki mentioned above.

4. Conclusion on the CVD

Our review of actual village-level development activities raises serious questions about whether the CVD has contributed any new institutional capacity for local action to the villages studied. Villages where CVDs have undertaken "development" activities since the creation of the Société de Développement" also executed a series of similar projects such as school construction, rural road maintenance and seed multiplication programs prior to the creation of the new institutions. For the most part, these projects were the result of local initiative, demonstrating that villages can freely organize themselves to undertake activities which villagers deem important. Although the pattern of power and authority varies considerably in villages, it appears that in the villages studied CVD projects are organized along lines identical to those freely undertaken by villagers in the period pre-dating the CVD.

On the other hand, villages which have not yet undertaken new activities through CVDs in the contemporary era have had experience only with projects which were externally imposed, such as the colonial reserve-granary program in the earlier period.

These somewhat impressionistic data certainly do not prove what maybe the potential for development action of CVDs, independent of the pre-existing village authority structures, may be. Currently, few villages have any experience with locally initiated action. If villages to are be encouraged to undertake small-scale self-help activities assisted by the Rural Development Fund, they must develop new capacity for planning and implementation. The potential for developing this new capacity through the CVD must be carefully studied.

IV. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE SUCCESS OF THE NIAMEY PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT

Given the analysis which precedes, it does not seem very probable that formal, local organizations would have contributed significantly to whatever success the NDD has had in specific terms. Despite the fact that the development of this organizational process was seen as a major goal in its own right, one must agree with Roberts that "the project has contributed very little to the development of cooperatives"⁶ and, perhaps, add that formal, local organizations have, therefore, contributed very little to the success of the project.

⁶A. Richard Roberts. "Rapport Individuel d'Evaluation," USAID/Niamey, nd, p. 26. This report seems to have been written as part of the Project Paper for the design of Phase II of NDD.

TABLE 5.1

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE NIAMEY PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT

INDICATOR OF PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT	PARTICIPATION IN THE SAMARYA	PARTICIPATION IN THE GM	PARTICIPATION IN THE CVD	PARTICIPATION OVERALL PARTICIPATION
ADOPTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES	.34 (.23)	.28 (.19)	.27 (.19)	.32 (.23)
KNOWLEDGE OF THE CPT FARMER TRAINEE PROGRAM	.32 (.25)	.24 (.18)	.32 (.25)	.34 (.27)
BENEFITS FROM THE CPT FARMER TRAINEE PROGRAM	.31 (.20)	.20 (.13)	.23 (.15)	.26 (.17)
BENEFITS FROM THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM	.38 (.27)	.76 (.56)	.40 (.28)	.65 (.47)
INDEX OF PARTICIPATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT	.40 (.32)	.53 (.42)	.36 (.29)	.51 (.41)

Chi² test of statistical significance. P= .001. Gamma and in parentheses Somer's D which takes in consideration ties and is therefore a more conservative measure, are the tests of strength of association reported.

But when one considers the future direction of the Project, it seems important to draw whatever lessons are possible. Thus far, these lessons are to be found mainly at the level of individual behavior. Our study demonstrates that there are some fairly strong relationships between the participation of individual villagers in the formal base-level organizations created and all of the measures of project success discussed above. In Table 5.1 a series of significant relationships is reported. To take just

one example, overall participation in the state initiated institutions is fairly strongly associated (.51) with overall participation in the activities of the NDD.

It is equally true that individual participation in reciprocal labor exchange is associated with a number of measures of responsiveness to the project such as the adoption of agricultural practices and participation in the whatever potential benefits the GMs offer through their credit and marketing activities.

The question is what do these relationships mean? There are two possible hypotheses which might explain them, and these hypotheses do not appear to be necessarily exclusive. First, it is possible that those in power virtually monopolize, or at least have much greater access to, both participation in local organizations created by the state and the benefits from state-sponsored development programs. This would be the case if access to participation in local organizations were relatively closed in political or social terms. It is undeniable that those who participate more fully in these formal organizations possess more information about programs available to villagers. If these programs include valuable resources or may help the individual benefit financially, it would hardly be surprising if people in a better position to learn of these programs were to use them to enrich themselves disproportionately. Should the hypothesis prove to be confirmed, the development project would confront a serious problem since it would be fostering inequality and would find it difficult to produce the broadly shared gains needed to promote rural development in such a poor environment.

The evidence for this first hypothesis is not very persuasive. As we have already seen, apart from the problem of gender, sociological factors which exclude certain categories do not effectively determine participation in these base-level organizations. It is true that certain social categories, such as married heads of households, do exhibit higher levels of involvement in these organizations. That may indicate the special status accorded to adults who are expected to be more responsible and are, therefore, accorded more influence. This is a status which is accessible at least to all males.

