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NOTES ON A BASE ORGANIZATION STRATEGY

FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

by

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August 1978

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Preface

This paper began to emerge at a seminar conducted by the Catholic Relief Service in Cali, Colombia, in late July 1978. The seminar dealt with rural base organizations and how CRS might relate to them. Participants at the seminar included professionals working for CRS in eight countries and New York as well as professionals from national development agencies with whom CRS has collaborated.

The exchange of ideas at this seminar was extremely stimulating. However, the main contribution from my point of view was showing that a new methodology was being carved in development by the practitioners of this art. What this paper hopes to do is present in an orderly fashion some of the ideas that came out of the seminar and incorporate where relevant contributions of other observers and practitioners.

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1.   Development and participation

The concepts of development in general and rural development in particular have been the subject of extensive analyses and the focus of a multitude of projects through which substantial quantities of resources have been channeled. The dominant view of the development process has been the economic one, which has defined development in terms of per capita income and/or per capita productivity. The contributions of the various development projects within this economic framework have been judged in terms of the increase in per capita income or productivity within a particular region

In recent years the principal features of this economic model have been modified. In brief, the model holds that the way to achieve economic development is through the creation of a modern industrialized sector with the assistance of foreign capital, which in turn will generate a dynamism sufficiently strong to trickle down to the poorer sectors of the society, especially the rural areas not directly involved in the "modern" sector (Currie 1966).

The critiques of this model have focused on (1) the failure of external aid, and (2) the inappropriateness of local institutions for spreading the wealth.

Concerning external aid, it has been noted that often such "help" provides neither the quantity of capital required nor the appropriate type of technology. Moreover, the costs of the technological transfers that do occur have been overly high and have contributed more to the outflow of capital than the reverse (Chenery et al. 1974).

The institutional critique of the capitalist economic model has noted that the benefits of the development process rarely trickle down. Recent studies have concluded that the poor in general, and the rural poor in particular, have not improved either their relative or their absolute status in the past years of the "development decades" (Thiesenhusen 1978). The tendencies toward the concentration of wealth into relatively few family economic groups via the institutions they control apparently counteract the forces that incorporate new individuals into the slowly expanding capitalist economy. In agriculture it is often the land tenure systems that channel resources toward the wealthy (Cummings 1978).

The failure of the trickle down part of the capitalist model has moved some analysts toward looking for transfer mechanisms, principally taxation and an active state welfare program, to push at least some of the benefits of the capitalist system toward the poor. This subsidy logic meets some of the humanitarian criticisms without fundamentally altering the core of the economic development model.

However, subsidy programs require growth in the size and power of the state apparatus, which may begin to conflict with entrenched economic and political interests. One idea that attempts to get the process moving while avoiding such conflicts has been the implementation of area-specific "integrated rural development" projects, where state resources are channeled into welfare services from the inception of the project to accompany the infrastructure investments and private sector stimuli, which are more traditionally a part of the economist's model. In such projects, it has been argued, the web of poverty is complex and requires a concerted attack that mixes income production activities with state-supplied social services. The role of the state is limited to these social services.

In part as a reaction to the problems many of these integrated rural development projects have had in achieving their immediate welfare goals (Oliart 19767), and particulary their difficulty in assuring the continued delivery of services once the project ends, recent interest has developed in local participation, often via grassroots organizations, in such projects. A number of hypotheses have emerged which indicate that development projects have more likelihood of immediate and long-term success when there is substantial participation of the people whom these projects affect than when they are simply implanted from outside the community (DAI 1975; Cohen and Uphoff 1976).

Moreover, this pragmatic concern has been complemented by a resurgence of a more humanitarian model of development, that is, the definition of development in terms of the realization of the potentials of the human individual and the collective in which he operates. This humanistic definition of development has been advocated by the various religious development agencies, especially the Catholic Church in Latin America (Goulet 1974), as well as by many of their ideological opposites in the neo-Marxian camp (Haque et al. 1977). In both instances humanistic philosophy leads to a concern with the local community and its expression in various local organizations. The argument is that only the participation of the "target population" in the development process will assure that they will somehow benefit from the various projects implemented in their name. The extent and form of that participation is the central question.

In order to address this question, the hypothesis advanced in this paper is that efforts at rural development, whose objective is the reduction of human misery among the poor, are most effective when projects grow out of, and are controlled by, the disadvantaged. This hypothesis simply extends the participation logic of projects by asking how can the probabilities be maximized that the benefits from development projects arrive to the disadvantaged. The very preliminary answer advocated by the Development Alternatives study and presently being explored by the Cornell group (Cohen and Uphoff 1976) is that such probabilities can be maximized by expanding the participation of the local population in such projects. But as these analyses observe, local participation in pre-established projects is often too little and too late to do more than make the local community feel important for a short time. Perhaps a more fundamental problem is the fact that "local" does not mean "disadvantaged." Rural communities have their structure of power, and in many localities the ownership of the fundamental indicator of wealth and power, land, is in the hands of very few individuals. Ignoring this social reality will mean that the outside resources generated by the development agency will likely benefit only the relatively better-off individuals and not necessarily the disadvantaged (Fals Borda 1971).

