PN-ABC-130

PT IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CASE STUDIES IN KENYA

A REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE RESEARCH

by

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Deliverable Report
Per Purchase Order #
For USAID, PPC/CDIE

May 20, 1988

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES & DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Progress Report on the Organizational Case Studies and Impact Assessment of PT Training in Kenya

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Introduction: The Nairobi Visit

The trip to Nairobi for a workshop on governance, constitutionalism, and the implementation capacity of third world countries to achieve development goals within the constraints of a civil society was gratifying and quite successful. As agreed I was able to set aside some time for discussions with IDS personnel about the PT impact assessment and organizational case studies being carried on under contract with USAID. I met with Dr. Riak on Monday (May 8th, 1988) to have a general and open discussion--a

kind of introductory session. We were each delighted to find that we had spent time at Stanford, he for his doctorate, I at the Center for Advanced Study. The acting director did his doctorate at Carleton in Ottawa and discovered we have a number of mutual friends. This set of common features in our backgrounds was a good way to start, and we agreed to meet for all day sessions on Thursday and Friday after my workshop was over. This was amended later to a half day on Friday.

Dr. Riak appeared at our University of Nairobi Senate conference room on Wednesday morning with a detailed agenda for meetings which I discussed briefly with him, agreed to the first session, but asked that we play it a little more by ear. He partially agreed, enough at least so that I felt free to lead the discussions in several directions that clearly needed work. The workshop broke up in the early afternoon, and I hied myself down to USAID to meet Derrick Singer and to hear his views on the Project. He very kindly let me run through all the files on the project including Kumar's most recent critique of the survey instrument. After a discussion of these materials and of his present impressions of the project, we agreed that I would return on Friday, just before departure, and use the Wang processor to summarize any agreements made about the project in writing.

After a rather late night on Wednesday preparing a seminar on "Contemporary Approaches to Organizational Theory" I spent all of Thursday plus Friday morning at IDS working with the actual research team and Dr Riak. At the end of our discussions Dr Riak and I joined the Director, Dr. Kinyanjui, to go over some of the methodological matters already agreed to and to discuss the organization and management of the project. The Director had been out of town and this was my first opportunity to speak with him about the project. As planned I then spent the latter part of Friday afternoon at USAID and briefed Mr Singer on the meetings as well as dashing off a brief summary of the agreements and suggestions that stemmed out of my visit. The document was written in some haste, and I apologize for its obvious lack of explanation as well as a dearth of any redeeming writing style.

I wish to thank the people at IDS who took off time to work with me, and to enter into quite frank discussions of method and theory relevent to the project. I am also grateful to them for their obvious willingness to incorporate suggestions about improvements in the design and execution of the project. In addition Derrick Singer has been extremely helpful in providing instant access into the project and has quite frankly discussed the ins and outs of the management problems involved. This gave me an invaluable start on what could have been, and to some extent was, a rather delicate assignment.

Discussions at IDS: May 12-13, 1988

(1) Theoretical

It is in no way a criticism of IDS that I was asked to present a series of seminars on organizational theory and qualitative methods. They expected that as a visiting 'expert' in these fields I should be eager to share my own experience with them, and then to discuss the relevence of my approaches to the project at hand. I saw, and still see nothing wrong with this as a starting point. However to keep the discussions at this level would have avoided any in-depth analysis of their own work and the approaches being taken. I therefore participated fully and indeed enjoyed the theory discussions during the first morning, and turned these towards the project in small fits and starts through the use of examples etc. that illustrated various points of my presentation. This allowed the more detailed analysis of their work to flow naturally from a scholarly exchange. I did not wish in any way to begin the visit by identifying it as an auditing exercise with IDS being the object of an accountability operation, and myself as the auditor. First off, this is not true--I was there to help--and secondly that kind of identity hardens and heightens the natural barriers inevitably present in such a situation, turning a visit and scholarly exchange into a negotiating session.

Without going into needless detail here, let me say that I summarized four approaches, (1) structure-functionalism, (2) systems analysis, (3) power-conflict (marxoid), and (4) evolutionary theory. Strengths and weakness of each were assayed, and then a political science doctoral candidate who is a senior member of the case studies component served as official discussant. Besides allowing us to move to the project in a rather abstract, non-evaluative and general way in this begining session, this approach opened up the differences between us, and most importantly the distinctions they see between themselves and USAID.