The relationship between participation and being a native son of the village is somewhat more troubling. Villagers who are not native to the community, who have come within the past 10-15 years and who are often from ethnic groups different from the majority of native villagers are less likely to participate in village-level organizations. This is hardly surprising, however, and can probably be attributed to a weak sense of integration and psychological involvement in the life of the village.

The tendency of close relatives of the chief to participate at higher levels in these organizations poses the most serious issue for interpretation. It should be noted that this relationship is limited to participation in a single organization, the Samarya. We have already discussed the fact that the support of the Samarya is an important resource for a village chief since it helps him meet the expectations of the external political authorities. Nevertheless, since Samarya is a local organization with some real organizational and political power in the village, the tendency of this organization to be run by people who are closely connected to the chief must raise some caution flags about the openness of the local development process.

The strongest relationship which concerns us, however, is the relationship between local office holding, participation in GMs, CVDs and Samaryas, and involvement in project activities and benefits. Here we seem to be confronting a vicious circle because the more active individuals are always more concerned and accept positions of responsibility more readily. The criteria of selection to these positions are not fully understood although we know that, for the most part, they are not hereditary. It is also clear that economic privilege, at least as it is measured by our indicators, is not significantly associated with position holding. The most important qualification on the hypothesis of a relatively closed and self-serving elite, however, is the fact that all of these social and economic factors cited here explain only a small amount of the total variation in terms of who participates in local organizations and in project activities and benefits. Given this fact, it is difficult to argue that in any real sense an elite monopolizes project benefits through its use of local organizations.

The data also suggests a second hypothesis, that, despite a certain bias in access to participation, the most powerful factor in explaining participation both in local organizations and in the project is individual dynamism. The study demonstrates that individual villagers who search to obtain some education and training, who work for other people for a wage or some type of established compensation and who have more than the average amount of consumer goods are more likely to participate in the new local organizations. Interestingly, they also are likely to participate in reciprocal labor exchanges and mutual aid activities. This suggests the possibility of a path to development for local communities which can avoid both the domination of the community by a conservative elite or traditional

authorities and the marginalization of the most progressive local individuals. In effect, by encouraging dynamic individuals to become involved in local organizations it may be possible to assure that benefits are shared more broadly and that community interest and cooperative traditions are still considered.

The role which local organizations can play in this development approach becomes even more obvious. If participation in local organizations is associated with personal openness to new productive activities and to knowledge in general, the governmental policy which encourages the broadest possible involvement in these organizations is likely to promote not only cooperative activities at the village level, but also may stimulate a growing number of individuals to take risks in the broader economic arena, including the adoption of new farm and non-farm productive techniques. To stimulate this kind of participation, however, local organizations must offer individuals and groups in the community the opportunity to participate on the basis of their own interests.

CHAPTER 6

SUPPORTING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIAMEY DEPARTMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

For the foreseeable future, rural development in the Niamey Department depends on the establishment of two interdependent processes:

-- the reinforcement of local-level institutions capable of acquiring the characteristics necessary to play a meaningful role in self-management and financing their own investments;

-- the encouragement of all forms of socio-economic activity, particularly of income generating and savings producing activities which can improve the standard of living of villagers.

In reality these processes are linked; for, in the context which currently prevails, where capital and trained people are in very scarce supply, the possibilities for development through individual action are very limited and risky.

The key, however, to any successful future development activity is the identification of concrete interests and needs which are truly felt by the community. In the absence of these interests, support for local organizations, investment in the means of production and training are destined to fail and even to produce very negative consequences.

II. A TYPOLOGY OF INTERESTS

One of the major problems which all the large productivity projects have encountered is that they did not begin with the identification of the

real interests of the potential village participants. The organizations erected to carry out "project" activities, therefore, have not necessarily corresponded with the core of local interests. Cooperatives, for example, have never become true associations of "cooperators," not only because of the lack of cooperative education but also because potential members could not identify concrete interests which they shared. This is especially true for credit cooperatives which were asked to accept the responsibility for the farm equipment loans made to CPT trainees.

Nonetheless, such interests do exist. In almost all of the villages studied, there were individuals and groups which expressed strong interest in undertaking certain actions. (See Table 6.1). Sometimes these interests corresponded with specific needs and interests of the local community, of a substantial proportion of the villagers, a small group of individuals residing in the village or individuals grouped on some basis other than the territorial and administrative subdivision of the "village." This array of different interests suggests that it is not useful always to conceive of interests in public or collective terms when the interests capable of stimulating development actions are often in the private domain.

The survey conducted for this study, as well as several additional efforts to survey the interests of villagers (The Seminar at Lossa in 1983, studies conducted of village grain mills, studies of savings associations), reveal a common core of needs and interests. An analysis of these needs expressed by inhabitants of local-level society can lead to a first effort at classifying fundamental development interests in this area of the country.