These institutionalized social conflicts lie at the heart of "underdevelopment." The under-privileged are kept in such a condition because their resources are very limited and because other social classes in some way benefit sufficiently from the disadvantaged' condition to try to retain the status quo. The *hacendado* derives certain benefits from having cheap labor to work his lands. The merchant maximizes his position when he is the only buyer of the smallholder's production.

In such conditions development agencies can propose a community development project to benefit all members of the community. But as many observers have pointed out, such interventions often strengthen

the conflict by strengthening the power of the upper classes. Haque et al. (1977) have developed the hypothesis that where such fundamental contradictions are sharp, any "class neutral" intervention is really class-biased. The green revolution has often been criticized for contributing to the worsening of the relative and at times absolute economic and social position of the small and poor farmers as a result of the introduction of miracle seeds, while these seeds are alleged to be "size neutral," meaning in the context of rural life, "class-neutral." The real class differences are so great, however, that the alleged neutrality of the technology cannot long be maintained.

Under such conditions of wide social inequalities and their importance to the local elite, the only way to avoid biasing projects in favor of the upper classes is to bias them in favor of the disadvantaged. But this biasing cannot be overdone, since it will only generate opposition from the local elite; nor can it be a one-shot matter, or else its effects will soon disappear. What is required is a contribution to the evolution of the disadvantaged to alter the social contradictions within which they are confined. Such an evolutionary action cannot have an individual focus but must grow from the unity of the poor expressed in organized collective-bargaining power stimulated to solve problems of the disadvantaged. The expression of this unified, organized collective-bargaining power is what we call base organizations, that is, organizations populated and controlled by the disadvantaged.

Under this conception, the participation of the development agencies in the development process becomes "simply" a contribution to the growth of these base organizations and cooperation with projects that base organizations propose and can implement. As expressed at the CRS Cali seminar, the tasks of development agencies are: (1) to hear what the disadvantaged say they want, (2) to incorporate into the development agency the goals and objectives of the base groups, and (3) to fortify the *organized* expression of the goals of these groups.

Development agencies with a mandate to reduce poverty under this base organization focus would find ways to cooperate with this base organizational development. Projects that they finance, or in some way cooperate with, would have as their primary objective the organizational development of base groups, and perhaps more importantly, such projects would grow out of the expressed needs of those groups.

This focus is, of course, not new. European development agencies such as MISERIOR and OXFAM have been operating with their versions of this philosophy for a number of years. The InterAmerican Foundation has also been exploring this path. USAID in fact does a great deal of institution building and has embarked certain projects with this base organization logic, especially those involving rural cooperatives. Private voluntary agencies such as Catholic Relief Service have begun to move along this developmental path. The Peace Corps contains a healthy dose of the self-help philosophy. The two problems that these agencies have faced have been (1) the lack of focus on base organizational development, perhaps due to having to operate within the economic model, and (2) the resulting lack of learning from past experiences about what base organizational development involves and how an outside agency can cooperate without co-opting and often destroying the base organization and its fundamental purposes.

This paper begins to explore these processes of base organizational development and the forces that condition it, including the participation of development agencies in the process. The central question, then, is what might be some guidelines for channeling and optimizing the contribution of development agencies as they participate in the lives of the disadvantaged and in the evolution of their organizations. The problem we address here is *not* how can the poor participate in development projects, but rather, how can development projects participate in the evolution of the poor.

2. Organizational development as the capacity to solve problems

At the seminar sponsored by the Catholic Relief Service in Cali, Colombia, an interesting extension of the humanistic, participatory model of development emerged. The participants at the seminar assumed that development is not fundamentally the accumulation of capital, the increase in per capita income or productivity. Nor is it the spread of social and economic benefits to the population in some egalitarian fashion. Nor is development the re-arrangement of institutions in order to make the accumulation process more dynamic and equitable. The idea emerged that development is best conceived of as the capacity of a group, principally the disadvantaged of society, to solve its problems. There are two central concepts in this definition: (1) the process of *solving problems*, and (2) the *capacity to succeed* in this process.

2.1 Organizational problem solving

Numerous models of the problem-solving process have been developed, and it is not our purpose here to summarize them. What is fairly common in these models is linear project logic, where the individual or group defines a problem, formulates a plan, secures resources, conducts coordinated actions, and evaluates their effects. A slightly more sophisticated view holds that this process is better described as a dynamic spiral, with the evaluation phase feeding into decision-making at all stages and particularly into the re-definition of the problem to re-initiate the process. The CRS Central American group has put a further twist on this process with the base organization as the central focus. In working with base organizations, the problem-solving process grows out of the individuals in the organization and from the structure of the organization itself. In turn, the process reacts upon the individuals and the organization to create new ways of interpreting the world as well as new organizational forms to act upon it.

This centrality of the base organization is reflected in the "Figure 8" model of problem-solving (see Figure 1). Starting with the organization, two aspects are of crucial concern, namely, the participation of the disadvantaged, both in decision-making and in the enjoyment of benefits, and especially the degree of control such groups have over the organization. The disadvantaged populate a base organization, participate in the operation and outputs of the organization, and fundamentally control it. The characteristics of the organization and its decision-making structure are crucial to this definition of a base organization and are discussed below.