The sharpest distinction concerns the causal factors that may and may not be included in the analysis and write-up of the material. For a variety of reasons IDS sees external causes of performance variation as an important source of variance. They claim, quite rightly, that PT experience is in itself an outside influence on Kenyan development and must be conceptualized as such. Going further, they also feel that negative as well as positive outcomes of PT training ought to be included in the possible findings of the study. All over Africa the research climate and intellectual discussions have been peppered by controversy over the importance and scope of external versus internal sources of variance in development outcomes. Both sources are important and in recent years a shift is taking place towards internal causes as a focus of attention, research and theory. These differences flavored our

discussions, made them interesting, even passionate, but helped to clear the air so that IDS researchers could in a sense ventilate about how they see the interaction between their own theories and the project goals and methods.

In a very real sense this is what they mean, operationally, (for starters) by the contract calling for a "collaborative" effort. It is also clear that IDS researchers are in no way dogmatic dependency theorists. They quite sincerely accept the now common knowledge that that set of ideas was/is a cul de sac. However the notion that USAID serves US foreign policy interests, and that this fact of life could have deleterious impacts on the development of third world countries is a residue of that theory which still lingers as part of their world view and their theoretical lenses. And this residue informs their approach to this present project. It also means that they see USAID as having a more systems theoretical approach in which internal factors within the country itself are the most important causes of organizational performance. They accept this, but add features of their own as well.

It is, if you like, part of the culture of the research climate. And just as it is difficult to see culture in our own corporate business world, but this is now an ackowledged factor in economic life, so too the research cultures of both USAID and IDS, albeit mostly similar, are in some respects different and these

differences can mar communications between these contracting parties. What is needed is a clear recognition of common goals, and common standards for research, as well as sensitivity to the small but significant differences in outlook.

It is important to state quite forcefully, therefore, that such views need not necessarily bias or change the fundamental findings of good, empirical research. As a person who lived through the dependency theory period and squired a large gaggle of Ph.D.s in and out of research trips to Africa I have developed acceptable ways of dealing with such differences when they emerge. Any and all outcomes of such ideas that are empirically testable and measurable are legitimate. Thus, again after many examples, discussion of possible variables etc., I suggested and IDS (Riak and his research team) willingly agreed, that as long as a negative effect of PT training can be carefully stipulated, operationalized, and isolated as an outcome, it is scientifically acceptable. As interpretation, intuited meaning, or imposed explanation it is both suspect and methodologically unacceptable.

The team, and its leaders have agreed to this approach, and claim that their own US-based training gives them the stylistic tools to report on any such findings in 'value-free' or at least quite standard and widely accepted language.

The example we used was the hypothetical one that if after extensive US training a PT were to favor US methods, the purchase of US products etc. even when non-US methods or products were demonstrably as good or better eg Japanese electronics equipment, then this should be reported as a negative outcome. I noted that good US training should predispose a Trainee to maximize effectiveness and efficiency rather than bias his judgments in a pro-US direction.

There is every probability that this kind of research question, and data, and conclusion will not be included in the study. However, <u>it is a matter of principle and interpreted as a challenge to their competence that the IDS research team should be able to include such an approach in the study</u>.

I agree to this but used the opportunity to suggest that there is a very significant difference between competence and excellence and they, with their world-wide reputation must, as a matter of course, strive to achieve the latter. When asked to explain I noted that excellence involves a challenge to normally held ideas, including their own, by expanding methodology to fit real situations and not being enslaved by outdated training or simple-minded ideology. And to this maxim---they agree. Although somewhat overly concerned with this issue, once it was talked out, and agreements reached, it became something of a non-issue, except as an intellectual discourse at the very end of our discussions in

which we debated development theory in general. In effect the IDS researchers are afraid that by taking this USAID contract they have "sold out." To maintain pride and independence they therefore want assurances that research findings which they believe might be unacceptable 'to US interests' but which support their their own intellectual independence are not censored by the contracting agency. Once this point is cleared up, they are as traditional and competent a group of researchers as one can find anywhere.

(2) Methodological

Thursday afternoon (May 12, 1988) was spent going over methods and techniques in the project. Here I used a paper developed in Kathmandu for the HRC group. My notion here was simply to start a discussion of how this study was being done elsewhere, note that the two must be comparable and then to ask questions about their methods as we went through the paper. I promised to get it duplicated at USAID and sent to them ---which has been done. In fairly diplomatic terms I also made it clear that I was aware of Dr. Kumar's critique of the survey instrument. IDS's overall plan seems quite sensible. They will carry out the survey, after a pilot test, choose a smaller sample of people in the organizations for more intensive interviewing, and carry out intensive historical studies of the performance of each organization, its changing structure through time, and the projects intitiated and their outcomes. Data will be collected on PTs, non-PTs trained

elsewhere, and non-PTs with no foreign training. Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and utilized in the final write-up. All of this seems mete and proper, and I said so.