TABLE 6.1

NAME OF VILLAGE	IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE	SAVINGS AND TRADE	GRAIN AND SEED STORAGE	POTABLE WATER	HEALTH FACILITY	SCHOOL	COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE	PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
AIBAICHI	WATER SUPPLY FOR OFF-SEASON GARDEN			X		X -7KMS AWAY		
BABOUSAYE	IMPROVE WATER SUPPLY; GARDENING TOOLS		FOR SELECTED SEEDS					BLACKSMITH TRAINING
BANE BERI	DEVELOP SWAMP CULTIVATION			X SOURCE 8 KMS AWAY				
BOSSE BANGOU		LITERACY TRAINING FOR BRICK MAKERS		X	X		TELEVISION REPAIR	AUTO MECHANICS
DADAGA	TRAINING FOR OFF SEASON GARDENERS		LOCAL STORAGE OF SEED				TELEVISION REPAIR	
DOUTOUEL	TRAINING AND FENCING MATERIAL			X DUBIOUS PROJECT				
GILLENI	FENCING AND IMPROVED WATER SUPPLY	TRAINING IN MANAGEMENT OF CREDIT						
KIKI	CASH CROPS AND MATERIAL	TRAINING IN MANAGEMENT OF CREDIT						TRAINING OF BLACKSMITHS AND WEAVERS

NAME OF VILLAGE	IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE	SAVINGS AND TRADE	GRAIN AND SEED STORAGE	POTABLE WATER	HEALTH FACILITY	SCHOOL	COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE	PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
KOKOIREY PEUHL				X		X		
KONE BERI			LOCAL STORAGE OF MILLET					TRAINING OF BUTCHERS AND BLACKSMITHS
LOUMA	TRAINING AND SITE DEVELOPMENT							
MONDOLO	FENCING AND OTHER MATERIALS							
TCHANTCHAN FOULBE	IMPROVED PUMPS				X THROUGH SELF HELP			
TOLKOBAY FANDOUBAN	FENCING AND OTHER MATERIAL			X				TRAINING OF BUTCHERS
TOMBO	IMPROVEMENT OF WELLS AND MATERIAL	MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR MERCHANT GROUP	STORAGE OF CEREALS AND SELECTED SEED		X THROUGH SELF HELP		WANT A TELEVISION	

A. PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE INTERESTS

It is clearly possible to draw the distinction between public and private interests. Public interests are those shared by a collectivity and not easily monopolized by a few individuals. Successfully meeting these interests usually requires decisions at some level of government and often involves commitment on the part of a substantial percentage of the local population. Private interests can be either collective or purely individual. In this study the concern is mainly with those interests which seem to require group action, even if the group does not correspond to any previously defined political or administrative unit, such as a village, or state mandated cooperative. Groups can be more or less formal and can have more or less defined structures and rules. But what distinguishes these groups is their pursuit of a mutual interest which motivates individuals to participate in them.

B. INTERESTS DEFINED BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS

1. Rainfed Agricultural Interests-- Table 6.1 reveals that the rural people surveyed expressed a variety of socio-economic interests and needs. It is notable that, despite the frequently expressed need for assistance with food in this particularly difficult year, rainfed agricultural interests figure infrequently among the needs villagers list. The principal agricultural need expressed was for locally controlled storage of both cereals and seed. Storage seems to imply two distinct interests. First, locally controlled cereal banks could reduce individual risks and costs associated with huge variations in price and availability due to annual fluctuations in production. Second, they could serve a community need for social assistance to those hardest hit by drought or crop failure.

At least a portion of community grain stocks could be made available to the needy, as certain Samaryas currently do. Although the first interest appears to be mainly individual, both imply collective action for success.

In addition, village-level storage capacity can reduce the risks and costs of getting seed as compared to individual, on-farm storage. Here the interest is typical of "Rochdalean" cooperative principles where groups form to better serve individual interests.

Storage, whether of seed or grains, requires that groups be capable of mobilizing investment capital and that they learn to manage this capital on a continuing basis.

Some farmers in the villages studied expressed another need which is more directly associated with rainfed production. They wanted to have a better system for supplying "inputs," such as chemicals and fertilizers, so that these commodities would be available when needed. They also expressed a need for a supply system which would make inputs available on short-term credit and which could take into consideration the risk factors associated with this activity. At the moment, however, the demand for these purchased farm "inputs" does not appear to be very widespread. The interest in creating a better supply system is therefore limited to a few farmers.

2. Irrigated Agricultural Interests-- It should be noted that interest in various forms of irrigated agriculture was intense in the villages studied. No doubt this was due to the extensive campaign launched by the government of Niger to promote off-season cultivation in a year of very poor cereal harvests. Interest in gardening is seen mainly in economic

terms associated with individual gain. We did not find a single gardener association in the villages studied. In all of the off-season gardening projects sponsored by the state, individuals or family groups worked their own plots with no formal cooperation for production. Nonetheless, improving an irrigated perimeter involves making a certain number of investments, such as improving wells, constructing canals or fencing the site, which in most cases, cannot be accomplished by an individual. To address these needs and others which will be suggested below, it seems vital to create an organization which groups the interested parties, not all the inhabitants of a given local community.