The elements of the Figure 8 are fairly standard.[*] Moving from the analysis of the reality in which the individuals find themselves, the next step is their motivation to make a group decision, to modify the organizational structure if there is an organization, or to create one if there is not. Once this stage is passed, the next is carrying out the "re-organization" followed by the elaboration of a plan, an agreement on what should be done within a particular sequence of events. In turn this plan is followed by a stage of actually carrying out the planned actions, which in turn is followed by evaluations of the actions. The process then feeds again into the organization and the individuals involved in it to begin the process anew.

One way of viewing the organizational development process is in terms of the number of cycles it has passed through as well as the rapidity of organizational movement through the various stages. An incipient organization would be one that has not passed through all the stages, whereas a highly developed one would have passed through the stages various times. Moreover, an incipient organization would struggle to get through the process once, while a more developed one may pass through the complete cycle very rapidly, which demonstrates a certain organizational momentum.[†]

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[*] See Schein 1969 for a similar but slightly more elaborate model.

[†] See IAF 1977, pp. 92-93, for a brief discussion of momentum in their projects.

FIGURE 1
The "Figure 8" of organizational problem-solving
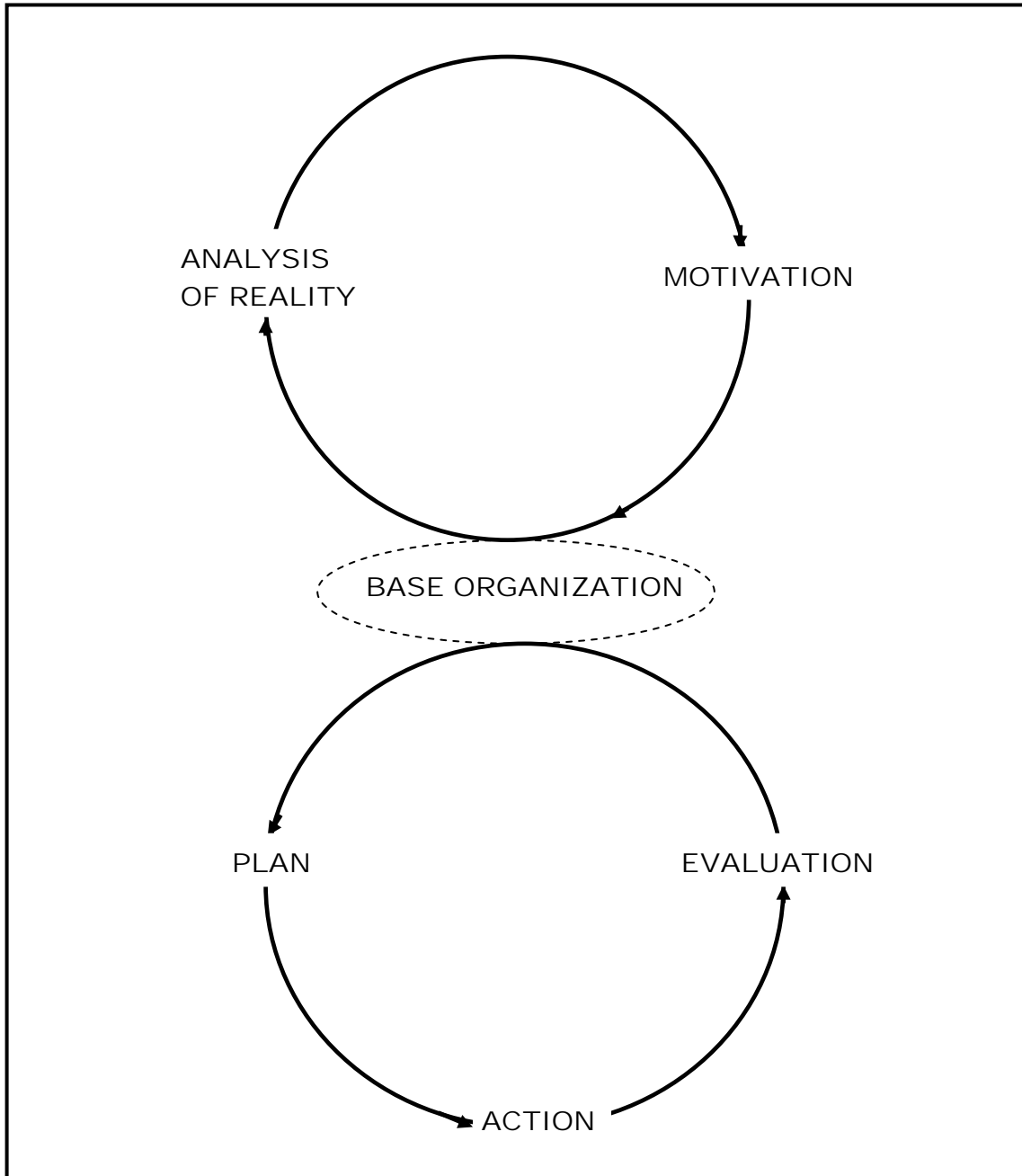
In this problem-solving view of organizational development, the Figure 8 moves along a time dimension in a highly dynamic manner, producing at each pass through the cycle some alteration in the organizational structure and/or in the individuals who compose it.

