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SOME FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECTED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES (VDCs) IN THE TEMA AND WEST-AKIM DISTRICT COUNCILS OF GHANA

presented by

Ellen Bortei-Doku

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

PhD degree in Sociology

J. William Beegle
Major professor

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SOME FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECTED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES (VDCs) IN THE TEMA AND WEST-AKIM DISTRICT COUNCILS OF GHANA

by

Ellen Bortei-Doku

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to

Michigan State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Department of Sociology

1984

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ABSTRACT

SOME FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECTED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES (VDCs) IN THE TEMA AND WEST-AKIM DISTRICT COUNCILS OF GHANA

by

Ellen Bortei-Doku

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of some environmental factors on the effectiveness of Village Development Committees (VDCs). It focuses on 18 VDCs in the Tema District council and 12 VDCs in the West-Akim district council areas in southern Ghana. It was hypothesized that the effectiveness of VDCs is positively related to effective leadership style, high levels of access to resources and high levels of inter-organizational linkage.

Data from the 30 VDCs were obtained through personal interviews with the chairmen and secretaries of the VDCs, and from 90 informants (3 in each village). Additional information was obtained from government officials and documents and other documentary sources.

Only nine VDCs (4 in Tema district council and 5 in West-Akim district council) were found not to be engaged on any project at that time of the study. Contrary to popular opinion leadership was found to be independent of VDC effectiveness in our study. However, a positive relationship was found between access to resources (especially financial and raw material resources) and VDC effectiveness, which

supported our expectations. A weak positive relationship was also found between inter-organizational relations and VDC effectiveness. A significant proportion of the Committees with on-going self-help projects reported below average or average progress in the one year period. Several of the 30 Committees said they had high levels of leadership, and several of them reported low access to resources. This reflects the center-periphery nature of rural-urban relations in Ghana. A historical analysis was also conducted which examines the evolution of the Committee in the context of the political economy of the country. It was concluded that VDCs would make better progress on self-help projects if a comprehensive decentralization process were to be implemented in Ghana, which would redistribute economic and administrative resources in the country.

For my parents,

brothers and sisters

and friends.

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Ford Foundation made it possible for me to attend Michigan State University, through various academic and research fellowships. I deeply appreciate this opportunity. My sincere thanks also go to The Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research (I.S.S.E.R.) for accepting me as a member of their research team, and for logistics and other kinds of support which enabled me to conduct research in Ghana.

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My special thanks go to the presidents and chairmen of the Village Development Committees in the villages included in my study, for enduring the long interviews. Also, the staff at the Eastern Regional Administration in Koforidua, the West-Akim district council staff, as well as the staff of the Greater Accra Regional Administration, and the staff of the Tema district council have earned my appreciation.

East Lansing, Michigan

U.S.A.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION: THE NATURE OF VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES (VDCs) IN GHANA

This dissertation focuses on the problem of organizational effectiveness and selected variables that promote or impede effectiveness. The object of our study is the Village Development Committee, a grassroots organization, viewed as the basic structural unit in the process of achieving rural development in Ghana. In addition an essential part of this dissertation is an exploration of the historical roots of VDCs. The position of Asafo Companies and Youngmens groups are given special attention.

This introductory chapter is divided into two sections. The first part discusses the problem of incompetence or ineffectiveness among Village Development Committees (VDCs), as well as some of their organizational, statutory and geographical features. The second part focuses on the increasing perception that VDCs could assume greater responsibility in the execution of self-help rural development programs.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF VDCs

The Problem of VDC Ineffectiveness

In a country that is about 70% rural, the relatively simple achievements of grass-roots organizations like the VDC become an integral component of the overall national development effort.

Although they do not possess any of the organizational complexities of higher levels of development administration in Ghana, the VDCs have been expected to perform a fundamental function in the rural development process, namely, to mobilize the mass population for increased agricultural production schemes, as well as infrastructural improvements. Unfortunately, the progress made by the committees has fallen short of official projections. Still, administrators and the rural populations are quick to point out the potential of the VDCs.

