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READING

Study #5

Farm Management Unit / Study #5
University of Reading

Department of Agricultural Economics & Management
University of Reading

THE MANAGEMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Steve Wiggins

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The Management of Rural Development Projects in
Developing Countries

Steve Wiggins

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PREFACE

This paper explores some issues in the management of rural development projects in less-developed countries (LDC's). It aims to help establish a framework within which issues of management specific to rural development projects can be examined. To the best of my knowledge, no such framework has been devised, although the authors cited in this paper have contributed a number of useful building blocks. It is important to try and establish an analytical framework, lest in talking about project management we continue to make observations from different points of view, accumulating an indigestible mass of knowledge full of apparent contradictions. An appropriate framework should resolve some of the contradictions, and serve to order investigation, debate, and the formulation of policy.

This paper deals with rural "human development" projects, to use the World Bank's (1983) phrase. "Human development" here means all those projects intended to raise the welfare of rural people more or less directly. Included are education, health, community development, and smallholder agricultural production projects. Typically such projects are small-scale, either in total size, or in scale at the sub-unit of operations (EG a village) - a national effort to promote the adoption of an improved seed variety might be quite large in total, but at the village level would be small in terms of staff and resources. Human development projects are typically carried out by either non-governmental organisations or by governments. Here the emphasis is on government projects. The other major category of rural projects in LDC's is physical development, including projects such as large dams and tarmac roads. The distinction between human and physical development projects is useful: that different kinds of projects have different managerial needs is one emerging point of agreement both for development specialists and management scientists.

There is a regional bias in this study to the problems of management in Africa, and I draw heavily on my experience of Kenya. Africa's problems with development in general, and with its management in particular, are greater than those of other continents. Hence whilst Africa may merit the lion's share of attention, concentration on its problems may exaggerate the situation elsewhere in the Third World. Nonetheless the literature dealing with other areas suggests difficulties similar in type, if not in degree.

Some readers may find themselves wondering whether this paper should not go under the heading of "public administration" rather than management. I am not sure that there is a clear and useful difference between "administration" and "management". Strictly it can be argued that the latter is concerned more with policy, strategy, and decision-taking whilst the former limits itself to the more mundane everyday functioning of organisations. However in British usage it is frequently inferred that public bodies administer, private bodies manage. For example, senior civil servants who give policy advice to Ministers are proud to be part of the Administrative stream of the civil service, whilst junior employees in private companies who do routine tasks rejoice in titles like "assistant personnel manager". As far as rural development projects are concerned, I see no useful distinction between "administration" and

"management", given the tendency for all but the most junior employees to perform a wide range of tasks of varying difficulty. The term "management" will be used to encompass all that is normally understood by the two terms.

Before proceeding, two further points are in order. First, this paper does not pretend to elevate management to the position of the critical factor in rural development. No attempt is made to detract from the importance of technological, economic, social, and political factors. Neither do I believe that management is a purely exogeneous variable: I am well aware that management is rooted in political and sociological factors, amongst others. But just because management can logically be subsumed within established categories of social science, does not mean that it should be left to the tender mercies of pure political scientists, sociologists, or economists. With a few honourable exceptions they have neglected the managerial baby for long enough, not least of all in studies of development. Management has been the last topic to be examined in development. Given that no single social science is prepared to give management due attention - probably because its interdisciplinary nature makes it messy for most social scientists - management here will be treated as a separate object of study. Given that projects do have to be managed, that management quality varies no matter what the political situation, economic conditions, etc surrounding it, and that managerial quality can have a major effect on the outcome of projects, the study of project management as a separate topic seems a reasonable enterprise.

Second, some readers may ask, "why bother about management?", and might add, "if government were to withdraw from direct intervention in rural economies and societies, leaving the private sector and the market to provide whatever services are deemed necessary, then there would be no need for development specialists to concern themselves with management". There are logical objections to such an argument. To claim that privatisation will solve managerial problems is pure hypothesis or assertion. It is one of the objects of managerial studies to test such hypotheses. Hence making such claims logically justifies the pursuit of management science. Government intervention or not, much human activity requires organisation, which implies management and managers. Managers will manage whether they be small entrepreneurs or mandarin bureaucrats. Unless it is perversely assumed that study of the art and science of management cannot improve management, then what managers do merits attention. To reiterate, management is something done by people called managers: there is no less need for its study than for the study of any other human activity, especially when it directly affects our material welfare, a high level of which underwrites life as we know it. I hope these comments establish the validity of the exercise in hand.

I am indebted to Tony Giles, Tahir Rehman, and Doug Thornton for commenting on the first draft of this paper. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the commentators, the responsibility for errors and misinterpretations being mine alone. Thanks go to Mrs. Audrey Collins for her typing.

Reading
January 1985

1. INTRODUCTION

The last five years have seen a rising interest in the management of rural development, culminating in the adoption of management as the theme of the 1983 World Development Report (World Bank 1983). The current interest in management is nothing new. In the 1960's the Development Administration Movement arose, largely concerned to improve the quality of public administration in the newly-independent nations of sub-Saharan Africa. The Movement aimed to transfer western management techniques to African public administration by training of staff and by technical assistance. It also advocated reform of public administrations from the control orientation of bureaucracy to a more entrepreneurial style of management more fitted to the needs of rural development, a topic which will be taken up in more detail in this paper. Enthusiasm for the Movement fizzled out in the late 1960's as it became clear that the quality of development administration was little improved. It seems the critical failure was the lack of attention to the political and social context of African administration.¹ It had been assumed that techniques could be transferred without regard to context and the preconditions necessary to allow them to work. The reforms intended to accompany the training programmes either were not implemented or were half-hearted.

The 1970's saw the focus of interest in development move to agriculture and the rural areas, accompanied by strategies like integrated rural development and basic human needs.² Academics and policy-makers concentrated on the technical, economic, and social aspects of rural development, implementation and the problems of managing rural development efforts being seen as peripheral.³ If there was a problem with the local public administration the usual response was to bypass it by setting up a semi-autonomous project agency or unit, insulated from the malaise affecting the rest of the civil service. If skilled managers were not available locally, then expatriate personnel were recruited to fill the gaps. Faced by the complexity of the technical systems, economies, and societies for which public interventions were being planned, policy-makers could be excused for paying less attention to managerial considerations. They were under pressure to find ways of advancing rural development, then a relatively little understood field.

Recently there has been a growing sense of unease about the management of rural development, for a number of reasons. In many cases integrated rural development programmes administered by special agencies were never institutionalised within the local public service. As soon as donor funds and manpower were wound down or withdrawn, or when local political support for the programmes waned, the programmes were rejected by the regular ministries and allowed to die. In addition, the focus on the rural areas has shed light on the continuing low output of established government programmes like agricultural extension. At least a part of this low output can be attributed to administrative and managerial problems. Lastly there has been concern at the lack of popular response by the intended beneficiaries of rural development efforts, by the failure to enlist their help and to capture their imagination and resources for the tasks in hand. Again, some of the blame for this can be attributed to managerial style and procedure.⁴

This paper considers specifically the management of rural development projects, leaving aside some of the wider problems of public administration - although clearly these impinge directly and insistently on the management of public sector projects. Although carrying out development in the form of projects has attracted criticism (Morgan 1983), largely because projects can be difficult to institutionalise once they achieve their immediate goals, they do have great advantages in breaking down the development "mess" into manageable portions for which action programmes can be formulated and implemented rationally. That the rationalist approach has been grossly overdone for some rural development efforts is a question of degree rather than quality.⁵ Whatever the merits and or otherwise of projects, they "... have become the primary means for transferring financial resources for development from richer to poorer countries and the dominant arrangement for implementing high priority development policies in developing nations" (Rondinelli 1983b, p. 317).

As development specialists turn their attention to the management of development in general, and of projects in particular, management scientists are showing evermore interest in projects and in those projects which involve multiple groups of actors. Increasingly businesses in developed countries which depend on their ability to innovate and solve problems, and these include the "sunrise" industries based on the latest electronic technology, are adopting the project format and organising their staff into teams assigned to a specific task or project. When such tasks are large-scale, or highly visible to the public, or dependent to some degree on public funding, management has to take into consideration the interest of multiple groups of actors. Managing these projects is a frontier for management specialists (Morris 1982). For organisational experts too the world of projects involving multiple agencies and complex environments is a frontier (Smith et al. 1980).