3. Craft Production-- Craft production follows several different principles in the area covered by the project. For some producers, it is, above all, an individual, economic activity. For many others crafts are produced by small enterprises which are organized on kinship or hereditary "clan" lines. Where the latter is the case, interest in craft production is limited to a minority of villagers who are, nonetheless, closely tied to other village producers.

The most important interest which craftsmen articulate is for a general improvement in the local economy which will enable more people to buy their products. But this is an interest which local craftsmen can do little to affect. What they can influence is the efficiency of their production. Many craftsmen express an interest in training so that they can develop new products or improved methods, such as meat-preservation techniques or iron working techniques, which will find a broader market. In addition, craftsmen seem to be limited by their lack of working capital which prevents them from maintaining adequate supplies of raw materials. This problem they seek to remedy through more reliable and less expensive

credit than is currently available on the informal market. All of these interests are economic in nature and concern only a small percentage of the inhabitants of any given rural community.

4. Trade-- Few groups of commercial traders were identified by the study, but there is reason to believe that, in less severe economic times, more groups of merchants exist, particularly to conduct the cattle and grain trade. A number of traders interviewed expressed the need for better training in the management of stock and credit. As in the case of craftsmen, however, this interest involves only a small number of villagers directly.

5. Savings-- Saving as such is a means to other activities, rather than a socio-economic function in its own right. In most cases savings groups had several different purposes. The common form of savings group identified was the "adassé. This type grouped individuals who shared a common interest in delaying immediate consumption so that, through the accumulation of a relatively large sum of money, they could afford to make a major expenditure at the time required. This is a classic savings function, but the institution is far from ideal, lacking both institutional guarantee of payment and interest on savings. It is no doubt for this reason that it is considered to be the least desirable form of savings association among the Hausa interviewed in another study (see Diara Fatima Marthe. Maradi- Etude de Factibilité des Caisses d'Epargne, June, 1984). Nevertheless, there is an interest in this type of savings association in the Niamey Department since no more profitable or more certain form of savings groups exists.

One goal of savings is to conserve capital. Another is to see it grow. The latter is an investment function. Few examples of group investments were identified by this study apart from the case of weavers who jointly invested a portion of their profits in livestock. For these craftsmen, interest in improved savings and investment groups exists but, again, this concerns only a very small number of rural people.

6. Socio-economic Infrastructure-- It is important to note that a large percentage of the interests expressed by villagers concerns collective investments in village equipment. This is, no doubt, because of the low level of infrastructure found in most of these communities. For the most part, desires for improved infrastructure are limited to widely shared perceptions of constraints on local economic production and on the quality of rural life. The case of drinking water is a good example of this. Women often see the issue of improving drinking water supplies in terms of their work schedule. Since women are already heavily occupied, the task of fetching drinking water from distance wells restrains them from entering fully into more economically productive activities. In other instances, villagers see the issue of water quality in terms of the general problem of attracting and retaining inhabitants since the quality of water in a village is closely associated with the quality of life. At the minimum, a concern for more convenient water sources involves most village women. The issue of water quality, on the other hand, concerns all villagers.

The problem of rural roads and village isolation is seen in much the same way, despite the fact that it appears to be a less pressing concern than water quality. In particular, people who engage in commercial activities and who need to visit the surrounding market towns frequently are

interested in improving rural roads to facilitate their economic activity. In reality, the entire village is often concerned about isolation from markets and larger towns, which led the inhabitants of Tombo and Bossé Bangou to attempt to construct or maintain some rural roads with their own resources.

Schooling, on the other hand, is seen mainly as a quality of life issue. Most villages have already built one or more classrooms, often on their own initiative. In other villages, such as Aibachi, this type of investment is given a high priority since existing schools are located too far away for their children to make the trip on foot daily. In such villages, this problem affects most villagers directly at one time or another.

Health care facilities are also seen as a collective good which contribute to the local quality of life. Only the village of Farmas lacks a resident, first aid worker and mid wife. For this village, obtaining training for local volunteers in this area is a high priority. Some villages, such as Bossé Bangou, seek to construct a local, first aid or nursing station since they are located too far from a facility for the safety of their inhabitants. In Tombo and TchanTchan Foulbé, villagers seem to want local, health care facilities which would make their community a more desirable place to live. Investments in health care are truly collective goods because the interests of all villagers are involved.