As far as the instrument is concerned, I agreed publically with Kumar's assessments, (a) that it was too long, (b) that some of it was rather vague and (c) possibly extraneous to the study. However since they are going to use this present instrument in a pilot test, I agreed that drastic revisions could await the construction of the final format. Here we had some 'frank' discussions about pilot testing, and scaling. I suggested that 5-point likert scales can often be collapsed after a pilot to a 3-point scale making administration much easier, and that they need not remain religiously attached to a scalar form simply because it is a text-book thing to do. I asked that they study Kumar's critique and make some changes, but that if they found they could not make up their minds they could do the final cutting and re-arranging after the pilot results are in.

I emphasized the point that the survey was a baseline set of data to be used to strengthen the major thrust of the work---the organizational case studies, the PT performance, and the comparative analysis across cases. Ie not an end in itself. They understand, and agree.

We disagree somewhat on the sampling frame. IDS wants to stratify the pilot in the same way as the the final sample. They feel they need to do this to obtain proper statistical results that point to the final results. I suggested that they try to represent as much known variance as possible in the pilot and use this empirical base to choose criteria for sampling stratification. Thus Dr. Riak says he will use "hunches" eg type of job in the organization to stratify the pilot sample. Such decisions are probably OK, but I also try to include as many kinds of stratification criteria as possible. For example, if duration of time elapsed since PT training turns out to be a very significant factor (observed by eye-balling the pilot results) then it may be necesary to use it in stratifying the sample. We discussed this thoroughly. Dr. Riak suggested I mention this difference in my report. This is in my view a minor difference and will not add or detract a great deal from the study. My anthropology background, however, leads me always to look for the most adequate descriptive materials. I am less concerned to carry out correlations on pilot data than simpler forms of descriptive percentages and a few major cross-tabs to test out, again, possible sources of variance that should be a basis for representative sampling. Obviously it is also important to look for items that need changing or eliminating, and the research team is well aware of this practice.

My 'bottom line' on sampling in African research is quite flexible. After years of trying things out I believe that our survey work in Africa catches important over-all features. But for refined relationships and interpretations it is so error-ridden for reasons of item construction and administration, that sampling errors are minor if decent sized samples are utilized. In my divorce research in Nigeria, I took two separate samples, not always as randomly chosen as required by the text-books---one for demographic and sociological data, the other for psychological data. (However, the respondants were screened on grounds of validity which I deemed more important). I repeated a number of basic sociological items within each survey, then tested the results to see if the two samples produced any differences in findings and major relationships--none were apparent. In other words, whatever errors were present in the data were not demonstrably due to sampling (see R. Cohen, in W. M. O'Barr, D. Spain, and M. Tessler, Survey Research in Africa: Its Application and Limits. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973).

Of more concern to me is the fact that the researchers are presently going to carry out case study research in more than one of the organizations chosen for inclusion. I believe that the depth of probe, and the validity of interpretation is a function of the familiarity of each researcher with "his" organization. In this sense the organizations, their history, development, and

performances are like a community that the researchers must come to know as intimately as possible. It is unlikely that the work will be improved by having each research team carry out more than one case study each, especially since this is not the case with the Nepal study. I have recommended that the IDS group think seriously about changing to the HRC strategy--ie one team per case study. In Nepal they also had people on the teams with experience in the organizations. In Kenya, with the exception of one person, an ex-District officer turned researcher who therefore knows the Public Administration Department, none of the workers has first hand experience in the organizations. The senior researchers see the merit in this approach and suggest they try to hire one person in the organization who would work with a non-organization researcher. I suggest a retiree because the inside person may have a loyalty bias. But the main point is to arrange that a single team, of at least two researchers work solely on one organization.

IDS claims this will require more money. I leave that point to those involved in the financial negotiations. The budgetted costs of interviewers is US $125 per month for 8 months, plus $12.50/day for expenses. At the very most this comes to another $12,000, which might be absorbed partly by IDS, partly by USAID i.e. $6000 each, which comes to less than 5% of present budget.

The research teams doing the actual interviewing are comparatively young compared to many of the senior personnel to be interviewed. Discussing this point with the Director and Dr. Riak, I have suggested that much better data will be obtained if they as more mature senior public officials interview the senior people within each organization themselves, and thus clear the way for their interview teams. This strategy will also give them invaluable on-site familiarity with the workings of each case study environment and provide the project with much richer material. Their own high status is more applicable to this kind of interviewing. I did not mention, but implied that they were, themselves the senior researchers, and when put in such a position myself, I always participate in the data collection to keep on top of the process and to obtain a "feel" for the data.