There are no ready-made theories of rural development project management to be lifted from mainstream managerial studies. Instead we find an area littered with case studies, most being evaluation reports carried out for funding agencies, containing all kinds of statements regarding managerial success and failure. Whilst these can be valuable, they tend to be disembodied, unattached to a theoretical framework, which makes it difficult to assess their importance and their relationship to the managerial whole. Consequently, recommendations for better management tend to become lists of desiderata, difficult to put into practice because of their perfectionist overtones. Owing to the complexity of rural development problems, and the corresponding variety of managerial situations, attempts to combine such lists produce overlong lists, with contradictory recommendations. There is a pressing need to take the first steps towards building an analytical framework by producing codes and typologies to form the basis of the framework. Such simple initial processes of ordering data and drawing out generalisations is the task in hand.⁶

2. WHAT DO PROJECT MANAGERS DO?

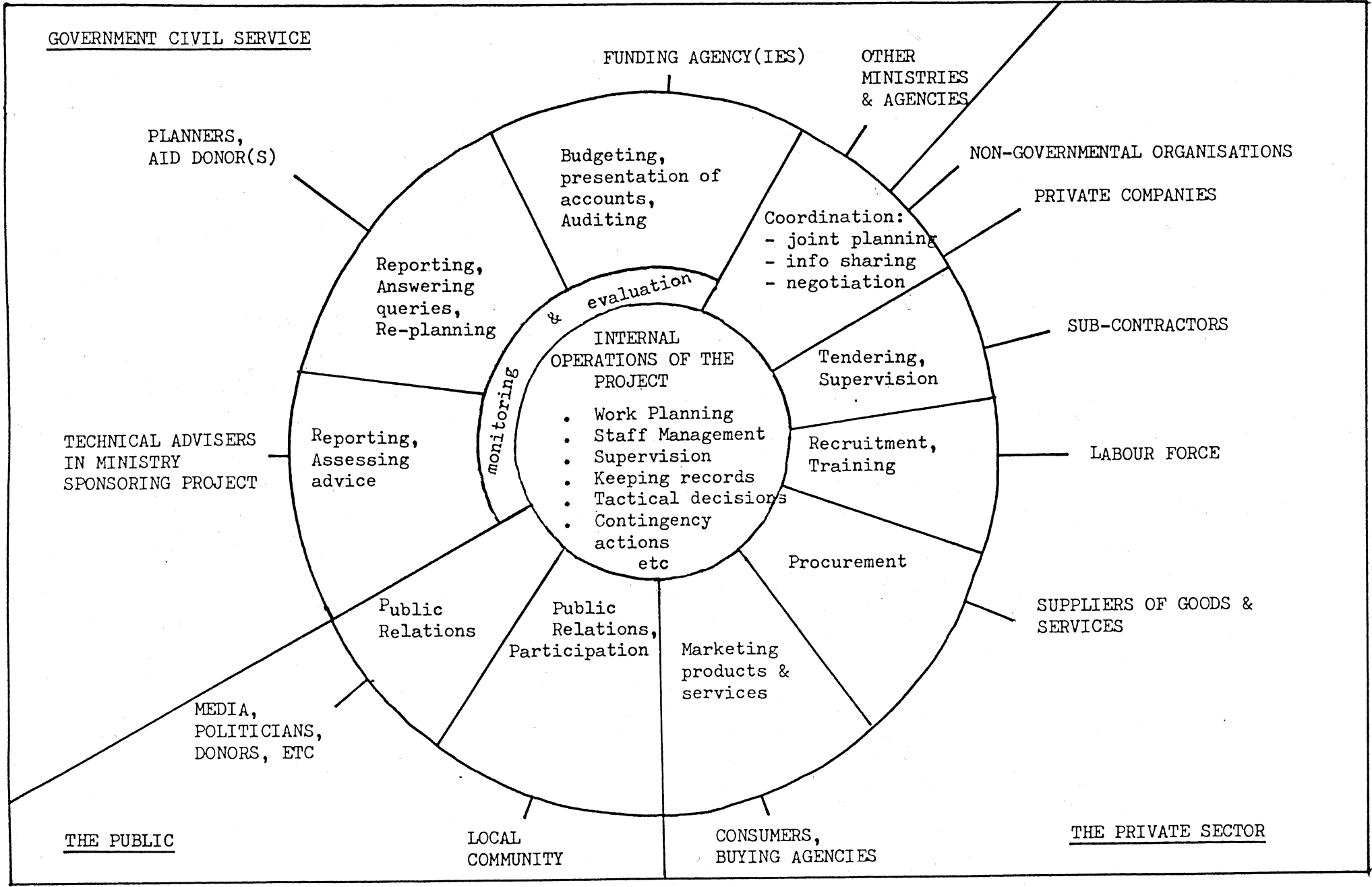
Before proceeding, it is worth looking at what the job of project management consists of. Figure 1 is a conceptualisation. The rectangle enclosing the diagram represents the project's human and institutional environment, divided into the governmental civil service, the private sector, and the general public. These are further diagggregated into the principle actors involved in each sector, many but not necessarily all of whom will be concerned with any given rural development project.

The project is drawn up as a circle. It consists of an inner circle representing the internal operations of the project, and an outer ring made up of those managerial functions which involve interaction with the project environment. The internal operations comprise those tasks under the direct control of the project manager. Most of these have been much examined in the management literature, and techniques, some highly sophisticated, have been devised to aid their accomplishment. In contrast, the outer ring involves interaction with bodies and actors not under managerial control. For some of these activities, like budgeting, tendering, and labour recruitment, there are well established principles and procedures, but for the most part these activities involve negotiations and bargaining where wit and judgement are at a premium.

Two points to notice here: first, project management includes a wide range of activities and demands a correspondingly broad range of skills. Effective managers may thus have to be jacks of all trades, whether or not they become masters of any. Second, the diagram has been drawn to highlight the outer ring activities, that is the project's interaction with its environment. This is because in most rural development projects in LDC's it is these activities which bulk overwhelmingly large for project management. It would be no exaggeration to guess that project managers spend 80 per cent of their time on such tasks.

The same points do not apply to all managers. A very different diagram might be drawn to illustrate the functions of, say, the factory manager of a shoemaking plant in the UK. These initial observations on the nature of the management of rural development projects introduce the major theme of this paper : the specificity of such management, a theme which will be explored in detail in the next part.

FIGURE 1 : THE PRINCIPAL TASKS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES



THE PROJECT ENVIRONMENT

3. CONTINGENCY AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT : THE INFLUENCE OF TASK AND ENVIRONMENT

Contingency theories of organisation and management argue that there is no single method of management applicable to all situations, but that successful management must be adapted to the context, or the contingencies, of management.⁸ Two major contingencies stand out as influencing the management of rural development projects in LDC's: the nature of the task in the hand; and the project environment.

3.1 Task

Projects, being defined as activities to achieve stated goals bounded in space and time, are in general regarded as the archetypal situation for "task culture" to be effective. "... The whole emphasis of the task culture is on getting the job done ... the culture seeks to bring together the appropriate resources, the right people at the right level of the organisation, and to let them get on with it" (Handy 1982, pp 181-182). Group work prevails, and creativity and flexibility count for more than standardisation and control.

So projects in themselves deserve a special form of management, yet there are great differences between different kinds of projects. For simplicity, projects can be divided by the nature of their tasks into two types: physical development, usually infrastructure projects involving much construction, for example dams, roads, ports; and human-orientated development projects, that is those concerned directly with people and their decisions, including health, education, and smallholder production projects. These two categories differ in a number of interrelated ways.

Physical projects have simple and specific goals, the range of the task is narrow, and much of the environment relevant to the project is under managerial control. For example, a bridge would have the objective of spanning a particular river. The whole project takes place in one location and is easily isolated from other activities: indeed so sharp is its definition that it can be seen by eye to be a separate entity. Relatively little that affects the building of the bridge is beyond the project manager's control, especially once labour has been recruited, materials have been delivered, and machinery is on site.

Human-orientated projects, on the other hand, often pursue multiple and nebulous goals - "increase local self-reliance" - and goals may even change as the process of development alters the perceptions and perceived needs of local communities. Correspondingly, the tasks in hand are wide-ranging and far-reaching, and involve multiple sub-sets of the local economy and society. Consequently a great many of the factors affecting project success are quite beyond the manager's control: at worst he or she may not even be conscious of all of them. A good example would be an integrated rural development programme for a particular area. Its objectives will be likely to cover various sectors of the economy and society, from increasing crop production to reducing child mortality. Not only are project activities likely to be dispersed over the region concerned, but also activities will be spread through a number of sectors and sub-sectors, such that conceptualisation of how project actions

are likely to affect the system intervened in, and how extraneous elements may affect the outcome, becomes a major intellectual effort.¹⁰ Even a very well endowed integrated rural development programme is unlikely to act upon more than a small fraction of the system, leaving much of the environment beyond project control to be influenced or perhaps merely appreciated. Typically such projects seek to change householder decisions about crop production, health practices, attitudes to the rest of the local community, etc. At best the project can influence them: rarely can management order or coerce them.

A question which arises here concerns the degree of differentiation of project management to task demands : should management be tailored to the needs of each individual project? or are there thresholds of adaptation beyond which there is little gain to further refinement, so that management might be tailored to a finite number of ideal types? The answer awaits further investigation.

3.2 Environment

We have seen how the amount of the environment under managerial control varies according to the type of task. Looking at the environment itself, perhaps the crucial feature of the environment is its dependability. At one extreme, in developed countries the human and institutional environment can be relied upon to perform more or less as expected. In part this stems from the stability and well-established nature of the institutions, and in part from their multiplicity so that if one small part breaks down another can be used. If the nearest builder's merchant is out of bags of concrete, no great matter for another supplier will have some and most likely the additional journey will be very short. At the other extreme, in the rural areas of LDC's the human environment is highly unreliable and uncertain. Crisis and contingency rule the day. Every manager has to accept that problems beyond his or her control will continually impinge upon project activities.

It can now readily be seen that for managerial purposes there is a world of difference between, say, on the one hand constructing a motorway in the UK, and on the other carrying out an agricultural extension programme in rural Kenya. Although both are projects, the demands made on management will be quite different.

For the sake of completeness, the picture can be complicated by noting that time - or better said, the life-cycle stage of the project - affects both the task and the environment.

3.3 The influence of time

Morris (1982, p. 155) comments "... projects are highly distinctive. They are extremely goal-oriented, temporary, and in constant change, and they follow a life-cycle of change segments that involves progressing through markedly different phases of work." He divides the project cycle into four phases: feasibility; planning and design; production; and start-up and turnover.