III. AN APPROACH TO SUPPORTING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH AN UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR INTERESTS

This study has led us to formulate a series of propositions for reorienting the organizational aspects of the NND. The reorientation

proposed is based on the application of nine principles which we think must be respected if the project is to have a greater developmental impact in the future.

A. Action Oriented Propositions

1. Support associations which group people on the basis of a concrete and real interest.
2. Encourage groups which have private interests as much as possible, unless these private interests clearly conflict with those of the broader public. This means working much more than in the past with groups which do not coincide with a politico-administrative unit of society.
3. Support groups by offering them training which is appropriate to promoting their specific interest. This training may be technical, organizational or both, but it will rarely be abstract.
4. Support group requests with material assistance if these groups are themselves willing to invest their time and their material resources. Such support may come from a variety of sources which the project will draw upon, including direct AID support, support through interested NGOs and support through the investment budget of the GON, when the Nigerien economy returns to a healthier position which will make such support possible.
5. Support the process of development by encouraging group to direct their requests for assistance to be directed through the appropriate institution of the Société de Développement.

6. Equally importantly, support the process by offering organizational training to the appropriate institutions of the Société de Développement, normally the CVD, in the course of developing and considering specific project proposals. The goal of CVD training will be to assist CVDs acquire the capacities which seem essential for their successful functioning-- the capacity to identify legitimate interests and to transmit them to the proper authority level, to associate people on the basis of their free choice and interest, to mobilize local resources more effectively and to broaden the basis of participation and representation to include diverse strata of the population i.e. women, socio-professional caste groups, etc.).
7. As a priority, work with institutions of the Société de Développement which are ready to operate on the basis of these principles.
8. Work, as well, with institutions which are not ready to respect all of the principles, but which have specific interests which they are attempting to achieve. Use the opportunity to work with them as a chance to begin a process of training and discussion which may lead toward the later acceptance of these principles.
9. Where local-level institutions have no specific proposals to forward and do not seem to have clearly defined interest groups, undertake some preliminary organizational training which takes the form of self-study and self-evaluation of village problems and possibilities. These studies can even be conducted with the leadership of non-project personnel, but they must be essentially

village run. Only a small percentage of project resources can, however, be allocated for this purpose.

B. Applications to Specific Problems

1. Supporting Organizations for Rainfed Agriculture

If, given the unfavorable climatic conditions prevailing in this region, a segment of the population wishes to increase its investment in rainfed agriculture, every effort should be made to assist this effort. "Felt needs" in this area seem to center around local-level storage of grains and seeds to reduce the consequences of annual variations in price and supply. Furnishing farm "inputs" and seasonal credit interests a much smaller number of villagers, but may be connected to the design of a viable storage scheme.

An organization support strategy which would follow the principles outlined above would begin with discussions with cooperative officials and with members of the mutuels. If these discussions reveal that there is a real problem which villagers already perceive, discussions could turn to obstacles to the private sector's providing the needed services. These discussions will, no doubt, reveal perspectives and difficulties which must be considered if the decision is ultimately made to support local storage schemes. If the development action is to include the supply of farm "inputs" discussions should also focus on what the obstacles are to the provision of these well-known materials by local merchants.

Where interest is high in local storage facilities, the guiding principles of the scheme should be the broadest possible access to potential

users and involvement based only on voluntary adhesion. Villagers may be initially suspicious of any obligatory membership scheme since all of the villages studied have had earlier experience with the highly repressive colonial reserve granary program. It is highly unlikely, for example, that all "members" of a given GM will be interested in this type of activity or investment.

The next step would involve the identification of interests. Normally, it might be anticipated that villagers would solicit assistance with training, construction and, possibly, with the initial constitution of stocks. But the exact needs of those interested will become clear in the course of discussions. It is very likely that interested villagers will ask for training to help them manage the grain bank. Because of the high costs and time requirements, a general literacy course does not seem appropriate. If, however, the literacy and accounting capability is simply absent at the appropriate level of local society, it will be necessary to advise representatives of the interest group to send several individuals for a training session during the time that construction is underway. If several villages have expressed similar needs, this training can be conducted in groups. At the same time a separate session should be offered to members of the grain bank management committee.

Construction should normally be undertaken by the interested parties themselves. The project could offer model plans for efficient warehouses adapted to the Sahelian climate, based on the experiences of other projects and of organizations such as VITA (Volunteers in Technical Assistance). It is possible that, if the lack of a key tool or construction material poses an important obstacle to construction, its acquisition could be subsidized by the project.

The greatest problem is likely to be getting the funds to acquire the initial stock. It is here that a request for assistance from the rural development fund, or another source of financing such as IFAD, would be appropriate. Nonetheless, the decision as to what to request should come from the local participants who will establish an operational budget with the aid of a project trainer, if necessary. This budget should include the local contribution in cash as well as kind. The trainer should help the group establish some criteria for choosing a desirable ratio between internal resources and external aid. Local participants should be encouraged to develop a plan for replenishing the grain or seed bank and for fixing contributions to it in cash or kind. They could also decide at this time the broad outlines of their distribution policy and determine whether grain storage should be linked to other local development needs, such as the guarantee of short-term credit or a system of emergency aid for families severely affected by drought.