The centrality of the organization in the problem-solving process is the main contribution of the CRS Figure 8. However, it does not address three fundamental issues in the developmental process affecting base organizations: (1) Specifically what are the dimensions along which base organizations develop other than simply their experience and agility in problem-solving? (2) What are some of the more important factors that condition this development, which foment it, and which might impede or destroy the organization? (3) How might an outside agency, one committed to the development of a base organization, cooperate with this process so as to help remove the impediments to the expression of the group's potential? The remainder of this paper begins to explore these questions using some notions from the peasant movement experiences, especially in South America, some ideas from the work on institution building, and some experiences of development agencies. At this point, however, we are not elaborating a theory, but only looking for some conceptual tools which can later be refined and theoretically elaborated into useful guidelines for action.

3. Rural base organization

The notion of rural base organization as one populated by the poor of rural areas and somehow under their control is only a first step toward a definition of the concept. In the Latin American context, the number of distinctive groups of poor people is very great. Following Landsberger (1969, pp. 1-5), we begin with a relatively global concept of rural poor but with the notion that in particular analyses of the organization where such people participate or potentially participate, their "place" in the social and productive structure must be analyzed, much like what Haque et al. (1977) describe, as action research into the fundamental contradiction of the reality in which they work. This "place" for our purposes refers explicitly to class position, which in turn depends on the property system dominant in the society under discussion (Stinchcombe 1961). While not expressly incorporated into this paper, this theoretical orientation would have to be applied in analyses of particular organizations in particular societies.

In the analyses of peasant movements and the organizations that directed these movements, two principal actors have been identified. The first, or historically more recent, is the worker in relatively modern agricultural enterprises such as the sugar-producing haciendas in Peru and the wine *fundos* of Chile. These workers are often not the poorest of the poor, but they have occupied the historical stage at various times in the development of their countries with what have been labeled as "peasant movements" and can yield some insights into the organizational processes. These "enclave" workers have worked for enterprises which largely produce for the external market and which have attracted large-scale investments in productive and processing technologies, thereby creating factory-like conditions in the countryside.

The second type of peasant movement has grown out of the traditional haciendas, often in the Andean Mountains, which were formed. In these areas, a land hunger on the part of the peasants, who are best described as tenants on the haciendas, has at time resulted in land invasions and other pressures for bringing about some kind of land reform, the re-distribution of land from the hands of the large landowners to the peasants. A related social group in the Andean region comprises the communities where indigenous groups hold limited land in common and often work for the *patrón* (Alberti 1972). Conflicts often develop when the hacienda incorporates these communal lands.

While in the first case of peasant movements, the origin and impetus was the agricultural enterprise in which the workers were able to organize and direct their grievances against the owners of the enterprises,

the second type of peasant movement originated in the haciendas where workers were less laborers and more part-time farmers whose desires for land led to frontal attacks on the land tenure system in a particular area and thereby pitted the peasant against at least part of the dominant social groups of their countries.

A third type of peasant organization in the Latin American context is the service cooperative built around the individual farmer and his marketing needs (either for inputs or for the production of his farm). These farmers, be they smallholders or large landowners, are from a different stratum than the other types of peasants, and their "cooperative movement" has often been a service to the more wealthy sectors of rural areas rather than the small-scale farmers whom they in theory could service (Fals Borda 1971). In some countries, such as Chile, however, a serious program of subsidizing the development of small-scale farmers was mounted in the 1960s and early 1970s via service cooperatives and a substantial government input into these organizations. The basis for participating in service cooperatives is, nonetheless, landownership. This "property" characteristic puts this type of rural organization in a different class from the rural unions, which grew out of the modern and traditional large-scale agricultural enterprises. Where small farmers are involved, the organizational experiences of cooperatives are highly relevant as an example of rural base organizations (Bennett 1978).

Each of these three types of agricultural enterprise — modern enclave, traditional hacienda, smallholder — has given rise to organizations which to a certain degree have been controlled or at least influenced by sectors of the disadvantaged. Little has arisen from the ever-growing group of landless laborers, the semi-proletarians of agriculture in many less developed countries. The evolution of this group of rural residents has been only partially explored (de Janvry and Garramon 1977; Thiesenhusen 1978). Perhaps the most potent organizational voice achieved by the rural landless has been in the various political movements which contrast with the large economic issue-oriented programs of the unions and cooperatives. Relatively little has been done in analyzing the organizational experience or potential of this group. Certainly Feder's (1971) observation that the extreme marginality of many rural poor hinders their organization, that "the precarious financial situation of many millions of farm people, living at or near a hunger level, is a nearly insurmountable obstacle to peasant organization," should be further explored.

Yet a fifth group that has assumed a certain importance in some Latin American countries comprise the agrarian reform beneficiaries. While the number of families affected by agrarian reform is not as great as some observers had estimated in the early 1960s, the organizations that have been developed to coordinate the activities of these beneficiaries are of some importance. Two types of organizations are found; one is the familiar service cooperative which serves the interests of the individual property holders as mentioned above. The other is the "community enterprise," which is a collective operation of land on the part of several beneficiaries of the agrarian reform. Murcia (1976) gives a brief summary and comparison of these communitarian experiences.

4. Dimensions of rural base organizational development

Deciding in general how best to describe the problem-solving capacity of rural base organizations is probably an impossible task. What we hope to suggest here are some of the more common dimensions used by observers of the evolution of such organizations over time. The list is not exhaustive, nor at this point is it particularly coherent in theoretical terms. Rather, our purpose is to capture some of the flavor of past treatments of the phenomenon of rural base organizational development that can be elaborated upon and adapted to particular cases. We have chosen three sources for inspiration in this problem, one being the historical-sociological tradition of the study of peasant movements, another being the work

done on institution building, and the third being the experiences of development agencies in trying actually to cooperate with these base organizations, particularly rural cooperatives.