Morris differentiates management skills by three levels: institutional; strategic; tactical.¹¹ Institutional management, the highest level, relates the organisation to the outside world. It is the world of senior managers negotiating finance, lobbying government, reacting to public concern, etc. At the lowest level, tactical management oversees the everyday running of the organisation, operating the systems or procedures which govern the enterprise. In between, strategic management coordinates operations and translates high level decisions into operational targets and procedures for tactical management to follow. These different levels of management call for quite different skills. Mechanistic skills and technique will suffice for most tactical management and much strategic management. The institutional level, however, needs to employ judgemental, negotiating, and political skills. Rationalistic approaches to problems may founder because "Different people have different value systems and hence come surprisingly different rational decisions about, for example, the merits of projects such as nuclear power stations, airports, highways, or missile silos" (Morris 1982, p. 160).

These different levels of management assume importance in different phases of the project cycle. The initial phase will see much attention by institutional management; and production can be left mainly to tactical management. It is not just different personnel who may be concerned, rather it is the nature of the task and its demands on skills, organisation, and operating procedures which change between phases.

Such changes have different implications for different projects. For example, consider the antithesis of a human-orientated rural development project, the construction of a new petrochemical plant by a large corporation. The different phases are likely to be sharply differentiated in task, and the various levels of management are likely to be handled by different persons, perhaps belonging to separate units within the corporation. In this case the main overall challenge will be to integrate the various actors and departments to ensure a smooth and coordinated effort. At the other extreme, imagine community development with a field level facilitator working at village level. Chances are that the different phases will be less well defined in as much as planning and implementation may be an incremental and iterative process. Moreover it is likely that the facilitator will have to employ the gamut of managerial skills at all levels according to the demands of the particular task in hand which may vary from book-keeping and instructing a gang of casual labourers on the one hand, to bargaining for bulk discounts with a trader and lobbying for funds from a visiting aid mission on the other. Integration in this case will be automatic unless the facilitator is schizophrenic. The key to success here will be his or her ability to employ different managerial skills and styles appropriate to different circumstances.

Most rural development projects overseas require managers to have great flexibility in this way. To be able to make such adjustments is a considerable challenge to the individual involved. A leader of a rural development team who cannot see that different managerial styles and operating procedures must apply to different tasks will be lost and frustrated.¹²

The passage of time affects the environment, though to a lesser extent. Successful projects should bring more of their environment under their control and influence as time passes. For example, the manager of the newly established extension project may have a thin time negotiating with farmer groups and private suppliers of inputs at the start when the project confronts scepticism with little but good intentions. Two years later, if the extension effort is valued, the manager may find the project so trusted that negotiations run as smoothly as though he or she were issuing orders.

3.4 Implications for project management

Drawing out the main points from the preceding discussion, it can be noted that for rural development projects in LDC's:

i) many of the ingredients of successful management differ from those required for physical development projects in developed countries, and are even more alien to those used in industrial management;

ii) the nature of the task in hand is often ill-defined and wide-ranging. The project environment bulks large for the manager, and that environment is unreliable and uncertain;

iii) consequently, managers need to be flexible and adaptable, able to handle ambiguity, and have to possess a wide range of skills;

iv) in particular, managers have to possess high-level skills of institutional management, that is they need skills in public relations, bargaining, and negotiation; and

v) because the important skills of institutional management are not easily reduced to technique, wit and judgement count for much, and these are only developed through experience¹³ tempered by awareness of what is important in a given situation.

The next section adds to the description of the rural development task and its peculiar demands on management.

4. A COMPLICATION: THE INHERENT BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLE TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Matching projects to organisations

Korten (1980) sees projects as intervening within a rural development system. Successful interventions achieve high levels of correspondence, or fit, with both the beneficiary community and the sponsoring organisation. Figure 2 models these fits, producing three nexi: project-people; people-organisation; and project-organisation. The first of these is familiar being the major concern of project planners and designers. The people-organisation nexus is one that has been receiving increasing attention over the last few years: it is the field of local community participation about which there is a burgeoning literature.¹⁴ Although closely related to the interest of this paper, it will be set aside to concentrate on the third, and perhaps least explored nexus, that connecting the project to its sponsor organisation.

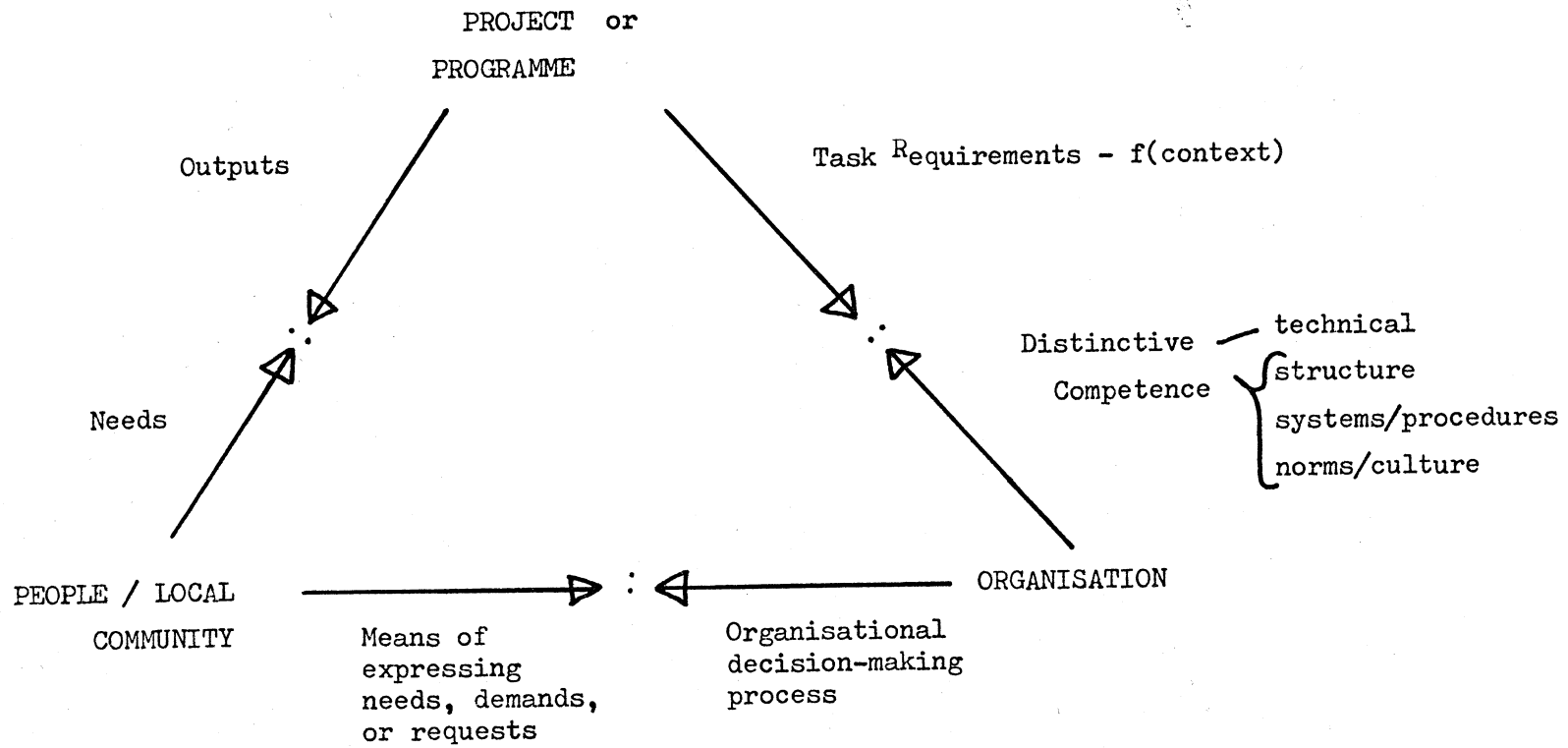
The requirement of fit in this case is that the task requirements of the project match the distinctive competence of the organisation. The technical dimension of this is easy to see; if the project concerns a water supply scheme, the sponsoring organisation has to have engineering skills relevant to water supply. However there are other human and cultural dimensions to the requirement of fit.

4.2 Task requirements

Looking first at the task requirements of rural development in general, what are the identifying characteristics of the context?

- i) Goals are often not specific, single, and unchanging. Instead projects may pursue a range of objectives at the same time, some of which may be ill-defined and nebulous, such as "raise the degree of self-reliance in the community" or "improve social welfare". Moreover goals may change during the project as staff or the beneficiary community gain new insights into the problems and opportunities afforded by their environment.
- ii) The project environment, both physical and human/institutional, changes unpredictably. Given that many rural development activities are based on natural resources subject to the vagaries of climate, some of the unpredictability may never be eliminated. Contingency therefore bulks large: and almost nothing beyond the immediate control of the project manager can be relied upon.
- iii) For some rural development efforts, there may be a need to create a demand for the services being established.¹⁵ Agricultural extension advice and family planning services are good examples. Hence the managerial task includes a marketing element.
- iv) Most rural projects need to mobilise local resources for the achievement of project objectives. These resources include: material - self-help labour, funds, contributions in kind; local knowledge and skills; and organisational capacity which can be harnessed to manage services once they have been established.

FIGURE 2: THE REQUIREMENTS OF FIT



- v) Rural populations are scattered over large areas where communications are poor. Most projects thus have to operate over a large area, making coordination and supervision difficult.
- vi) In dealing with the local population projects confront a plethora of decision makers. Even a small agricultural extension project will cover an area with several thousand farmers who probably will not be formally - and perhaps not informally - organised and who take production decisions independently.
- vii) Rural development projects frequently promote technologies which are either not proven or else which have been proven in some similar but not identical environment. This latter applies to natural resources based projects which because of the endless variation in local conditions are location specific. Most projects therefore have an experimental element to them.