Individually some VDCs have made significant contributions to development in their villages, but collectively their total impact has been neglible. Informal interviews with officials directly or indirectly associated with rural development, reveal a lack of confidence in this grass-roots organization. Moral laxity, particularly financial corruption, is often cited as the major reasons for the apparent poor performance of VDCs. Some corrupt VDC members are said to be uncommitted to the welfare of their villages. Others have been accused of misappropriation, fraud and collaboration with outsiders to exploit the villages.(62:6) The malpractices associated with VDCs go beyond economic mismanagement and fraud. Political conflicts arising from manipulation of VDC members by both community-based and external power-brokers have become an integral aspect of the life of the Committees.(26,124) This subject is examined in greater detail in Chapter Two.

Other popular interpretations of VDC ineffectiveness attribute it to the ignorance and illiteracy of Committee members. It is claimed

that this makes it difficult for the Committees to take decisions on the development of their villages.[1] In all of the criticisms, attention seems to be focused solely on the internal problems of the Committees. The point of departure in this study emanates from the view that VDC effectiveness has wider dimensions than has been suggested. The study presents an alternative, extended strategy for investigating the subject.

Given the scarcity of certain major resources in the Ghanaian environment and the highly centralized control of these resources, this study of the VDCs proceeds on the assumption that effectiveness of the Committees is also a function of the relationships that exist between VDCs and organizations in their external environment. The general thesis proposed is that environmental inequality is a primary constraint on the ability of the Committees to achieve their goals. Leaders in the external environment have avoided making real commitments to the transfer of scarce resources to grass-roots organizations like the VDCs. Some of this lack of commitment is evident in the way in which Committees have been recognized and defined by the government.

---

[1] The assumption behind the mass literacy campaign was that illiteracy is equated with ignorance, and therefore retards progress. Mass educators in Ghana attempted to fight this by teaching simple literacy, and simple community improvement schemes. In a similar situation Freire adopted a totally different approach, which focused on teaching the language of class interests and exploitation by the ruling class. His aim was to raise the consciousness (concientization) of the masses. Freire P. Pedagogy Of The Oppressed. Penguin Books. Britain. 1977.

It is important to note that there are other rural organizations in the villages also involved in development projects, sometimes in collaboration with the VDCs. These are usually special interest groups such as farmers' organizations, mutual aid societies, consumer societies and others. In addition, development nuturally takes place in the rural areas due to individual initiative, as people independently upgrade their economic and other practices. Therefore the presence of dormant VDCs, or the absence of VDCs in some villages does not imply a total lack of development activity in those communities. However, rural development in this dissertation will refer specifically to the development efforts of VDCs.

Government Recognition of VDCs.

VDCs existed for almost a decade before they were officially acknowledged by the Ghanaian government.[2] In the initial stages the general rural population appeared to believe that the VDCs would truly deliver them from deprivation and poverty. The people were willing to devote a lot of their time and other resources to the organization. This form of association also presented a happy compromise for the competing political interests at the time. VDCs were promoted as

---

[2] Ghana (Gold Coast) Welfare and Mass Education in the Gold Coast: Report of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. Accra, Ghana. 1953. This Report claims that the first VDCs were inaugurated in the Anomabu area in what is now known as the Central Region, in 1951. In 1963 the VDC was given statutory recognition by the Nkrumah administration. Ghana (Legislative Instruments). Village and Town Committee Regulations, L.I. 262. Accra, Ghana. 1963.

forums for chieftancy and the colonial government, as well as the ordinary people, to pull their resources together in the interests of their towns and villages. Several simple development projects were completed in those early post-war years.[3]

In the first local government ordinance drawn up by the British colonial government in 1951 (Ordinance Number 29), VDCs were mentioned as "positive voluntary organizations that should be encouraged to continue development work in the villages."(56) Similarly, in the second development plan of 1959, VDCs were described as "a vital force in the process of social change for improvement in the rural areas."(51) The Commissioner for Local Government in the service of the National Redemption Council (1972-1978) summed up popular official attitudes towards VDCs in the following remarks:

> "...perhaps the crucial bodies in this whole structure are the Town and Village Development Committees. Those will be reinforced and strengthened by the attachment of staff from the district councils. It is expected that these bodies will take up local projects of a very simple nature... To ensure effective coordination among the various bodies within the system, efforts will be made to select people who are already serving on Town and Village Committees." (51:26)