4.1   Administrative structure

The various discussions of the phenomenon of rural base organizations have identified at least three classes of variables or dimensions along which organizations can be arranged at any particular moment in time. The first set of variables has to do with the administrative structure of the organization, the ways decisions are made, and the means whereby communication within the organization occurs and coordination is achieved. This problem is often addressed by analyzing the nature of leadership in the organization, whether it is largely charismatic, that is, personal, located in one parson and his immediate aids, or whether it is routine, bureaucratic, defined in terms of office rather than person. Santos de Morais (1976) elaborates a hypothesis that in the initial stages of peasant organization, personal charismatic leadership is crucial. This personalistic leadership, according to Santos de Morais, derives from the individualistic, personal nature of peasant work situations. Production is individualistic, personal. Cooperation and coordination arise only through mechanization of production processes. "When they (peasants) do organize, it is around a leader rather than an association (union, cooperative, etc). They associate around individuals and almost never around structural organizations" (Santos de Morais 1976, p. 39).

Whether or not this logic is accurate about the individualistic, personal leadership being shaped by the nature of the peasant enterprise may be debated. The Weberian tradition in sociology would also suggest that in times of social change, peasant organizations like other types of social organization will be led by charismatic leaders whose personal characteristics and abilities attract a following and thereby provide the basis for later organizational consolidation. Weber observes that:

> In traditionally stereotyped periods, charisma is the greatest revolutionary force. The equally revolutionary force of "reason" works from without by altering the situations of action, and hence its problems finally in this way changing men's attitudes toward them; or it intellectualizes the individual. Charisma, on the other hand, may involve a subjective or internal reorientation born out of suffering, conflicts, or enthusiasm. It may then result in a radical alteration of the central system of attitudes and directions of action with a completely new orientation of all attitudes toward the different problems and structures of the "world" (Weber 1947, p. 363).

At the same time, charismatic leadership cannot continue indefinitely. Weber again very astutely observes that since charismatic authority has a character specifically foreign to everyday routine affairs, when these affairs become of dominant concern once the organization is established, charisma will have to give way. "[I]n its pure form charismatic authority may be said to exist only in the process of originating. It cannot remain stable, but becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both" (Weber 1947, p. 364). This process of rationalizing or traditionalizing is what Commons (1961) calls becoming a "going concern."

The routinization of charismatic leadership can take a number of forms, extending from the highly centralized, "despotic" leader supported usually by forces from outside the community, to the more democratic, participatory forms of leadership and decision-making.[*] The charismatic form of authority may also develop into simply the traditional type, where a large degree of consensus exists in the community and the decisions made by the traditional leader begin to assume an aura of rightness over a long period of time.

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[*] See Likert 1967, for some observations on this point.

The forces that affect these evolutionary processes and condition one or the other outcome can be speculated upon. What we want to suggest is only that this dimension of "quality" of leadership or the "style" of decision-making is an important dimension that has been used to describe an aspect of rural base-organization problem-solving capacity.

Another leadership dimension has to do with the origins of leaders, what interests they represent. Landsberger (1969) summarizes a number of studies that contribute to a debate on whether leaders of peasant movements are themselves peasants or from another, more affluent (bourgeois), or somehow more knowledgeable (intellectual) class. Again there appears to be different requirements for leadership at different stages of the development of the organization. In many cases, during the initial stages, leaders or cadres or organizers do not originate from within the peasant community. On the other hand, when the organization has passed its initial hurdles and in some way proved its viability, local leadership arises from within the disadvantaged classes.[*]

Neither charismatic leadership nor leaders derived from outside the disadvantaged group correspond to the notions of many development agencies of what a base organization ought to look like. The Inter-American Foundation has been struggling with a sincere faith in the capabilities of the disadvantaged to solve their own problems. However, in practice IAF has run into the realities of organizing and the various actors which interpose themselves between the funds that IAF controls and the disadvantaged who are the foundation's target group (see IAF 1977, p. 111, for example). An explicit recognition of the various stages through which base organizations pass and the possible relevance of different styles of leadership and different types of leaders for the different stages might help avoid some of the problems of a "patronal" or "populist" philosophy.

It should be noted that this discussion of the dimensions of leadership does not touch on other aspects or characteristics of leaders which are repeatedly cited when discussing leadership as "the single most critical element in institution building because deliberately induced change processes require intensive, skillful, and highly committed management both of internal and of environmental relationships" (Esman 1972, p. 22). Our focus is more on the structural characteristics of leadership rather than on the personal skills and commitments that leaders may possess. This is not to say that these technical and commitment variables are not important, but that they are part of the reality in which organizational development occurs; in the process of change, leaders' competence and commitment have to be improved according to the specific needs of the situation. How this improvement in administrative skills exhibited by those in leadership positions is achieved is of fundamental importance. It is the structure of this tactical and strategic decision-making that is of principal interest in this paper.