These task requirements bear managerial implications. Good project management should be able:

- to react to change and contingency, it must be flexible;
- to experiment, monitor the results, learn the lessons, and make any adjustments required;
- to adapt its technical message and its mode of operation to local circumstances, such adaptations being village-specific if necessary;
- to operate over large areas despite poor communications, where close supervision of staff is impossible;
- to motivate and gain the commitment of local communities to the project. This will largely be a function of the project's success in meeting other requirements, but also includes some ability in public relations; and
- to negotiate and coordinate with other agencies operating in the project area in pursuit of wide-ranging and diverse goals.

4.3 Distinctive competence

This stands in stark contrast to the distinctive competence of public agencies in LDC's. The nature of LDC bureaucracies is in debate, differences of opinion being voiced over the degree to which the exterior form of public organisations reflects their internal substance. To clarify, let me simplify by identifying three tendencies in LDC bureaucracies.

i) Role culture

Historically many LDC's, especially those under colonial rule in the early part of the 20th century, have inherited a replica of the bureaucracies of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, etc. which evolved during the 19th century to deal with certain tasks in their local, in this case metropolitan, setting. European Governments in the last century shared a distaste for involvement in all but clearly essential public functions like defence and public order.¹⁶ They had little to do with directly productive activities or with innovative and problem-solving tasks. Hence the range of their activities was limited and tended to consist of control functions: routine, programmable exercises like tax collection, policing, and supervision of education. The setting for public administration was one of a relatively predictable human environment, but above all what Hyden (1983) calls a "nature artificielle". That is, there was acceptance of the primacy of scientific and rationalist norms as the basis for debate and action, these norms having been created by artifice to serve the interest of communal progress under capitalism. A concomitant of these norms was that individual and family loyalties were suppressed in the public realm, being replaced by an impersonal nation where multiple interdependency between individuals was underwritten by mutual acceptance of such norms. "Institutionalised suspicion" (Hyden 1983) in which public bodies had to account to political authorities like Parliament, and limited companies had to account to their shareholders, helped ensure public confidence in the national systems created.

Two consequences are important for this argument. First, the task set undertaken by the metropolitan bureaucracies was such as to infuse the organisations with a "role culture"¹⁷, where specialisation by functions exists, where the orientation is to control, standardisation, and efficiency, and where decisions are made by precedent in a pervasive atmosphere of caution. Most of these traits can be seen in the procedures established to deal with staff, finance, and information. Second, these organisations were set up to deal with a social milieu in which science and rationality were accepted as working concepts, the interests of the individual were subordinated to those of the organisation, and in which the environment of work tasks was reasonably stable and predictable.

Role culture is the external form of LDC bureaucracies.¹⁸ It shows up in the division of government civil services by functional categories, in the strict hierarchy maintained, and to an extent in the high degree of centralisation of decision-making. It is at its most pervasive in the procedures adopted. For example, staff selection for civil services in English-speaking Africa is rigorously impersonal. Policies for pay are standardised and promotion is by seniority above other criteria. In finance, strict annual budgets are the rule, with complicated and restrictive procedures used for disbursement and procurement. The aim is not so much to ensure that funds are well-spent as to prevent them being mis-spent: the two are not necessarily synonymous. Flows of information are meant to follow the lines of command, with little lateral communication. Almost all messages are expected to be written, no matter how trivial the message nor how time-consuming it may be to do so. Overall,

civil service rules place a premium on caution, for whilst an officer can be disciplined for making mistakes, it is rare to indict staff for failing to take the right action. It follows that the organisation is unwilling to admit mistakes, and proceeds as though it were possible to eliminate error.

ii) Power culture

Although the metropolitan bureaucracies were essentially role cultures, many expatriate colonial administrators, confronted by the very different task requirements encountered in rural areas and plunged into an environment radically different to that of the metropolis, adopted a different organisational model - power culture. Moris (1973) calls this a "hub-and-wheel" pattern of management. The manager, perhaps a District Commissioner or a District Agricultural Officer, stands in the middle of a circle surrounded by subordinate staff to each of whom he or she dispenses orders. All decisions are taken at the centre of the wheel, all problems are resolved there, and all operational planning and intelligence reside there. The subordinates merely have to execute their latest set of orders. Such a system can work well provided the central figure is able and energetic, and can be very flexible in responding to problems and opportunities. It can function with low-grade subordinates. It requires no sophisticated systems for information flow, nor for financial control - the person at the centre can handle all disbursement. This way of doing things was admirably suited to colonial Africa where most endeavours were propelled by a very few trained personnel assisted by poorly educated local staff, where the scale of rural development was limited, and where the environment was monumentally unreliable, and even less predictable.

On the debit side, the hub and wheel can be highly personalistic, does little to promote motivation or learning amongst subordinates, organisational intelligence develops literally in the person of the central manager, is not institutionalised, and critically only functions adequately as long as the magnitude of the tasks and the number of staff supervised are within the span of one person's capabilities. For the colonial District Commissioner (DC) in anglophone Africa the system made sense: he had relatively few staff and a small budget, it was possible to keep control of almost all the administration was doing in a District. For the modern DC the situation may be quite different. Government may have over 50 separate development projects on-going in the District and have two dozen or more District-level Heads of Department. Any attempt to proceed by the hub and wheel model breaks down in undersupervision, arbitrary interventions by the chief, and staff demoralisation.

Despite the changing context of public sector action for rural development, power culture survives, most vigorously at District level, with all its inherent problems, because:

- today's senior officers grew up with the system in colonial times and have no other model to imitate;
- the working environment remains very uncertain and power culture gives managers the ability to act decisively - even if only spasmodically; and
- although the quality of staff has improved dramatically at the District level and below there are still yawning gaps between the knowledge and skills of the senior and junior staff.

iii) Informalism

In the opinion of Deria (1981), Heaver (1982), Moris (1977), and most assertively Hyden (1983), the single most important trait determining the operation of LDC bureaucracies is "informalism". This is the failure of bureaucratic institutions to gain the loyalty of their staff to their norms. Instead the staff remain subject to pervasive pressure from outside of the organisation to ignore such norms and to pursue alternative goals.

Hyden sees the main pressure originating from the "economy of affection", that pre-capitalist labyrinth of connections between people based on kin-and kith-ship which links largely independent producers. Such links are not designed to increase overall production, rather they exist to reduce risks in production, most pre-capitalist economies being marginal and vulnerable to natural calamities, and to provide social welfare to the unfortunate. Essentially the networks redistribute assets and resources from the wealthy to the poor, in return for social prestige and the expectancy of similar treatment in the future should the wealthy in turn suffer loss. Such networks militate against accumulation and investment, for any personal gain is expected to be shared with the wider community. But by limiting the possibility for accumulation, either by individuals or by groups, it acts against investment in the kind of technology in which people collaborate to produce more overall than they would through the sum of their individual efforts. That is, it acts against the mainspring of capitalist or socialist productivity.

Thanks to the influence of the economy of affection in Africa, most civil servants are subject to pressures to divert public resources to the benefit of their kinfolk, clan, and tribe. The linkage may be direct, resulting in favouritism, graft, nepotism, and corruption, or it may be indirect. Hyden argues that African politics at national level is indebted to clan or tribal politics, the political manifestation of the economy of affection. Hence the political masters of government organisations are obliged to direct government efforts to the benefit of their clansmen and women. Civil servants have to follow these pressures if they are to stay in their jobs. In some countries the difference between the politician and the public servant has become blurred, thanks both to politicians being awarded prestigious public sector jobs and to civil servants using their positions as bases of power from which to launch political careers.

A parallel feature of informalism is that just as the economic morality of the economy of affection rivals that of emergent capitalism, so behavioural norms which accept neither the subordination of the individual to the organisation nor the imperative of objective rationality as the basis for organised action rival those which do. Whether this is the cause or the consequence of the influence of the economic morality is a separate argument. Suffice it to say here that the individual is not yet shackled to these norms. Thus at any moment the procedures established by the bureaucratic organisation are likely to be ignored by individual staff members to whose interest they run counter and for whom compliance would, from a personal point of view, be irrational. Repeated violations of such procedures cripple the bureaucracy: it ceases to have whatever (perhaps limited) effectiveness it might be capable of and degenerates into chaos and inefficiency.

Heaver (1982) observes that where unofficial goals rank as high for civil servants as official goals, alternative procedures are used to effect the most salient goals in any given moment. These consist mainly of personal networks developed both within and between agencies by which actions can be expedited as personal favours. The use of these networks can produce dramatic results in the short run and for simple, concrete tasks.²⁰ Government agencies can be galvanised into extraordinary efforts to meet pressing goals. Anyone who has seen the performance of District staff faced by the knowledge of an imminent Presidential visit to the District knows how the organisation can work. Suddenly the apparently torpid, idle, and negligent become work slaves to whatever refurbishment, decoration, tidying, and embellishment is deemed necessary to impress the visitor.

Correspondingly, matters which have low priority and/or which conflict with more important but informal objectives can be forced through the gamut of bureaucratic procedures, their consequent delay and probable abandonment being blamed upon "red tape".

Where informalism bulks large, matters need to be kept unclear, secret, or obscure. Informal goals cannot be set overtly, and the organisation cannot be seen to be pursuing them too obviously. Moreover informal goals are set by individuals depending on their political power, both formal (as politicians) and informal (bureaucrats who can work the system). Such power shifts frequently, so that real priorities of the organisation can change rapidly. Senior officers thus become highly attuned to political nuances. They must be prepared to change their actions quickly and to change course without it being too visible. Consequently not only must officers sometimes disguise the thrust of their efforts, but they also need to tread cautiously to avoid being caught off balance as power shifts.