There is no direct evidence that District Council staffs were attached to VDCs, although this may have happened in some Councils. Still,

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[3] Ghana (Gold Coast) Report of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. Section 90. Accra, Ghana. 1954, reports that there were almost 2000 village development schemes progress or completed in 1953. By 1957 this figure had increased to almost 5700 (see Ghana (Gold Coast) Report of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. Section 84. Accra, Ghana. 1957).

officials often advertised the committees as a "framework at the grass-roots level, within which the energies and loyalties of our people may be effectively harnessed."(61) Statutory recognition for the committees came in 1963, with the enactment of a legislative instrument, L.I. 262, 1963. This specified the conditions under which VDCs may be established, and the functions they were expected to perform. This statute and subsequent statutes on VDCs are more closely analyzed in Chapter Two.

Definition of VDCs

Any attempt to define VDCs immediately raises the question of criteria. Nearly all social organizations at some point must decide between structure and function as the primary criterion for differentiating between organizations.[4] Arguments in favor of function are weakened by the fact that social organizations tend to address a wide range of issues, often covering judicial, deliberative and administrative subjects, sometimes at the same meeting!(183:3-4) The principal objective of this VDC study focuses on the purpose rather than the structure of the committees. Function therefore becomes the major context for defining the concept of VDCs. However, the committees are usually described as loosely structured, highly flexible and sometimes ad hoc rural organizations.[5] An organization can also be

[4] The idea of structure broadly incorporates concepts of formal, informal and the extent of complexity of organizations. Function, however, depicts goals and purposes.

[5] Some of the Committees have established a pattern where they are revitalized for purposive action depending on the needs of the

defined by the initial force behind the founding of the unit, that is, whether it is grass-roots or imposed from outside. Quite often grass-roots organizations are thouht of as arising out of indigenous initiative, but many times they have mixed origins. As in the case of the VDCs, many local organizations are initiated by a mixture of forces, both inside and outside the locality. Despite this, the committees will be referred to as grass-roots organizations in this dissertation. Generally the major objective of the committees is to plan and implement development schemes, particularly in the area of social amenities, and to some extent to promote economic projects. Frequently, also, VDCs find themselves caught in debates and confrontations over judiciary and political matters.(24)

VDCs have rarely been criticized as an imported form of grass-roots organization. Most people regard them as an adaptation of the age-old tradition of community discussion assemblies, where:

> "At every meeting every villager was given the opportunity to express his views on the problem under discussion...The final decision was taken after all opinions expressed had been considered by the chief and elders."(73,No.496)

As the committees became more organized in the sixties and more strongly associated with local government, every effort was made to separate chieftancy powers from VDC authority. The committees were constantly reminded of the need for this separation. The government

---

community (See Ghana (Tema District Council) Town and Village Development Committees. File 12, Vol. 2. Tema Ghana, Article dated 1/4/72).

argued that VDCs needed to devote themselves to modernizing their villages rather than getting involved in traditional matters. This was no doubt a gross simplification of the forces at work in the rural areas. Soon conflicts broke out between the committees and the traditional councils of chiefs and elders. The situation was further complicated by ambiguous government directives on the expected relationship between the councils and VDCs.

Most definitions of VDCs in Ghana have been limited to a description of their activities, as attempts to treat the subject more comprehensively have proven to be difficult. Part of the problem has been attributed to the relative freedom with which town committees have been allowed to grow. This has naturally encouraged significant varieties in their structure and function.(26:309) Differences have been noted particularly in the size of committees, their methods of selection, composition and style of office-holding.(26)

Judged by their pronouncements on VDCs it is clear that administrators in Ghana have been striving to establish councils similar to Bailey's arena councils, especially the types described as "Community-in-Council."(123:14-5) This form of organization is described as a committee that is distinct from its public, comprised of sectional representatives and vested with certain powers. Distinctively, Community-in-Councils allow participation by all members of the community. Even though the VDCs have evolved more or less along these lines, fair representation remains one of the biggest sources of

conflicts on the Committees.[6] Diagram 1.1 describes the organizational structure of the VDCs.