The importance of this decision-making structure to peasant movements is attested to by the means of defense utilized by some elements of the power structure when threatened by peasant organizations. The first and often most effective counterattack employed is the arrest of the leaders or the use of more violent means for removing these crucial actors from the scene.[†]

A third dimension of the administrative nature and capacities of an organization is what Landau (1972) and others have called the complexity exhibited by the organization. As derived from systems theory, the notion of complexity summarizes three phenomena in the growth of organizations over time. As Landau observes, systems (or organizations) pass from initial, simple structures to more complex ones. In particular,

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[*] See Haque et al. 1977, pp. 117-126, for a discussion of this aspect of an evolving leadership.

[†] See Feder 1971, p. 163; Cotler and Portocarreo 1969, p. 316, for examples; most of Landsberger's 1969 edited book contains observations on the measures taken to neutralize the leadership of peasant movements).

(1) As a system develops, it tends to become specialized; its parts assume definite structures and functions.
(2) As a system develops, it tends toward centralization; differentiated structures and specialized functions become subject to a central control which operates to integrate the various behaviors in the system.
(3) The organizational form of a living system tends toward hierarchy; its various structures and functions are arranged in terms of levels, the higher levels comprehending the lower" (Landau 1972).

These dimensions help specify what Weber calls the routinization of charisma in terms of the growing complexity of the organization. Whether this increasing complexity is in any sense an objective for development agencies is debatable. Apparently increased complexity of decision-making structures is inherent in organizational growth, which in turn has implications for development agencies and the members of the base organizations. One immediate implication is that in less complex organizations, highly complex projects would probably overtax the organizations' capacities. The swamping of base organizations with resources and auditors has many times killed off the organizations or contributed to internal struggles concerning what to do with the resources. Financial kindness wrapped in PERT networks often requires a degree of organizational complexity that does not exist. Rather than to think in terms of moving mountains, development agencies perhaps should think in terms of helping organizations develop their own capacities to move mountains at some later time.

4.2 Linkages

A second dimension of organizational development stressed particularly by the institutional development school is the degree to which the organization is interdependent with other organizations. This interdependence refers to the number and types of linkages which it maintains with "a set of discrete structures with which the subject institution must interact" (Esman 1972, p. 23). The peasant movement tradition also stresses this dimension of linkages, especially in the formative stages of the movement and in its "importance" in later stages.[*] This basic position expressed in Custer's paper (1978, pp. 1-5) is the requirement that peasant organizations project their program onto the society at large and incorporate themselves in the larger struggle being waged for human freedom and social justice. This incorporation both prepares the organizations for dealing with the most serious threats to their own existence as well as gives greater meaning to the often small achievements of small-scale organizations.

From the institution-building point of view, the leadership of organizations must attempt to manipulate or accommodate itself to certain linkage relationships for the organization to thrive. Esman (1972) presents four types of linkages:

(1) *Enabling linkages*, "with organizations and social groups which control the allocation of authority and resources needed by the institution to function."
(2) *Functional linkages*, "with those organizations performing functions and services which are complementary in a production sense, which supply the inputs and which use the outputs of the institution."
(3) *Normative linkages*, "with institutions which incorporate norms and values (positive or negative) which are relevant to the doctrine and program of the institution."
(4) *Diffused linkages*, "with elements in the society which cannot clearly be identified by membership in formal organization.

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[*] See Quijano 1967, p. 324, for a succinct statement of this position.

In evaluating the viability of an organization, and particularly what types of linkages should be strengthened, these four types of linkages offer something of an organizational blueprint. The obvious problem is one of generating empirical referents for these abstract dimensions. Nonetheless, the identification of four types of linkages of certain intuitive importance is an important step.

It is interesting to note that in later work coming out of the institution-building group, the emphasis has expanded to a concern with a multiplicity of channels for linking the local organization with higher-level ones. For any of the linkage functions to be effective, "requires the operation of a number of channels concurrently" (Uphoff and Esman 1974, p. 71). In that analysis expressly dealing with local organizations, the authors observe that "because any single channel may at any time be blocked or monopolized, may fail to function, or may yield unsatisfactory results, it is important to have multiple channels which local leaders use either singly or in combination, to meet their needs" (ibid.). This multiplicity of channels is similar to that noted by Hine and Gerlach (1977) in the more successful linkage systems, including that of the multinational corporations and China. Such systems provide multiple contact points and communication channels both up and down the power hierarchies and among organizations of the same level. Perhaps these notions of multiple communication channels both vertically and horizontally better capture the essence of the linkage problem than Esman's (1972) four types.

The Inter-American Foundation has developed a similar orientation in judging the social gains that any given project might have effected. For the Foundation, "leverage" is a crucial indicator, which in practice means strength at collective bargaining to secure the resources the organization needs and particularly bargaining as fortified by being integrated into national networks of organizations working for social change.

The methodology proposed for softening the fundamental contradiction in rural society by Haque et al. (1977) includes as an indicator of organizational achievement the development of a political power. This political power is an ability to assert the "group's power as direct producers in the society" (ibid., p. 130). The final judgment of an organization's success is not how effective it is in solving particular economic problems of a target group or changing attitudes here and there, but "whether the principal process of exploitation of which the target group is the major victim is being reduced by virtue of the increasing strength" of the group, its capacity to alter "the course of social processes" in a fundamentally different way.