In a similar, but more general vein, Howell (1978) notes that LDC bureaucracies operate in an unstable political environment characterised by: policies and priorities fluctuating in accordance with shifts in the balance of power; political interference in the civil service; and frequent experimentation in the form of organisations - departmental responsibilities reallocated, new agencies established and disbanded, etc. These are manifestations of different aspects of informalism. Their overall effect is to make officers cautious in their actions.

The combination of these three trends - role culture, power culture, and informalism - produces a heady cocktail. Moris (1977) describes a series of characteristic problems of African bureaucracies. He makes no attempt to draw out the different threads. Table 1 lists the features and tries to relate them to the three factors discussed above.

Table 1 CHARACTERISTIC PROBLEMS OF A STEREOTYPE AFRICAN ADMINISTRATION

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Symtomatic of</u>
Decision-making highly-centralised: small coterie at the top make almost all decisions	Role, Power
Military line of command, communication down the line with little feedback	Role, Power
Organisation does not learn from mistakes, no institutionalised intelligence	Power
Weak on complex task beyond the span of one person	Power
Flexible attitudes to schedules and plans: the latter not seen as binding	Informalism
Tied resources often hi-jacked to different tasks: cannot be relied upon	Informalism
Poor maintenance of resources leads to high operating costs of equipment and facilities	informalism
Marked ambivalence shown towards technical matters, professional standards, and even to the legal bases of action. Little appreciation of the need to adhere to such norms when administratively inconvenient	Informalism
Little distinction made between public and private goods leading to graft and corruption	Informalism
Personal relations are crucial: officers in the hierarchy are intensely politicised with patron-client relations abounding	Informalism
Hierarchy used to reinforce status distinctions: open disagreements not tolerated even if about technical matters	Informalism, Power
Disciplinary procedures barely operative, jobs hyper-secure, transfers used to shift disciplinary cases around	Informalism
Lowest level officers are unsupervised, given little attention, and suffer from low morale: consequently often have a low output	Power

After Moris (1977, pp 78-80)

The way in which these three tendencies mesh together will vary from country to country and from department to department. The extent to which informalism pervades organisations is, as will be seen later, an important issue in any specific case. For the moment however it is sufficient to note that LDC bureaucracies are hybrid creatures which display various characteristics in operation, some of which are contradictory.

4.4 The consequent mis-match

What is certain is that the distinctive competence of typical LDC administrations does not match the task requirements of rural development. Most discordant are those traces of role culture, which is antithetical to project management in uncertain environments. Power culture has the potential to fit well with the demands, although the problems of staff supervision, learning, and motivation augur badly when implementing a project over a large area where staff are for the most part invisible.²¹ Informalism is a way of getting things done, but the disorder and politicisation of actions propelled by it scarcely makes it suitable for rural development.

One further element of mis-match not dealt with so far is the "blueprinting" model of policy-making prevalent world-wide and which has infused LDC agencies as it has infused all others. Blueprinting is the belief that all plans can be thought through from initiation to outcome in advance and the best, or optimum, plan selected. It assumes that the system intervened in is well enough understood for the effect of interventions to be predicted accurately. Faith in blueprinting, derived from man's successes in the natural sciences, has been transferred to social systems. It has raised planning to an exalted position and by implication demoted implementation. Carrying out plans has been seen as low-grade work to be left to lesser staff to attend to. Clearly the assumption made is erroneous: even in the developed world we have little enough idea of how economy and society function, let alone in LDC's where so much less study has been carried out. Blueprinting has come under severe attack of late, see Korten (1980), Moris (1981, Chap 2), Rondinelli (1982, 1983a), and Johnston and Clark (1982, Chap 1). Attempts to solve rural development problems by pre-planning alone are doomed to failure. Beliefs which play down the need for adaptation and replanning during implementation run counter to the interests of rural development project management.

In conclusion then, public organisations in LDC's are not well suited to carrying out rural development projects. It is this mis-match between the task requirements and distinctive competence which ensures that implementation is so often so bad, and that managerial problems appear so intractable. This is not to argue that LDC bureaucracies cannot, or should not, implement such projects. Rather it is to note the difficulties inherent in their attempting to do so. In the next section, some responses and suggestions for improving performance and for getting a better fit are described.

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This section reviews some suggestions, most of which have been made recently, although the ideas may not be new, for improving rural development administration in general. Most of them have a direct bearing on project management. Improvements²² can be grouped under three headings: changes in procedures or systems²²; structural changes; and changes in the character of development organisations - ranked in order from the easiest to the most radical measures.

5.1 Changes in procedures: making bureaucracies work

5.1.1 Staff Management

Staff management is a glaring area of inefficiency, rapidly visible to most observers. Low morale and dissatisfaction, especially amongst lower grade staff are readily apparent. To ease these, there are frequent calls for improving pay and conditions of service, and for making promotion the reward for good rather than for long service. Heaver (1982) calls these "intrinsic" incentives for improved performance. There are a number of problems here. To begin with, most LDC's could not afford to raise pay. Moreover, it is not clear that field staff are underpaid or that more money or perquisites would raise their productivity. More likely it is the higher grades of LDC civil services which are paid too little compared to their peers in the private sector. Significantly, a 1982 report by the Kenyan Government noted that the government service was overstaffed in the lower grades and understaffed in middle and senior positions: the likely outcome if higher grade wages were too low and lower grade wages were adequate.²³ Moreover some schools of thought in staff management would discount the value of pay and benefits in raising motivation, saying that they need only reach a level of removing dissatisfaction, instead stressing the importance of intrinsic rewards from work in the form of achievement, peer group recognition, and self-fulfillment as spurs to greater effort.²⁴

Promotion can be used as an alternative reward to pay, and has the advantage of apparently being costless. However if promotions are to be given frequently enough to motivate staff, and studies suggest that recognition of good performance has to be made at least every two years²⁵, the staff hierarchy may become distorted with "too many chiefs and not enough Indians". Promotion on the basis of past performance rather than future potential in a higher grade brings into play the "Peter principle" by which staff are promoted to their level of incompetence.²⁶ That is, as long as someone performs a job adequately they will be elevated in due course irrespective of their capacity to handle the next highest grade of work.

Others have looked to other ways of raising motivation. Better supervision and job enrichment are two methods of doing so. For example, the much-vaunted Training and Visit (T & V) system of agricultural extension aims to improve the supervision of field workers and to enrich their job, as well as to improve the technical message of extension and to get feedback. It does so by bringing them into contact with senior officers every two weeks for briefing sessions concerned with the

technical content of their work, by encouraging them to report back on farmer reactions and problems, and by freeing²⁷ them from non-extension duties with which they are so often lumbered. If operated properly, T & V promises to restore to the extension agent a sense of professional pride in his work, renew his interest in his subject, and make him feel they are important to the work of the organisation. If this sounds too good to be true, perhaps it is: implementing T & V as proposed requires more than just a change in the technical operation of the local agriculture department, it requires accompanying changes in the character of the organisation.²⁸

Chambers (1974) reports on an experiment in Kenya in the early 1970's where a field staff management system was introduced. Field staff met regularly with their supervisors to set their work activities and targets for the coming period, and to review achievements in the previous period. Accompanying this were notebooks to be signed by farmers to show that the extension agent was carrying out his work as intended. The scheme combined closer supervision of staff with an enrichment of job by allowing the worker to discuss his plans and to set his own goals, considered to be powerful motivators by advocates of "management by objectives". Chambers notes that the scheme worked well whilst the expatriate devisers of the scheme were in the area, but was abandoned when they left because senior officers in the departments concerned saw it as an unnecessary hassle. As noted above, small changes in procedures may not be possible without wider reform!

5.1.2 Information flows

Setting clear objectives, perhaps made as specific as targets, can help to focus staff minds on the job in hand. However if these are to motivate, staff must either be able to see the results for themselves or else should have some kind of feedback on performance. This is the point at which staff procedures intersect with information flows. Heaver (1982) sees a series of improvements to information management which can act as "extrinsic" incentives for performance. He notes first of all that information is not a neutral phenomenon and that attempts to use the same information for both motivation and for control of operations is to court failure to achieve either purpose.²⁹ Hence he divides information flows and procedures into incentive and control streams.

Heaver recommends that projects should have monitoring systems operated on behalf of project management, reporting first, and perhaps only, to management. Such could be participative with members of the beneficiary community contributing to keep their interest high on the agenda and to keep overall project objectives in mind. This is a good example of information that should not be used for control. Few project managers would feel free to discuss project shortcomings with local community leaders if they knew that all local complaints made would find their way to their bosses.

In similar vein, other writers (Johnston and Clark 1982; Jiggins 1983; Esman and Montgomery 1980; Moris 1981) stress the role of accountability to local communities in controlling and motivating field staff. At present in most LDC's field staff are accountable only up the line to their supervisors, the public they serve being too ill-organised and inarticulate to make their feelings count. There is little doubt that

well-organised public groups can do much to keep public servants on their toes.³⁰ Ultimately the improvement of government services overall may depend on the public becoming organised to demand better services, argues Hyden (1983), although the process may be further in motion in Africa than he implies. In the more prosperous parts of rural Kenya where peasant smallholders growing coffee and tea have great aspirations for a better material future, numerous interest groups - usually self-help groups - have been formed to improve education, health, cattle-dipping, and many other rural services. Some of these are very effective in pressurising government servants to deliver the goods.³¹

Information flow for control of performance should be handled by semi-independent units, like planning and evaluation units. They can use information to control in two ways. First, they can collect data to show what is being achieved, to alert senior management and perhaps also outside donor agencies to deficiencies. At very least this can act as a check against the worst cases of abuse, negligence, and dereliction of duty. At most it gives senior officers an accurate record of progress in the field, which can then guide future policy and action. Second, planning can be used as pre-emptive control. By specifying objectives and carefully linking resources to activities, planning can make implementation transparent and make it more difficult for officers to pursue informal goals. Critically, clear plans enable control agents - those senior officers determined to resist outside pressures, donor agencies, and perhaps the public as well - to compare performance to intentions and to raise awkward questions. It is difficult to query the actions of public servants if you do not know what they are supposed to be doing. Heaven sees such controls as being an important part of the effort to combat and limit the influence of informalism.