Membership of VDCs

Initially VDCs were apparently open to community influentials and ordinary citizens with exemplary records. In reality the VDCs at this time were monopolized by the traditional councils and their allies. Over the years, however, central government assumed control of the appointment of members to the committees. Directives were issued clearly stating the number of members permissible on the committees as well as those who qualified to serve. The most recent legislation on this issue stated that a committee should be comprised of no more than eleven, and no less than seven members.(59:2) In both the 1963 and the 1967 legislation on VDCs, the chief was accorded the position of president or chairman. The 1963 legislation was later interpreted to be a ceremonial gesture rather than an executive position, as political activists sought to replace the chiefs with local party functionaries.(60)

We found that neither the district councils nor the committees keep written records on the demographic characteristics of VDC members. VDC presidents in our study were therefore asked to describe at least seven members of their committees in the following areas: age, sex,

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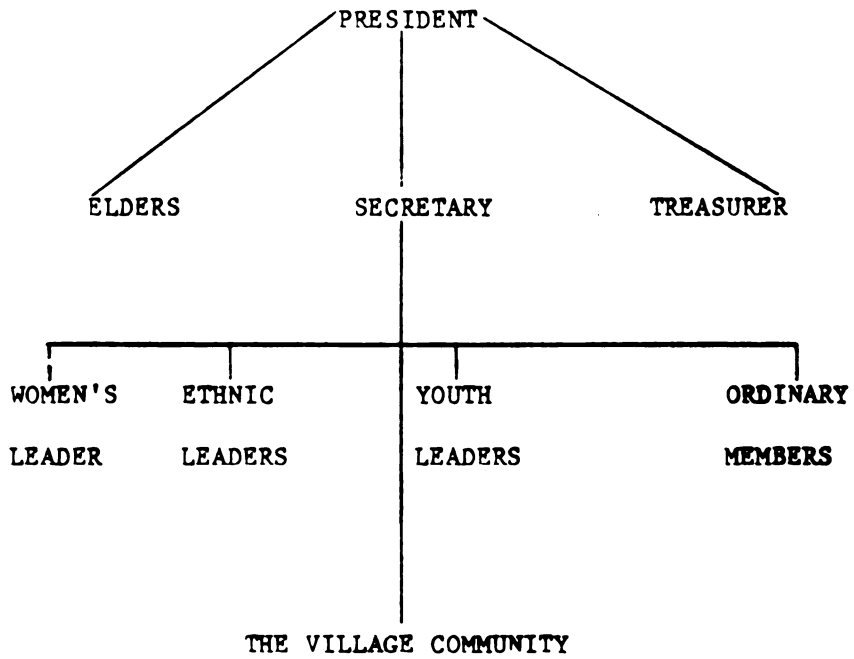
[6] As will become evident in Chapter Two the lack of fair representation has triggered serious VDC disputes. Many VDCs have been dissolved because of this issue.

DIAGRAM 1.1: Organizational Structure of VDCs in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils.



educational level, marital status, religious affiliation, occupation, social status, and place of origin. In the West-Akim district the presidents of the 12 VDCs selected for our study were able to describe the demographic features of 99 VDC members. In the Tema district the presidents of 18 VDCs selected were able to give information on 101 committee members.

Generally VDCs in West-Akim appear to have an older membership than their counterparts in Tema. In the former case about 67% of the members were said to be within the 45-74 age group, compared to 47% in the same group in the Tema district. Not surprisingly all the 30 presidents described the membership of their committees as predominantly male. Later, 30 female informants from each of the selected villages complained that the VDCs do not elect women to the top positions, nor do they encourage them to participate in the planning activities of the committees.

Also, at least 25% of all the 200 members described were said to have had elementary education but many of them can be described as functionally illiterate. In addition, a majority of all the committee members are described as married or engaged, they follow the Christian faith and are engaged in farming. The presidents further commented that the most important attributes that qualify people for VDC membership are respectability, influence, education and ethnicity. They gave relatively low priority to the factors of age, wealth and popularity. Later, however, we shall see that the presidents court wealthy persons to be patrons of the committees (See Appendix A for

Tables on the demographic features of selected VDC members in Tema and West-Akim district councils).