If villagers who are interested in investing in rainfed agriculture identify additional activities, they should consult with the members of other local-level groups, such as the Samarya or the CVD, to ascertain their interest in participating in the activity. It could turn out, for example, that a solution to the problem of guaranteeing seasonal agricultural loans could be found if potential borrowers voluntarily agreed to become members of the grain bank project as well. They could then establish an acceptable level of contribution to the grain bank at harvest time which would serve as a guarantee against loan payments contracted. In any event, decisions of this sort would necessarily be made by the interested parties themselves.

Once plans are drawn up and decisions are made concerning implementation, the group responsible for carrying out the activity should submit its plan to the CVD. In most instances, some members of the CVD would already be informed since it would not be surprising if leaders of the groups comprising the CVD, especially the GM, and, perhaps the Samarya had been contacted in advance to discuss aspects of the proposed activity. At this point it would be appropriate for a NDD trainer to work with members of the CVD helping them study the planned activity. The trainer would not only offer a brief orientation to planning but would also stress the principles which CVDs are supposed to follow. The trainer could also attempt to discuss the proposed activity and its implications more broadly with the village assembly. It is possible that such discussions might reveal that the needs of some interested villagers, women for example, have simply not been considered in the formulation of the activity. Villagers might engage themselves in a discussion of the implications of this fact without fear that they will be required to take specific actions dictated by authorities external to the village community.

The requirements in staff and resources of this organizational development approach will be discussed briefly below. It is clear, however, that, at the outset, this methodology seems to require a heavy commitment of trained staff. If, however, the projects which villagers carry out are beneficial, other groups will want to undertake them as well and will organize to do so. At this point staff requirements per activity will decline as models of successful local organizations will become widely known and replicated without much discussion.

2. Support to Irrigated Agriculture

There are particular problems associated with supporting irrigated agriculture since no organizations currently exist which group parties interested in the activity. Normally one might think that government-sponsored, off-season gardening activities would work with a village-level group. Evidence from this study seems to dispute this assumption. For example, one of the largest of these projects took place at Louma, a village of 4000 inhabitants. But only about 100 families were involved in the scheme. On the other hand, if off-season gardening is to fulfill its promise to increase the income and nutritional levels of villagers, and if it is to do so largely through local investment and management, a certain number of problems must be resolved:

-- How can villagers organize to invest in and to maintain fencing of the garden plots?

-- How can they organize to maintain wells, the means of drawing and lifting water, and the canals?

-- How can they manage the use of water?

-- How can they establish a system for marketing their production?

The CVD is not necessarily the ideal organization to resolve these questions. Leaders of the CVD do not necessarily represent the interests of those who want to garden. If the CVD is charged with determining who should receive training and who should benefit from externally funded assistance to production, these resources may not be allocated in ways which maximize efficiency and responsibility.

It is also possible that people who want to practice off-season irrigated cultivation do not reside in the same village. In this case an NDD organizer will have to work with those who are interested to see how they plan to organize their group and to mobilize the local resources required by external authorities as a condition for aid. This trainer can also act as a liaison between local groups and private suppliers of equipment (such as fencing or seed) which these groups require. If it turns out to be impossible to form a local association of gardeners, the NDD should not promote irrigated agriculture. The agricultural service should be encouraged to offer technical assistance to gardeners should its staff permit, but the Project (NDD) itself should avoid involvement with individual gardeners.

If, on the other hand, gardeners do agree to form a group, they should be encouraged to do so using any organization model of a production and investment group which they prefer. Often this will be a model which already exists for a different specific end. However it is organized, the NDD trainer will work with the group to help it identify interests and to develop an action plan. This plan should then be presented to the CVD or, if the group involves residents of several different villages, to the relevant CLD. Trainers will then use the same approach described above to engender a discussion of the CVD structure and of exclusions from benefits and participation.

3. Support to Craftsmen

At the moment, the production of crafts is poorly integrated into the development process in the area covered by the project. As we have seen, craftsmen are often already organized in groups but they are not always

disposed to work with external authorities. They are especially leery of becoming involved in economic obligations to the public sector.

The most serious problem, however, for supporting craft production is found at the level of village society where craftsmen are often viewed as socially inferior or marginal. Where this is the case, craft groups will be reluctant to have to make their requests for support through the CVD and CVDs may be reluctant to pass these requests on to the appropriate authorities or private sources of funding even if these requests are forthcoming. This problem is delicate and not easily resolved. At best NDD trainers can attempt to work with CVDs where this situation seems to obtain and to persuade them to examine the needs of these craftsmen, the possibilities offered for local economic growth by improving their production and the responsibility of CVDs to promote such growth. This will not be an easy task since external trainers cannot and should not attempt to change the behavior of CVDs directly, nor will they find it easy to precipitate this training process without a locally initiated request for support. Those requests may only be forthcoming following a period in which information about the possibilities for professional training becomes widespread and pressure is put on CVDs from within to investigate and benefit from the opportunities available.