Again, translating these diverse thoughts to specific situations is a joint task of researchers and development agencies with a commitment to the disadvantaged. The globality of the focus is undeniable, however. In the words of the Catholic Relief Service, in each project that is carried out the peasant is and ought to be the author of his destiny. But the goal is more than this. "It is through concrete projects in which the peasants have the opportunity to bring into being achievements which are translated in the realization of man and of all men of the countryside" (CRS 1977, p. 1).

Linkages, then, refer to the "points at which exchanges (information or energy transfers) actually take place" (Landau 1972, p. 94); they are crucial for the existence of the organization and for giving the organization a role in broader processes of social change. But the concept of linkage can mean more than a connection of the organization to its environment. The environment may also connect to the organization by bestowing a certain legitimacy on it. One of IAF's social gains indicators is "legitimacy," where the IAF beneficiaries' "cause is being recognized as valid and their demands are just and reasonable" (IAF 1977, p. 76). In Esman's words, "institutionalization means that the organization and its innovations are accepted and supported by the external environment" (Esman 1972, p. 35). For many development agencies, legitimacy means the ability of the organization to secure funding from other agencies. What is often forgotten is that this indicator may only emerge after a long period of

institutional struggle or even after the organization has changed its goals so as to be more accommodating to the society in general or to a particular political current in it. The delicate balancing of linkages is a constant tension within base organizations as in other types of organizations. The issue is under what conditions is isolation, autonomy, the cutting off of linkages more important than the achievement of a stable relationship with the organizational environment including the legitimacy of the organization.

4.3 Attitudes

The third major category of base organizational development refers to the mental processes of the organization's members. At the CRS seminar in Cali, despite the obvious difficulties involved in assessing mental processes, the question was of paramount importance. The IAF social gains indicators also refer prominently to this dimension. The Haque et al. (1977) approach conceives of attitudes as a central category of analysis and action.

There appear to be three basic attitudinal processes that reflect organizational development. The first is the development among group members of a capacity to reflect critically on the problems affecting the group and the individuals who compose it. Achieving some degree of this critical awareness is what Haque et al. (1977) say is among the first steps in creating an organization, an awareness that "de-links" the target group from the psychological controls induced in them by the society in which they have functioned. This de-linking or reduction of psychological dependency may be quite modest at the first stages of organizational development, and may result from some natural calamity such as flooding, or as part of a reaction to social injustice such as land foreclosures. The sign that some progress has been made is the decision to take collective action and not await the action of other social groups.

The CRS procedures in Central America focus on the analysis of reality as a separate element in group decision-making. Critical analysis implies the exploration of the causes of problems as they derive from the interactions of the wealthy and the poor, again a stepping outside of the psychological dependencies inherent in most social structures.

This de-linking implies further that an idea of group identify is being developed apart from the general social position in which the individuals in the group had been imbedded. Critical awareness is an ability to reflect on ones reality, on the origin of ones problems, and on the viability of collective action to achieve some relief. But this awareness is also a consciousness of others in this same position, on the identify and potential of the individual in the group.

This group identity leads us into a second attitudinal dimension which has to do with a sense of solidarity of the individuals with the organization as such, a sense of group commitment. This orientation of the organization's members refers to "an affinity among the target group that makes them stay together and turn to each other for material and emotional support, a concern for each other's well-being, and an urge to have constructive dialogues with each other about issues of individual, mutual and common concern" (Haque et al. 1977, p. 128).

This commitment to the organization may have its roots in the traditions of the community (see Dore 1971), especially where some aspects of the means of production are managed collectively. This tradition of cooperation could be the focal point of first activities to stimulate organizational development, especially in the line of rural cooperatives.[*] The basis of this commitment probably lies both in past experiences or traditions of cooperation as well as in the constant testing of the organization's contribution to the member's goals (Olson 1971). It is affected by actions of others in the organization,

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[*] See Bennett 1978 for more on this question of compatibility of cooperative forms.

how trustworthy they are from the point of view of each member, how predictable their actions are, and how the leadership protects the interests of the members.

This group solidarity or collective spirit is often a fragile bond, which nonetheless plays an important role in organized action. The commitment of a number of individuals to the group feeds into what the IAF book calls discipline, or the situation where "peer group pressure becomes the only necessary means of effectively supervising and enforcing work responsibilities" (IAF 1977, p. 76). Each individual's commitment to the group in a context of commitment provides the checks and balances that Dore (1971) calls "institutionalized suspicion" (Dore 1971, p. 52), and which he observes is the basis for modern forms of cooperation, meaning large, highly differentiated, often impersonal, bureaucratic organizational forms. Ironically, apparently it is the doubts about commitment combined with this very commitment to the group that enables these mechanisms of discipline to function.

A third attitudinal dimension of organizational development is creativity. Perhaps as a result of the critical awareness and group solidarity, the members of the organization sense a new freedom of thought and are able to develop this creative spirit, this "urge to innovate, to seek new resources, to seek and innovate new technology, to make organizational and administrative innovations, to make experiments, to solve problems and not to run away from them or expect others to solve them" (Haque et al. 1977, p. 129).

The IAF experience is quite similar to this notion of creativity. Their view is that creativity is a result of the organizational development process, where the individuals involved have a more "positive and innovative view of the beneficiaries' relationship to their milieu" (IAF 1977). They are able to create new forms of relating to their environment. But of special importance for IAF is the ability to engage in long-range planning and the disposition to postpone immediate gratification if this long-range goal is accepted.