Esman and Montgomery (1980) note that such data collection and control could eventually be done by "organised special publics".

5.1.3 Finance and procurement

Complaints about financial procedures, especially about annual budgets and restrictive procurement procedures, are common³², although prescriptions for improvement are less readily found. There is in most countries the greatest reluctance to see financial procedures relaxed from their present state of near maximum control, lest informalism degenerate to unbridled theft of national resources. Hence financial procedures are the last and strongest bastion of the virtues of impersonalised role culture. Treasury officials commonly see themselves as guardians of standards.

For some time the dissonance between budgeting and the planned objectives of organisations has been a commonplace, perhaps best described in Caiden and Wildavsky's 1974 study. Until recently however, planners and policy makers have ignored alarm calls, on the basis that implementation problems are teething problems, technical matters to be smoothed out later. The persistence of such teething pains has finally jolted such complacency, and a number of countries have begun to reform their budgetary systems to bring them closer to national objectives, and to tie allocations to individual departments more closely to their stated plans.³³ Nevertheless not many countries seem willing to tinker with their budget systems, and it seems that development project managers must live with the reality of annual budgets - with the concomitant worries of

annual submissions and justifications, unpredictable cuts and reallocation of funds between items, and the curse of annuality³⁴ - for some time to come.

Although basic systems may not change there is scope for at least making the procedures as they stand operate smoothly. Cohen et al. (1983) describe how in Kenya the Ministry of Agriculture had become so overwhelmed with the complexity of its budget submission that it could no longer relate Ministerial policy to the proposed allocation of resources. Use of a microcomputer has enabled large amounts of data to be handled quickly enough for senior officers to redirect their attention from simply ensuring that the sums add up to considering the match between funds and policy. Similarly, the same system has allowed the Ministry to authorise its District level officers to incur expenditure on the first day of the new financial year, rather than one or two months later as had previously been the case.

Procurement procedures may also be sacrosanct, but there is often room to improve their operation by adjusting the levels of discretion. These quickly become over-restrictive as inflation effectively lowers them and brings increasingly petty items under rigorous scrutiny. Decentralising tender authorities to regional boards can help relieve congestion in central boards.

Changes in systems and procedures can have great impact, without appearing dramatic. The World Bank (1983, Chap.11) recommends that administrative reform should be carried out piecemeal, selectively moving from one small change to another. The authors note that attempts at comprehensive reform have usually foundered because it has been easy for objectors to form a coalition to block reform from amongst those who harbour reservations about some element or other in the overall scheme. If a step by step approach is adopted, then organisational procedures are the place to start.

5.2 Changing organisational structure

5.2.1 Special administrative units and integration

Two structural dimensions that accompanied the integrated rural development programmes that were so much in vogue a decade or so ago, namely the creation of special administrative units to operate the programmes, and the attempt to integrate the management of multisectoral interventions, have subsequently fallen out of favour. Special units were seen as a way of avoiding the problems of governmental bureaucracy. Once established however they proved near impossible to institutionalise and so were disbanded once special project funding, usually from a donor, came to an end or when political support waned. The units also aroused the jealousy of other parts of the administration, which sometimes translated into a lack of cooperation.³⁵ Consequently, there is now wariness about creating special entities to implement rural development efforts and a corresponding concern to operate schemes through existing channels.

In retrospect, attempts to integrate the administration of rural development were over-perfectionist. A great deal can be implemented without integration: more modest schemes of cooperation and coordination between separate agencies can achieve what is needed. Trying to manage a wide range of activities under one organisation all too often leads to confusion over goals and priorities, and to severe managerial overload.

Hence a retreat to the time-honoured managerial principle of keeping organisational goals as clear and simple as is commensurate with the organisation's terms of reference has taken place. Where coordination is needed, interest has moved to simple forms, from information sharing through copying reports between agencies to holding liaison committees to joint planning and budgeting exercises where different entities negotiate to achieve complementarity in their actions (World Bank 1983, Chap. 9; Smith et al. 1982).

Turning to wider structural issues, organisations are set up in tension between pressures for uniformity on the one hand and for diversity on the other (Handy 1982, Chap.10). Uniformity brings many benefits in standardisation, effectively creating administrative economies of scale. However, diversity has to be embraced unless the organisation is to ignore differences amongst its own operations and in its environment which, if serious enough, will render a uniform, undifferentiated effort useless. LDC bureaucracies which have to operate across whole countries, and which carry out a great array of functions from defence of sovereignty to inoculation of children, cannot be immune to diversity. Differentiation can be divided into spatial and functional parts (Hyden 1983, Chap. 4).

5.2.2 Spatial differentiation

Spatially, centralisation versus decentralisation is a much examined issue (see Conyers 1983; Rondinelli 1983c; Hyden 1983, Chap. 4). Decentralisation can be split into: devolution, whereby political authority is given out by the centre thus encouraging greater participation in government; and deconcentration, by which only managerial functions of government are passed down the line giving greater autonomy of action and responsibility to regional units. The latter has been predominant in recent years in LDC's, devolution being eschewed because of the dangers of centrifugal forces acting against the integrity of the nation.³⁶

The need for deconcentration in many LDC's is self-evident: it is just not possible to mount effective rural development efforts with their peculiar demands for local adaptation (see the preceding section) if all decisions about such adaptations have to be shunted back to the capital. Regional/Provincial and District³⁷ officers, at very least, have to be able to exercise discretion as they see fit. The degree of concentration which exists is so plainly unsuited to rural development that it is worth noting why it has occurred. Two main causes are apparent. On the one hand, many LDC's have had so few well-trained staff capable of taking important decisions that the adoption on a national scale, of a hub-and-wheel pattern of management has been the only way to ensure that the able keep control over operations. On the other, there has been a reluctance to allow any authority at all to be exercised locally lest that discretion be captured by local interests thereby strengthening centrifugal forces in society. The former reason is ever less valid as LDC bureaucracies are increasingly able to assign graduates to District levels, but the latter objection to decentralisation remains valid, especially in Africa³⁸. Indeed, it has lead Carey-Jones (1983) to oppose decentralisation of agricultural services on the grounds that local forces would try to divert the production orientation of agricultural intervention towards social welfare objectives.³⁹ Whilst Carey-Jones would probably not object to strict deconcentration where extra local discretion is kept

firmly in the hands of civil servants responsible up the line to their supervisors at national level, he is concerned about any form of decentralisation which gives local leaders more say in agricultural policy implementation. The extent to which a pure deconcentration is possible will vary from country to country. Clearly where it is not possible, a dilemma arises.

5.2.3 Functional differentiation

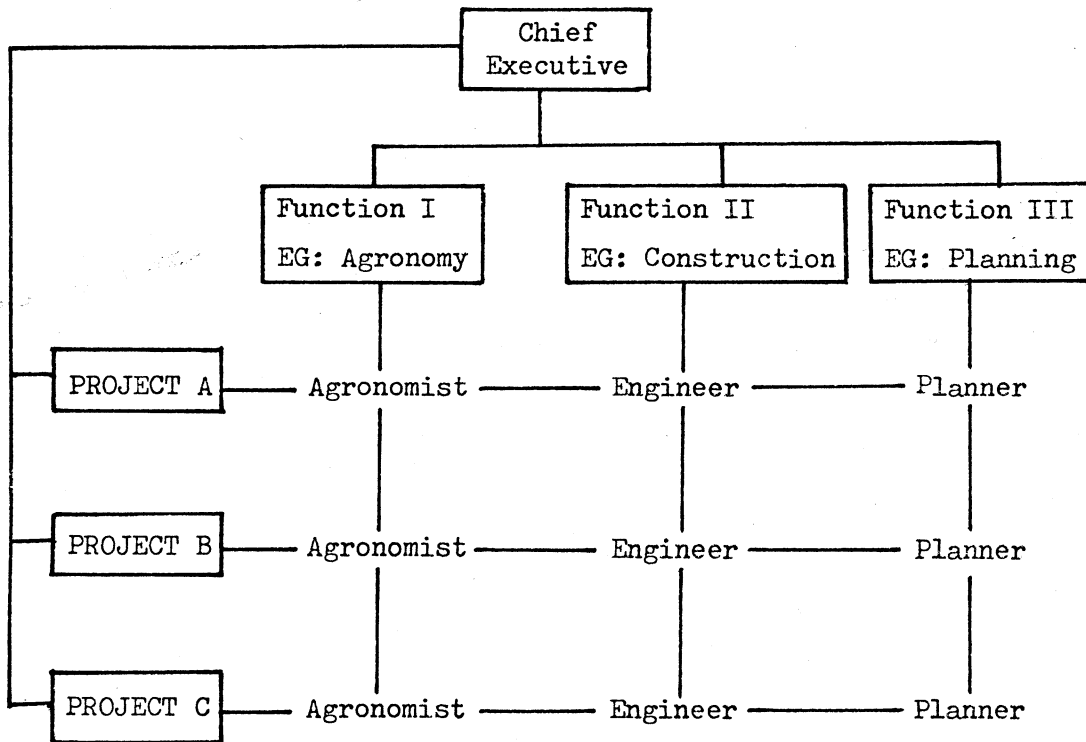
The functional differentiation of LDC administration is already well-institutionalised in the existence of Ministries and agencies defined by functional competence. Even so, many line Ministries have a wide span of responsibilities. Ministries of Agriculture commonly embrace crop production, agricultural research, irrigation, and soil conservation; in some cases they also deal with livestock, water resources, and forestry. Although large ministries may divide themselves into separate Divisions, at lower levels Ministerial officials commonly find themselves responsible for an impossibly wide range of duties. Agricultural extension agents are the classic example, expected to promote improved methods for a range of crops and livestock, and to encourage soil conservation, tree-planting, etc. This places an intolerable strain on the technical capacity of agents and leaves them confused about priorities.