Fortunately, the problems concerning the promoting of craft production are not always so formidable. In some villages, craftsmen are well integrated socially and may even play active roles in village institutions such as the GM, CVD or Samarya. Where this is the case, it should be possible to support craft production by eliciting the interests of group members for aid and then by communicating these requests through the CVD.

The aid requested will usually be in the form of socio-professional training which can be efficiently provided by training at the same time craftsmen from several villages who practice the same specialty, such as blacksmithing. If the group also wishes to request material assistance, it should follow the same procedure to determine its needs and the level of contribution it will make. It can then bring this proposition to the CVD which will determine whether to transmit it to a funding source. Investment funds can be accorded only to localized craft groups, despite the fact that some groups of craftsmen associate artisans from a number of villages. Some thought also should be given to adopting a policy of concentrating investments in craft production in a limited number of "modernized" workshops grouping workers who are already accustomed to working together, such as the Koné-Beri shop. This seems preferable to continuing the present policy of spreading out such investments to individual craftsmen or to very small groups of craftsmen in many villages. By concentrating resources it may be possible to create economically efficient production units and hence to rationalize investments while avoiding saturating the limited market. The possibility of having an important rural craft enterprise serving a fairly large area, which this strategy encourages, may even be so attractive that it will help overcome the social and political problems which craftsmen may normally expect to have in getting support from their CVDs.

4. Support to Trader Groups and Savings Groups

The possibilities of contributing to the rural commercial sector seem rather limited at the present time. This study was unable to identify large enough groups of merchants to benefit from a local organization approach and from group training opportunities. For the moment, the best approach seems

to be to offer limited assistance to the small commercial groups which exist by giving them the opportunity to send members to training programs in accounting and management designed for some of the other associations discussed above. We still know too little about savings associations to make firm recommendations. Given the general economic situation in Western Niger at present, however, there is little room for optimism. It is preferable to await the results of the Ohio State Rural Credit Study before drawing conclusions in this area. Perhaps the data from this study will enable planners to create a system of rural savings institutions, at least in important secondary centers such as Baleyara, Torodi and Kollo, which will be both more profitable and secure than the existing "tontines." Possibly such institutions can be undertaken by local organizations. The most important problem in the management of savings seems to be the security of deposits. Informal savings associations do not seem to have institutional ways of assuring this security and rely instead on personal relationships of confidence.

5. Support to Village Infra-structure Activities

Collective interests can perhaps best be served by dealing directly with the CVD--the base-level institution of the Société de Développement. It will be necessary to train members of CVDs in a great many villages if this institution is expected to function as an instrument of development. In most villages, however, some capacity already exists through the Samarya, however, to undertake actions in the public interest. The process of strengthening CVDs should thus begin by having NDD staff members and representatives of the local administration inform village chiefs of the types of assistance which CVDs can request for their villages if they follow the proper procedure. It could be anticipated that this step alone will

produce some reactions especially in well organized villages where social solidarity is strong. These villages are likely come up with lists of projects on their own and may even be capable of beginning some of them without external support. The goal of these initial projects, however, should be to strengthen local organizations, essentially through on-the-job training. NDD trainers should respond to these requests for support by engaging the CVDs in an analysis of initial and recurrent costs, as well as possible benefits, of their investment. Villagers should begin to understand better how to make simple plans, how to evaluate options and how to establish priorities between these options. CVDs should become capable of formulating a plan for financing the activity which includes a local contribution which is not restricted to labor or construction materials. Finally, CVDs should become aware of what kind of management approach will be suitable to accomplishing the job.

The initial efforts to develop CVDs through their experience with actual projects are likely to be difficult and time-consuming. They may well fall short of these ambitious, organizational objectives. Little by little, however, they will begin to approach these objectives as local people are trained to make informed decisions. During this period external authorities and trainers should avoid imposing projects. They should reject, however, any locally proposed activity which does not seem to be based on the genuine decision of a CVD unless external technical experts deem that it is vital and can be accomplished even without broad local support. Hopefully, the local organizational process will slowly move in the opposite direction-- that CVDs will come to see the value of encouraging the broadest possible local-level participation as they become more aware of the consequences of excluding certain strata of the population, such as women, from the planning and implementation process.

The strategy of developing local organizations in the course of specific activities should also condition the nature of training offered. Requests for any specialized training in literacy, calculation, management or specific professional skills, should flow from the decisions of CVDs as they find themselves confronted with difficulties in planning, managing and executing their own projects. No abstract training which is not tied to a project or concrete problem should be envisioned.