(3) Managerial Issues

Although it is somewhat outside my purvue, it is problably important to re-iterate what has by now become a concern to all of the IDS and USAID personnel involved in the study. The funding arrangements appear to be awkward and something of a bottle-neck. Getting moneys through the University is a tiresome process and often as not leaves final decisions in the hands of a clerk somewhere behind a desk. For the survey teams to work, for non-University organization or ex-organization people to be hired onto the project will produce delays right to the end of the work. Therefore, it may be advisable, albeit risky, to trust IDS with

some direct payments so they can have no excuses for not moving forward with dispatch. They now use the funding as the reason for the slow down in performance, and it is difficult to check them up on this excuse. If they were given some direct funding, with carefully stipulated accounting for funds, and time limits on the work, it might help to expedite things. I believe they are under pressure from the University to perform, and the University is under pressure from government to expand its work, especially teaching. If USAID and University regulations are followed, and if such funding arrangements are possible then I advise that we get on with it.

A brief comment on Derrick Singer is in order as well. Mr. Singer is a sensitive and experienced officer. He seems to be on top of this project but is dependent upon the work of the outside experts for some of his major reactions. The study is a technical one involving quite complicated research design strategies. It is unfair to expect Mr. Singer to make final judgments about the work given the press of his other duties. There is need therefore for a contact person to maintain channels of communication. I did this and believe it worked, although I would have preferred about two more days of all-day sessions to get at the nitty gritty details. Thus, for example, I know virtually nothing about the kinds of problems they will encounter in the organizations, whether these are comparable across cases, comparable to the Nepal cases, and so on. The project has to have a liason person who is trusted to know

something about Africa---they made this clear---and one who they believe respects their methodological competence and theoretical perspectives. This may sound like a self-serving statement, and USAID, PPC/CDIE must judge this for its objectivity. There are numerous choice points in the research agenda--how to gain access to the organizations, how to set up each research team, what to include and exclude and how to proceed with the more in-depth interviews? How to set up the analysis and present the data and conclusions. IDS knows full well how to do all this. They also --- just as the rest of us do---need to discuss all of these decisions and rationalize them convincingly. There is a need therefore for the IDS group to confer and to have a dialogue about the work with a colleaque who can be trusted not simply to criticize but to interact with them in a non-threatening advisory capacity.

The HRC group in Nepal were deeply committed to cooperation and even to compliance. The Kenyan IDS group are concerned that their competence, their ideas, their findings will not only be at a high standard of performance, but that these qualities be respected as the equal of any research done by non-Africans. For them all of this is incorporated into the term "collaborative work." And auditing their research is not the same thing as working with them. That is what made my own participation more relaxed, and hopefully fruitful. In the end, it is simply expecting too much to have Derrick Singer fill this role.

A final comment on this rather sensitive point is in order. The Nepal HRC team were able and well-trained, albeit not in the most prestigious US institutions. Their desire to please, rooted in their own cultural background, helped to make it easy and pleasant to work with them and to advise on proceedures. To a large extent the agreed upon recommendations have been carried out. I have a good deal of faith that this may also be true for IDS, with one proviso. The senior people in Nairobi have been trained at Harvard and Stanford respectively. They are aware and proud of the reputation of these institutions and therefore of the worthiness of their qualifications. This plus the widespread African elite reaction to outside interference, makes the Kenya situation more delicate, and less predictably receptive to outside advice even from the funding agency.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMEDATIONS

The USAID sponsored organizational case studies and PT impact assessment study in Kenya is under way. It is experiencing some problems getting off the ground, partly because it has difficulties freeing up funds, partly because there has been a great deal of emphasis on the creation of a survey instrument,

partly because IDS senses that theoretical differences between themselves and USAID may intervene to constrain their ability to carry out the work. Discussion with the IDS researchers has led to a number of points of advice and agreement.

(1) They may utilize any theoretical framework but must demonstrate all impact assessment findings on a strictly empirical basis.

(2) The instrument is to be pilot tested and revised in line with the suggestions of Dr. Kumar.

(3) Research teams will, if at all possible be assigned, one to a case study so that its history, development, performance, effectivedness, and efficiency as defined in the methods paper provided to HRC become part of the in-depth experience of the team and its work.

(4) If at all possible, people with previous experience of the organizations will also be used as researchers.

(5) The senior researchers on the project have agreed to carry out the interviewing of senior personnel when more detailed in-depth interviewing is to be carried out for the case studies.

(6) It may be advisable to shift some of the financing directly to IDS if this is feasible in order to speed up the work and to carefully monitor the accounting of such funds.