The Distribution of VDCs

Any figures on the number of VDCs in Ghana have to be regarded as estimates because of the very poor statistical records on the committees. Despite several instructions from the Ministry of Local Government to the district councils to keep records on the committees, there are very few longitudinal accounts of VDC statistics. The most comprehensive data on the committees should be in district council files, but unfortunately such data are not readily available and the cost of compiling them would be prohibitive. A reasonable body of data is available from the Community Development Department (hereafter to be referred to as CDD). This agency compiled annual statistics on the distribution of VDCs from 1959 through 1971, but unfortunately this does not include a regional breakdown. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 are based on data from CDD and the Advance News Magazine of CDD, as well as files of the Ministry of Local Government, Tema District Council and West-Akim District Council. The number of villages in Ghana was derived by simply adding all settlements under a population of 5000, which officially distinguishes between villages and towns or cities in the country. The Ghana One- Year Development Plan (1970) estimates the number of villages between 200 and 2,000 population at about 8,000. Others like Awunyo-Akaba have estimated the number of villages in the country at about 50,000.(10:1)

TABLE 1.1 Number of Village Development Committees in Ghana, by year, 1959-1971 and 1981.

Year	Number of VDCs	Percent of Total all Villages*
1959	2,341	22
1960	1,200	11
1962	3,022	29
1963	6,088	58
1964	5,162	49
1970	3,040	29
1971	2,531	24
1981	3,263	31

*Total number of villages in Ghana is approximately 10,753 (population less than 5000).

Source: Annual Reports of CDD, Advance Magazine, Files of the Ministry of Local Government and Tema and West-Akim District Councils, and the 1970 Ghana Population Census.

Table 1.2 shows a regional breakdown of the estimated number of VDCs in each of the nine regions, in 1981.

Except for the Ashanti and the Eastern Regions, there is no direct link between the number of villages and the total number of VDCs in a region. However, there appears to be an interesting relationship between the distribution of committees and the extent of centralization in the indegenous political structures in the different regions of the country. Notably, the regions with highly structured vertical political institutions and extensive chieftancy powers, also have the highest estimates of VDCs. Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo and the Eastern

TABLE 1.2 Number of Villages and Number and Percent of Village Development Committees, by Region, 1981.

Region	No. of Villages	No. of VDCs in Region	Percent of Villages with VDCs
Upper	1595	127	8
Northern	835	108	13
Brong-Ahafo	1022	483	47
Ashanti	1612	842	52
Eastern	1517	680	45
(West-Akim)	(264)	(130)	(51)
Volta	1585	242	15
Western	986	253	25
Central	991	406	40
Greater	600	124	20
Accra (Tema)	(318)	(60)	(19)
TOTAL	10,753	3,265	30

Source: Ghana Population Census, 1970, Ghana Ministry of Local Government Files.

Regions fall in this category. One might speculate that villages in such regions may be predisposed to the formation of VDCs because of prior experience in organized participation in public affairs.(16,14) As will become clear in Chapter Two, other factors may account for this type of distribution. With an impressive 51% of its villages with VDCs, the West-Akim District Council seems to have more active villages

than the Tema District Council which has a VDC rate of only 19%. Public officials in the Tema area concede that VDCs have declined in importance. No explanations are offered but the impact of a rapidly expanding capital city and industrial city of Accra and Tema, respectively, cannot be overlooked. (West-Akim and Tema were the sites in this study.) VDCs are bound by the same rules and regulations in all the regions, although district council's seem to exercise considerable discretion in the supervision of the committees.

THE FUNCTIONS OF VDCs: A FRAMEWORK FOR SELF-HELP RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The officially stated functions of VDCs have not changed much over the years. In the new local government directive of 1974, VDCs were expected to continue their role as liaison officers between the village and the district council. More specifically, "Town/Village Development Committees... also have to organize and supervise several sanitation and cleanliness projects of the village...and encourage the people to undertake self-help and voluntary work."(62:6) For both external agents and the VDCs, the organization is a means to an end, namely, the infrastructural development of the rural areas. It is not surprising, therefore, that the committees occupy a central position in rural development in the country. VDCs have become the channel for self-help programs all over Ghana.