This approach to strengthening local organizations consciously puts a great deal of emphasis on the CVD as opposed to the GM and the cooperatives per se. Given the state of GMs at present, making cooperatives the privileged local partners for training and for the administration of credit runs the risk of intensifying already existing inequalities between the central villages (cooperative seats) and the surrounding communities. In addition, it would contribute very little to the development process since cooperatives for the most part do not possess any greater capacity for action than CVDs. The financial viability of cooperatives in acting as responsible partners must also be suspect since they are almost all hopelessly in debt with no possibility of getting out unless their earlier debts are cancelled. Only the kind of training mentioned above and the establishment of a local development process are likely to lead to an improvement in the credit worthiness of village-level groups.

6. Activities in the other Villages

The strategy for promoting village infra-structure outlined above implies an inequality in village development as better organized villages respond vigorously to opportunities and other villages lag behind. It might be anticipated that, if the results of the initial experiences with

more dynamic villages are successful, other less integrated or "progressive" communities will follow suit. But the costs of working with this second wave may be substantially higher since they may well require still greater levels of organizational training and support. A third category of villages which are badly divided and blocked from responding to the opportunities through their own internal political and social dynamics may be unable to benefit at all, at least in the short-term. This category may, unfortunately, also have to include villages which are far from communication routes.

The need to establish priorities for local organizational support is inevitable, given the extreme scarcity of resources available to undertake these activities. It may be possible, however, to envision a minimum program for a limited number of the villages in the third category involving only training. This program would help these villages conduct a self-study of their problems. The goal of these studies is two fold. First, they would help villagers understand their problems and the constraints which they face at present. Second, the process of conducting the study might serve to unblock the political process in the village and to activate the CVD. Even here, since these studies are difficult to conduct, they should be done only where villages have economic potential which could be developed should their CVDs begin to function.

Village self-studies should be seen as part of the NDD's long-term study program. They cannot be accomplished through rapid survey techniques and will undoubtedly have to draw on the interest and resources of the University, IRSH and non-governmental actors to be undertaken at all.

C. The Means Required

This approach to supporting local organizations will require that a greater percentage of total NDD resources be allocated to organizational development than was true in Phases I and II. The organizational support component should, in fact, become not only the most important aspect of the project conceptually, but in resource terms as well. In the context which prevails, this is the method which holds the greatest promise for assisting the people of the Niamey Department to make significant economic and social progress. Successful implementation of this approach will depend on three essential elements:

--The dynamism of certain groups in local society and their ability to respond to the possibilities for assistance even if they have not been subject to "consciousness" training (sensibilisation) before. For many of the villages and groups studied, the principal obstacle to development does not seem to be the "lack of consciousness" to which the Nigerien National Animation Service so often makes reference. Villagers will certainly not all react in the same manner to opportunities for assistance, nor will they react necessarily in ways desired by external planners. Overall, the response of villagers will depend mainly on two things-- the degree to which they can see their own interests involved and their perceptions of how beneficial the first efforts to work with local organizations have been.

-- field agents capable of carrying out this process of organizational support. For the most part the NDD lacks such agents at present. It will be necessary to train a number of trainers and to give them enough material support to enable them to accomplish their jobs. The methods which they must use are well known and have been used by a large number of non-

governmental organizations around the world. It might be desirable to invite one of these NGOs to participate in the training of the field agents and even to assist them in undertaking specific development activities while they are testing out the new methodology of organizational development they have been taught. For this to be practical the NGOs would have to accept the broad outline of this approach to supporting local organizations including the assumption that it is essential to work through CVDs and the structure of the Société de Développement. In our view, a minimum of two agents per arrondissement, trained according to the methods outlined here, will be required if the NDD is to be significantly reoriented in the directions proposed. The NDD should proceed with the recruitment of eight trainers as soon as it can find an organization, preferably an NGO with solid experience with community development methods, capable of training them. This NGO should also be engaged to continue their training by supervising them in the field in their the first village-level projects.

--- A willingness on the part of NDD officials and the Government of Niger to encourage a more decentralized style of decision making and project implementation. This third factor involves a reorientation of the project's own administrative structure and style which will involve allocating more resources for training and for the Local Organization Section of the NDD. It will also involve a tolerance for undertaking a range of activities which may not be viewed as classic by the Nigerien bureaucracy but which must become more common if the concept of micro-réalisations is to become a meaningful reality. Finally, it will involve developing and accepting measures of project outcomes based on the results obtained in "establishing a process" and not just in terms of increased production, income or quantities of equipment sold.

This reorientation process will not be easy. It will require that the NDD find some new partners who are truly competent to assist it-- not just technical services, but NGOs and researchers from IRSH and university communities as well.