(7) I find the IDS research effort to be a competent one. They are working at a somewhat slower pace than might be expected, but there seems to be some rational excuse for the delay. This can be expected to improve---and must be expedited with direct funding is this is feasible

(8) There are grounds for setting up a liason cum advisory or colleagial relationship between IDS and PPC/CDIE. They need to be assured that the work is "collaborative" as they understand this term. USAID needs to be assured that the work will in fact be carried out and completed in a competent manner. This recommendation must be seen for what it is and can be interpreted as self-serving by the writer of this report. However, it is seriously put forward, because the problems of communication and of operationalizing the study are greater in Kenya than in Nepal.

Appendix

REPORT ON DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN PROFESSOR RONALD COHEN AND IDS IN NAIROBI, MAY 12-13 1988 RE ORGANIZATIONAL CASE STUDIES

BY PROFESSOR RONALD COHEN, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

This was written (in haste) in Nairobi and delivered to IDS

INTRODUCTION

The discussions on the organizational case studies held at IDS on May 12-13 with Professor Ronald Cohen have been fruitful and interesting. I wish to thank Derek Singer of USAID, and Dr Isaac Riak of IDS for their kind cooperation. Without this it would have been quite impossible to get through as much of the work as we did.

TIME TABLE

I was able to contact IDS on Monday, May while still involved in the workshop at the University of Nairobi. We agreed to meet of Thursday and Friday when my other tasks where completed. Mr Singer was most helpful in discussing the project on Wednesday afternoon and letting me see all of the recent correspondence.

CONTENT OF THE DISCUSSIONS

(1) I agree with Kumar's assessment of many of the shortcomings of the questionnaire, but disagree about the relevence these criticisms at this pilot phase of the work. It is not terribly worrisome to me that the pilot is rather long. In fact it is possibly a good idea to investigate what does and does not work. I have gone over a number of major parameters and they claim all are presently in the questionnaire. I will study this more closely and make a more fulsome critique in my final report.

On the other hand I did say that they should look carefully at likert type scales to see if they could be collapsed into 3-point scale measure. And that (as Kumar suggests) they omit questions that involve complex types of judgments. All of this can be worked out however when the results of the pilot are in hand.

(2) I discussed the sampling proceedures for the pilot and suggested that in my own work I look for as much variance as possible in order to choose criteria for representative sampling from the empirical results, rather than from "hunches" about major distinctions in the population or from economic theory etc.

We all agreed that parsimony in the final survey instrument was a desirable goal.

(3) The work of the interviewers has been gone into in detail and my paper on method written in Kathmandu has been copied to them. I am concerned that each organization does not have its own team and have advised that this proceedure be seriously considered, and IDS is doing so. However this may mean hiring some more field personnel and will have finance-management repercussions. It is in my view essential that each organization have its own research group tht treats the organization and its performance record through time as a problem. IDS has agreed and will try to reach this goal if it is feasible.

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(4) The senior researchers on the project--Director of IDS and Director of the project have agreed that it is important to the success of the research that they personally interview the major senior people in each organization. This will involve them in the field work and improve the quality of the data from the organizations.

(5) The extra people to be hired will be from the organizations being researched, or from those retired from the organization if possible. This will provide access to written documentation and contacts etc as well as personal experience with past performance records. Biases based of institutional loyalties can hopefully be countered by a non-organization member of the research team. The data quality will have to be closely monitored to check for biases, and the qualitative interviews must also be tailored to obtaining data on both PT and non-PT contributions to the organization's performance over time.

The above personnel changes may mean that the present financial arrangements will need some revisions. It would be wise if IDS could obtain use of funds and their dispensation in order to hire people outside the University without the red-tape that such hiring will occasion through the University bureaucracy. Accounting difficulties are not within the purvue of this report and must be overseen by USAID, Nairobi, in line with its own and USA Government rules and regulations as well as those of the University of Nairobi.

(6) A large amount of discussion has been given over to theoretical issues and their relevence to the project. While this will be discussed in greater detail in my final report, suffice it to say here that it is agreeable to all parties in the discussions that this research will consider 'external' as well as 'internal' sources of variance to be theoretically capable of explaining variant organizational performances through time. PT training itself is a form of external input into Kenya development. It is also possible that both negative and positive outcomes may result from PT training. As long as these potential outcomes are in the form of empirical findings it is perfectly acceptable to include them in the study. Thus if a PT returnee was prone to purchase only US-made products even if better and cheaper ones were available elswhere this could be construed as a negative bias inputted into development through PT training. However theoretically derived negantive or positive results must be labelled as such rather than as findings.

(7) I believe the IDS people are excellently trained and well-positioned to carry out this study. I look forward to reading the final report.