Self-help development in Ghana describes the efforts of rural communities to improve their living conditions through communal mobilization of material and non-material resources. The practice has existed for a long time and some even claim that it predates colonialism in the country. Through Asafo companies, traditional states in the past had mobilized local resources for communal welfare, especially for defense purposes, sanitation and labor exchange. A century of colonialism and the consequent loss of autonomy and control by chiefs introduced new dimensions into the indigenous perceptions of collective responsibility.(89:1-60) The creation of a nation-state for example also implied that certain communal responsibilities had to be surrendered to the colonial government. Labor exchanges where communal groups provided farm and other kinds of labor for members in rotation, also collapsed in competition with wage labor. In addition, monetized wealth offered new social and economic security, which greatly encouraged feelings of individualism in the country.(89) As the colonized population abdicated its power and control over land, mineral and other resources, it developed dependence on the foreign power. Soon villages and towns were demanding social improvements similar to developments around the forts and castles which housed the colonialists.(89)

Assistance from the colonial government and post-independence governments hardly met the expectations of the rural population. It is difficult to say exactly how much public resources were devoted to rural development in the past because of the manner by which national

accounts are categorized in Ghana. Accounts for government expenditure on community services are used here as a rough indication of the extent of resources allocated to rural development. From 1961 to 1966 the Nkrumah administration spent an average of 7% on community services -- the lowest average government expenditure on any category.(53) By 1978 this figure had made a modest climb to 10% but it remained the lowest average expenditure. The largest expenditure throughout this period was on social services, which is another name for urban services in Ghana.

Village self-help projects still remain the major vehicle for social progress in the countryside. The people usually plan their projects around the most economically rewarding activities such as road and market construction, and schools which have both political and economic benefits.(89:8-9) Field officials have reported that VDCs are less eager to undertake self-help projects, such as sanitation schemes, which do not appear to have any immediate economic benefits.(73)

Like Ghana, many African nations have adopted the concept of self-help as the basis of their rural development programs. Some claim to be motivated by moralistic feelings of the right to self-determination even at the village level, and others are attracted to the strategy for political considerations, suggesting that self-help nurtures the spirit of participatory democracy. Others have been quite blunt about the economic advantages they expect from such a process.(50:123) The Harambee self-help program in Kenya bears some resemblance to the

Ghanaian programs. Harambee is translated simply as the 'capacity to develop themselves'. It focuses on manipulating local and central government resources for the betterment of local communities.(103:31)

The idea of self-help is common in developed countries, too, even though the concept tends to have a different meaning here. Most self-help programs in the U.S., for example, appear to be directed toward the individual rather than the collective. They are also more associated with emergency situations, rather than a daily life experience.(80:viii)

Self-help, self-reliance and rural development are sometimes used inter-changeably in Ghana, but the last two concepts tend to refer to national programs rather than local development projects. Administrators are optimistic that such local programs could hold the key to bridging the increasing gap between rural and urban areas.(48-51)

Rural development is generally defined as a process by which progressive improvements in the living standards of rural people visibly occur. In much of the Third World such improvements are defined by infrastructural development and increased rural incomes. Basically, Ghana has maintained this 'project-oriented' approach to rural development, but, different governments have chosen different paths towards this goal. Their programs have emphasized one or more of the following:(91:30-1)

a. The social amenities approach
b. Economic development/agricultural development approach
c. The integrated project implementation approach

Policy statements of the Nkrumah Administration (1957-1966) and the Busia Administration (1969-1971) describe these different areas of emphasis quite well. After almost a decade of heavy government expenditure on infrastructural development, on the advice of the Lewis Report prepared by the well known Carribean economist, Arthur Lewis, (96,130), Nkrumah became disillusioned with the potential of that strategy. By the time the Seven-Year Development Plan was published, he had formed an alternative opinion. The Plan stated clearly that rural living standards cannot be improved by:

> "...pouring money into the villages to construct social amenities...the money for such village improvements can come from nowhere except the villages themselves. The rural population will, however, only be able to provide this money in proportion to the increase in its income."(50:62)

The government then made a commitment to intervene directly in the economic development of the rural population, through higher allocation of money to agricultural production. Despite this commitment, urban infrastructural development continued to dominate the minds of economic planners. In the Seven-Year Plan (1963-1970) this category still accounted for over 50% of the estimated total. Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup in 1966, allegedly over growing economic mismanagement in the country.[7] The Plan was naturally abandoned.