A common answer to this problem has been to create parastatals as separate bodies with a narrow range of tasks, autonomous in structure and procedures from the rest of the civil service. Some have been notably successful, like the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA),⁴⁰ but others have fallen prey to informalism and attendant politicisation, and have failed miserably to perform (World Bank 1983, Chap.8). They stand as monuments to the insidious effects of unchecked informalism on institutions, a depressing reminder of the virtues of bureaucracy. Parastatals have to be established with clear and realistic objectives, installed with procedures appropriate to the task, and rigorously protected from political interference. In short, the success of such enterprises depends less on their structure than on their procedures. Protection from political dabbling may seem a tall order in LDC's, but where the parastatal serves an organised clientele well, they can ensure that standards are adhered to. Kenya's tea farmers may not be formally organised, but most politicians would fear a backlash were KTDA to be misused for petty political gain.⁴¹

5.2.4 Matrix structures

For project management the most appropriate organisational structure is some form of matrix. A matrix involves two lines of authority: a functional division by professional and technical skills; and a task division by projects. Hence there are two sets of managerial chiefs with responsibilities for particular functions and for particular projects both reporting to the chief executive. The rest of the organisation's staff become located in multidisciplinary groups working on specific projects. Figure 3 illustrates a matrix structure.

FIGURE 3: A MATRIX STRUCTURE



Task-orientated groups can become highly creative and innovative in tackling problems, and are ideally suited to early project stages which are experimental in nature and design work - and to those projects which are experimental in nature or where innovation and flexibility are at a premium. Many rural development projects fall into this category. Matrices are increasingly being adopted by developed country corporations which depend on their ability to innovate or to handle problems at the frontier of knowledge for their prosperity (Morris 1982).

For such concerns matrices hold much promise, but there are a number of problems associated with them. Twin lines of a authority can create confusion over responsibilities and lines of command. The temporary nature of staff assignments to projects makes for personal instability. Above all, matrices involve a great deal of staff interaction unmoderated by role or hierarchical position. Unless a participative atmosphere can be sustained, in which conflicts can be resolved positively, matrices can degenerate into endless squabbling and staff demoralisation.

This last point underlines a salient feature of structural change: unless it is accompanied by corresponding changes in procedures, and indeed in the organisational culture itself in some cases, it may achieve little. For this reason a degree of scepticism is needed when looking at proposals to change structures. All too often the form changes, but the content remains the same. Heaver (1982) notes how frequently structural change has been used in LDC's to give the impression of reform, whilst the change has been cosmetic at most. Above all, structural change cannot diminish the influence of informalism.

5.3 Changing the character of organisations

Given the mismatch between the task requirements of rural development and the distinctive competence of LDC bureaucracies described above in section 4, some writers argue that nothing less than a transformation in the character, culture, and operating mode of public agencies is needed to carry out rural development programmes adequately.

Particular concern has been voiced about the tendency for role culture to result in overly mechanistic management, based on rationalistic premises. Blueprint planning - see section 4.4 - which encourages both over attention to planning with consequent neglect of implementation, and a rigid approach to implementation, is one manifestation.

Critics have advocated a more organic⁴² style of management. A typical example is Korten's (1980) "learning process approach". In this he sees project or programme organisation being developed as the project proceeds, so that the organisation and character of the project changes through time and becomes moulded to the context of the project. Experimentation, monitoring results, embracing error, and making subsequent adjustments are the devices by which the organisation develops. Korten identifies three phases through which successful rural development efforts pass: learning to be effective; learning to be efficient; and expansion.

The first stage is one of fluid experiment, in which a small team of high calibre staff working in a small area - perhaps just one village - try out promising techniques and forms of organisation in a search for whatever works. Creativity, innovation, high motivation, and the willingness to admit false starts and begin anew characterise this phase⁴³.

Once an effective programme has been devised, then the second stage is to make it efficient in use of resources and procedures. At this point comes an interest in cutting costs, in making procedures routine, and in rendering the effort sustainable and replicable without high-level personnel. Some effectiveness will be sacrificed, but this should be more than offset by the advantages of a more efficient operation. The programme is still confined to a small area or small beneficiary population.

Lastly, the organisation can expand the programme developed over a larger area, using lower grade staff than in the initial period and relying on standardised procedures and routines to spread the programme. In the process, further losses will be experienced in effectiveness and efficiency.

Korten notes that this sort of development might not take place within a single organisation. It might be that non-governmental agencies with their flexibility and openness to innovation might be encouraged to develop programmes through the first two stages, large public agencies picking them up later and expanding them. Even if they tackle only the third stage, the demands on LDC bureaucracies of such an approach are great. Structural changes, especially a deconcentration of authority, would be needed, as would more flexible procedures. Apart from the question of whether it is possible to summon the will to overcome inertia and make such changes, two important objections have been lodged by Heaver (1982).

On the one hand, Heaver queries whether there are enough junior staff at District and field staff to carry out such an approach. Certainly the learning process makes great demands on staff skills, judgement, and motivation. Where junior staff cannot be trusted to take the right decisions, then there may be little alternative to the hub-and-wheel administrative model.

On the other hand, Heaver fears that any approach which slackens control, albeit highly bureaucratic control, will only allow informalism to flourish unopposed. Left to their own devices, with greater discretion to take decisions, act, and use resources, the staff would pursue informal goals above all else. The bureaucracy would degenerate into a machine for patronage with achievement of its stated objectives a mere by-product.

Hyden (1983) agrees, stressing that such discretion could only be given where "organised special publics" or local non-governmental bodies are able to exert pressure on the bureaucracy to deliver the goods. Hence where accountability extends beyond the public body, the agency can relax its internal vigilance. But until that applies - and generally it does not apply in LDC countrysides - strict controls must be applied to counter informal pressures. This is one more argument for encouraging local community participation in the implementation of rural development.

6. CONCLUSIONS: SOME KEY ISSUES

Briefly, this paper has argued that the management of rural development projects in LDC's requires different managerial approaches to those employed in developed country projects, owing largely to the nature of the task in hand and the uncertainty of the project environment common in LDC's. Successful project management depends on the ability to cope with a wide range of activities, many of them open-ended and ambiguous in nature. The majority of these concern the relationship between the project and its environment, and call for the skills of institutional management, including public relations, negotiation, and bargaining - in short, high level political skills. In the main these are not reducible to technique and can only be acquired through experience allied to consciousness of the important issues. This suggests that managers cannot be "trained" in the narrow sense of the word. Managerial education must instead aim to raise the consciousness of managers, so that on the job learning is made rapid with a minimum of unpleasant surprises.

But we have seen that rural development makes other demands on management, such as the abilities to experiment and to learn, to operate over large areas where close supervision of staff is precluded, to gain and maintain the commitment of local communities, to coordinate efforts with those of other agencies, and to be adaptable and flexible to the demands of the situation and to unpredictable changes. Unfortunately, it seems that public bureaucracies in LDC's are peculiarly ill-suited to meeting these demands. Typically they display elements of bureaucratic role culture, colonialist power culture, and traditional informalism, which makes them in part hidebound, in part authoritarian, and in part indisciplined! This makes the analysis of concrete situations and formulation of recommendations for management a daunting task.

This paper has made a short survey of some of the changes that might be made to management and administration from petty change to sweeping reform. The whole prompts the following concluding observations.

First, in looking at management, there is a clear need to build an understanding of the administrative system as a whole before declaring such-and-such a reform to be the key to improvement. ⁴⁴ Partial understanding may lead to proposals which are counter-productive.

Second, some proposals for managerial improvement tend to leave one hung on the horns of dilemma. Two such dilemmas constitute key issues in rural project management:-

(a) Just how much trust can be devolved to managers at District and field levels? They need to be given considerable personal discretion if they are to act with sensitivity and intelligence in pursuit of project objectives. Nevertheless, discretion can be a licence to pursue informal goals. The trust versus control dilemma affects all organisations, but it is especially critical in the presence of the compelling appeal of informalism.

(b) To what extent can rural development goals be left as multiple, nebulous, and subject to change with all this implies for the skills of managers and their tolerance for ambiguity? To leave them thus is to give projects a chance of serving their publics. However, it places formidable demands on managerial systems and on managers themselves. Would it not, then, be better to simplify and clarify goals to allow implementation, but at the risk of numbness to the needs and context of rural development?⁴⁵

General answers to the questions posed would mislead: the specifics of given circumstances will moderate the answer according to case. Hence, the broad conclusion of this paper is a familiar appeal to look carefully at the specific, a requirement however which is much facilitated if the analyst or manager is aware of the kinds of factors and issues likely to be important. Raising that level of awareness has been the principal goal of this paper.