Perhaps this creativity is at the heart of the call for more participation of local organizations in the development process. The local people's knowledge of local problems and capabilities in combination with the enlarged opportunities offered them in the various types of rural development projects can yield highly innovative ways for implementing the projects, of adapting them to local conditions. But in this paper, creativity is not so much instrumental in the achievement of a project manager's goals, but an integral part of the growth of the organization's capacity to solve problems which it faces as an organization and which in turn reflect on the micro-problems faced by each member.

5. Summary

This attempt at switching the means-ends logic of development practice is the basic thrust of this paper. The institutional question is the central question, understanding by institution those *means* whereby elements in the social reality are defined as problems and those *structures* for making decisions about how to solve those problems. What has been attempted here is an illustration of what some of the more commonly used dimensions of this institutionality are. There are many such dimensions, many that we have not included in this analysis of problem-solving capacity. Moreover, the dimensions selected obviously are interrelated, changes in one affecting changes in the other.

FIGURE 2
Dimensions of organizational problem-solving capacity
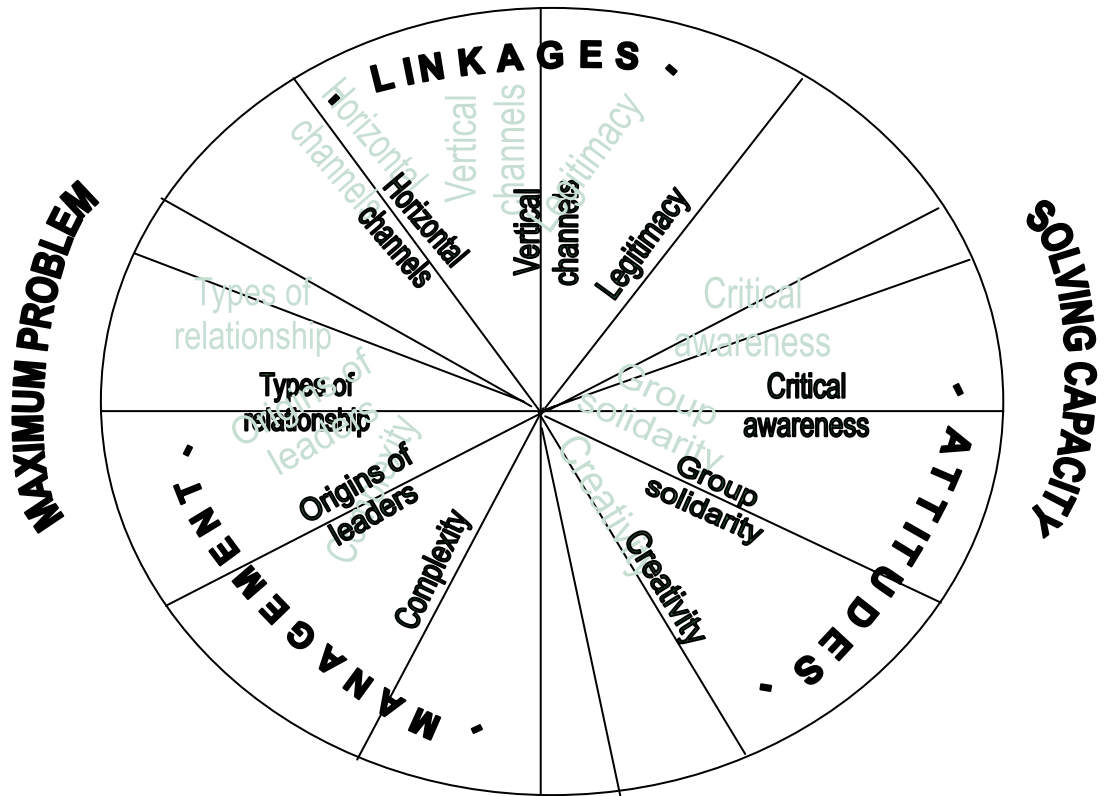
What we have selected could be summarized in a fashion similar to the "sociogram" used by Haque et al. (1977). Figure 2 visualizes the dimensions of organizational development which we have discussed as spokes on a wheel, as separate dimensions of the phenomenon under study but as interrelated and part of an ongoing process. As the analysis and experience with this process grows, reconstruction of this wheel could be undertaken.

The process of organizational development involves movement from the center, a state of non-organization, an incapacity to solve group problems, to the periphery, where we assume there to b a maximum capability to solve problems.

These dimensions of the capacity to solve problems are interrelated and probably movement along each dimension itself creates new problems for the organization to face. Nonetheless, the dimensions summarize what a number of observers have concluded to be central features of organizations as they move from the incipient, isolated, emotional stage to a stage where decision-making structures are more elaborate, rational, and well-integrated with a wider environment, which allows the organization to attack its problems on several fronts.

Having visualized how one might describe base organizational development is just part of the journey. Given that it is a proper and desired role of agencies to cooperate with this development, the question of what factors tend to favor and what forces tend to inhibit the development along these dimensions is a crucial one. For only by understanding these forces can development agencies fit their activities to the organization with any hope of success. This problem will be explored in a later paper.

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