FOOTNOTES

1. Hirschmann (1981) tells the story of the Development Administration Movement. Moris (1977) and Hyden (1983, Chap. 3) emphasise the lack of attention to the context of public sector management.
2. For an excellent and concise description of these changing priorities, see Rondinelli (1983a, Chap. 2).
3. Chamber's 1974 book on the management of rural development was a rare exception to the pattern of neglect of administration.
4. Local community participation is a large topic in its own right and will not be dealt with here. For a useful review of the issues and a guide to the literature, see Johnston and Clark (1982, Chap. 5).
5. Replies to Morgan's critique of projects can be found in Honadle and Rosengard (1983) and Rondinelli (1983b). The rationalist approach in which an attempt is made to think through all possible consequences of interventions to select an optimum action plan or blueprint prior to implementation, and its excessive use are well described in Rondinelli (1983a, Chap.3) and in Johnston and Clark (1982, Chap 1).
6. Johnston and Clark (1982, Chap. 1) make the same point for development studies in general, which they see hitherto as a shiftless, immature discipline, apparently incapable of building up a core of accepted knowledge.
7. Smith et al. (1982) divide the project environment into three components: the controllable; the influencable; and the appreciated environment. The first is the area directly controlled by the project, equivalent to the core circle in Figure 1. The influencable environment includes all those agencies and actors closely involved with the project but not under its control, like marketing boards, banks, input suppliers, farmer groups, etc., and with which the project can negotiate to good effect. This is the environment referred to as the project environment in Figure 1. Beyond this lies the appreciated environment where the project can have no influence, but which managers must understand and take into consideration. It includes items like pricing policies, local religion, exchange rates, Government procedures, land tenure systems, etc.
8. See Handy (1982, Chap. 7) for a discussion of contingency theory. Also see Morris (1982).
9. Roger Harrison identified four kinds of organisational and managerial culture: power; role; task; and person. See Handy (1982, Chap. 7).

10. One participant in the Southern Region Agricultural Project in the Sudan has commented that the project was sufficiently complicated and spread over such a wide area, that only a handful of people achieved such a conceptualisation. Despite all-day briefings, visiting missions had great difficulty in comprehending the project as a whole.
11. Differences originally identified by Talcott Parsons (Morris 1982, p. 157).
12. A few years ago I was a junior member of a team looking for solutions to the environmental problems of a Latin American river basin. The work style was classic task culture: teamwork, discussion, think-tank sessions - all conducted in an egalitarian atmosphere. The team generated the sort of ideas and possible solutions that it was meant to, but did not meet its deadline. A short extension of the project had to be requested. The official dealing with the request on behalf of the funding organisation, a person immersed in routine and bureaucratic tasks, was aghast: how was it that supposedly highly-skilled and qualified professionals could not stick to schedule? His contempt was clear: he saw poor management. But his uni-dimensional image of good management was appropriate to only one type of task. He could not appreciate that keeping to schedule was of secondary importance in this case.
13. Experience is necessary but not sufficient on its own: it is possible to learn very little from doing a job. Individuals in these situations usually do the job badly, and feel frustrated.
14. Cohen and Uphoff (1980) define what is meant by local community participation. Johnston and Clark (1982, Chap. 5) review organisational issues in achieving effective participation.
15. Some would object that no services should be provided before rural communities have identified the need for them. However there are plenty of examples of services offered to rural communities without prompting whose provision has subsequently become a prime local demand. Smallholder tea production services in Kenya provided by the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) are an example. Peoples' needs change according to their material welfare and their perceptions of wants: as the former improves the latter changes. Indeed shifts in perceptions by rural communities are one of the most striking results of development. Whether or not outside agencies should intervene to promote such changes and to anticipate shifts in perception is a metaphysical point which underlies ideological arguments between advocates of "top-down" and "bottom-up" development strategies (see Moris 1981, Chap. 7).

16. This was the age of "laissez-faire", in which the minimum of public involvement with private business was seen as a precondition to maximum social welfare. Interestingly it has been argued that at least part of this view was attributable to the manifestly corrupt and inefficient nature of government business in early 19th century England - government posts were then often as not the spoils of political success. Laissez-faire became a way of restricting the consequent damage to economy and society (World Bank 1983, Chap. 10).
17. Footnote 8 refers: this is Harrison's fourfold characterisation of organisational culture (see Handy, 1982, Chap. 7). Table 1 in Heaver (1982) presents an alternative typology in which the metropolitan bureaucracies would come under the heading of "the bureaucratic model of decision-making". The importance of such cultural divisions underlies contingency approaches to management which have assumed such importance in management science recently (Moris 1982; Howell 1979).
18. "Bureaucratic" has become a perjorative which is not implied here. Caution and control are important where standards must be met: for example in health care and civil aviation. Even those who despise caution would be alarmed if they were told their appendix were to be removed by an "innovative and imaginative surgeon" or if the pilot of their intercontinental flight were announced as a "creative flier".
19. Kenya has a number of Members of Parliament and some Ministers who began their careers as senior civil servants.
20. This reservation is necessary. Some claim that such networks could do wonders for development if properly harnessed. I doubt it: it is one thing to repaint the District Headquarters in 2 days flat in preparation for the big visitor, it is quite another to mount an agricultural research and extension effort. Bellowing orders and issuing threats will achieve the first task, it could never be used for the second. Extraordinary efforts can always be made in the short run, but what rural development needs is ordinary effort in the long run.
21. Chambers (1974) describes field staff as "invisible men".
22. Organisations can conveniently be divided into structure and systems. Structure is analagous to the body's skeleton, whilst systems can be likened to systems like the digestive, nervous, blood circulatory, etc. Organisational systems include the procedures for handling staff, finance, and information. Here the word "procedure" is used instead of "system" because it more readily conveys the idea of what these organisational systems are in reality, and because system is a much used word with different meanings.

23. Government of Kenya (1982).
24. Herzberg is the foremost exponent of these views, see Handy (1982) Chap. 2 and Pugh et al.(1983), Chap. 5. However debate rages about what motivates staff, and about the value of pay - see the sections in Pugh et alia on Lawler and Jacques for example.
25. Handy (1982), p 259.
26. Handy (1982), p. 259.
27. Howell (1982) explains the T & V system. Agricultural extension agents are frequently expected to perform all kinds of other agricultural duties for their organisations, and indeed to do other chores for non-agricultural agencies, like help run elections, extend forestry and nutrition, etc.
28. See note 27: to free the field worker from additional chores requires a change of attitudes amongst senior officers in departments of agriculture and amongst generalist administrators. It is they that impose the extra demands because they do not respect the functional specialism of the field extension agent.
29. Handy (1982), Chap. 11, stresses the problems of designing management information systems for multiple uses. Essentially for every informational purpose, a separate informational flow is needed.
30. In developed countries this entails special problems in that it is middle class groups, rather than the disadvantaged, who are most able to take advantage of public services and demand high standards. Hence disturbing reports that they often gain a disproportionate share of the benefits (see "The Economist" of 28 April 1984, p 25, for a report on middle class access to the UK National Health Service).
31. Education is probably the most advanced sector. Interestingly, the Kenyan education ministry is commonly regarded as one of the best run, staffed by able and willing personnel. They have to be: failure to deliver services prompts strong reaction from local parents, usually in collaboration with an MP or powerful local notable.
32. See, for example, Waterston (1965, Chap. 8).
33. See Doh (1981) on Malaysia, Hinchliffe and Allen (1983) on Papua New Guinea, and Gable and LaPorte (1983) on Pakistan.
34. "Annuality" derives from the requirement for all unspent funds to be returned to the Ministry of Finance at the end of the year. This leads departments to spend funds on anything during the final weeks of the year to prevent any returns. They are encouraged in this by public opprobrium of underspending, and the undermining of any request for higher funding in the future when lower budgets are apparently not being spent.

35. See Ruttan (1975) and Lele (1975) for examples.
36. Hyden (1983) argues that African states are weak and have every reason to fear national disintegration. Precapitalist modes of production dominate the rural areas of Africa, and these have no interest in the maintenance of the national unit, only in the integrity of their tribal or clan framework.
37. District-level here refers to the third tier of administration, below the second-tier located at Provincial or Regional level. The terms for these levels vary from country to country, but the tiers exist in most LDC's, and often there is remarkable similarity in the managerial span involved measured in physical area and population.
38. Hyden's argument as described in note 36.
39. Like Hyden (1983), Carey-Jones sees local politics as essentially uninterested in greater production, preferring the independence that peasant economy confers on families to the interdependency forced on those participating in more productive modes of production like capitalism. As Hyden noted in 1980, Tanzanian smallholders prefer the state not to interfere with production and for it to provide services as a direct supplement, and subsidy, to the peasant economy.
40. Moris (1973) explains why KTDA has been successful in encouraging smallholder tea production.
41. This may be an after-the-event rationalisation. Other factors may have protected KTDA, for example the character of senior staff or the involvement of the Commonwealth Development Corporation. Certainly Kenya's smallholder coffee farmers have been unable to protect their coffee cooperatives from chronic inefficiency, manifested in very low prices to producers, and from corruption.
42. "Organismic" is the original term coined by T. Burns - see Pugh (1983, Reading 3).
43. Korten notes that this is analagous to venture capital: it should be accepted that a high proportion of initiatives will fail, but that the return to the successful ventures will more than compensate.
44. For example, a common response in the Kenyan administration to laxity in implementation in the field has been to tighten control systems, especially financial and procurement procedures. One result is to make the government even less sensitive to the demands of rural development because strict and standardised control procedures act as straightjackets, rendering the governmental effort "numb" - Hyden's description.

45. A good example is cattle dipping in rural Kenya. By reducing the programme of control of tick-borne diseases to the immediate goal of building dips, staffing them with attendants, and providing acaricides, considerable success has been achieved in management. However wider problems relevant to cattle disease control remain untouched, like location of dips, cost-effectiveness of the programme, alternative control measures, etc. In some cases this has led to dips not being used, used too infrequently to control ticks, or being unnecessary because of low local levels of tick infestation. Hence some dips are effectively concrete memorials to ideas of progress, rather than productive infrastructure.

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