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[7] A group of army officers calling itself the National Liberation Council (N.L.C.) overthrew Nkrumah's Administration on February 24, 1966. The N.L.C. government then sold many of the on-going State economic projects to private foreign and local industrialists.

The Busia Administration (1969-1971) retracted the Nkrumah position on rural development. In its One-Year Development Plan (1970-1971), the new government took the position that:

> "Improvements in the living standards of the rural areas should not be measured in terms of economic facilities alone. The supply of potable drinking water, health and sanitary facilities, better housing, educational facilities and elementary community projects are equally important in promoting economic development."(49:13)

The ground-work for Busia's program had been carried out by the previous military government (National Liberation Council, 1966-1969) which established a Ministry of Rural Development, to coordinate pre-existing rural development programs with new ones to be introduced. (53:15) In addition to the social amenities strategy, Busia also envisaged the creation of service centers for infrastructural decentralization. The One-Year Plan described a service center as a "small or medium-sized town", where "a farmer could go without difficulty to procure inputs for his farm and sell his produce."(49: 120-1) Busia also never got the chance to test his plan, as he was overthrown in a military coup in 1972. The National Redemption Council after Busia (later known as the Supreme Military Council, 1972-1980) made an attempt to incorporate all the previous proposals in an integrated plan for rural development. Its major emphasis, however, was on agricultural development. This government is credited with slight increases in food production in 1974.(48:337)

Other African countries hold similar views on rural development. At a conference on the African Human Environment in Ethiopia, the Kenyan delegation defined the concept as:

> "A series of quantitative and qualitative changes occuring among a given rural population and whose converging effects indicate in time, a rise in the standard of living and favorable changes in the way of life."(105:6)

Unfortunately preoccupation with the subject has not resulted in a significant improvement in the living standards of rural Africa.

A prolonged economic crisis in Ghana has made it increasingly difficult for successive governments to honor their commitments to rural development. While much of the economic crisis can be attributed to poor management within the country, it has also been argued that heavy dependence on foreign resources and 'the extroverted character of production' has contributed significantly to the crisis.(4:45) The GNP fell by 6% from 1974 to 1978, accompanied by an inflation rate of about 70%.(52:19)

Generally governments in Ghana have accepted that sometimes material and non-material assistance must come from national coffers to supplement the efforts of VDCs in their self-help programs. A variety of assistance programs have been tried in the country, but typically they have been sporadic and of limited impact. The list includes block grants, grants-in-aid and matching funds, as well as technical assistance.(116:24-83)

The enthusiasm for self-help rural development overshadows some serious problems associated with that strategy. Ironically, the

spontaneity which generates self-help also makes it vulnerable to inadequate planning and supervision. In addition, frequent delays in the implementation of projects are quite common, partly due to inflexible bureaucratic structures which seem unable to respond to impromptu calls for assistance from VDCs. Furthermore, poor coordination between different government departments have particularly affected the operation and maintenance of certain VDC projects. School buildings without teachers and health clinics without paramedics are good examples of such problems. Given these potential problems associated with self-help, it is not surprising that certain quarters have expressed deep reservations about the method.(17,87)

The emerging science of cultural ecology readily admits that both human and natural environments can act as limiting conditions on human progress. This underscores another dimension of the controversy over the strategy of self-help, namely, that it over-simplifies the potential negative impact of environmental constraints. There is a call for clarity of conceptual boundaries which attempt to define viable social, economic and geographical units for self-help programs.(12:24) It is necessary to know, for example, to what extent environmental resources are available in relation to the technological level of their exploitation, and the legal, economic, and political rules governing this process.[8] Also missing in the literature on

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[8] In a country like Ghana the extensive foreign participation in the development of resources and trade in the Ghanaian economy makes it imperative that the control of resources is clearly understood by both local and central government. Multi-National companies play a central role in the process.

self-help in Ghana is the notion of power. How does the exercise of power both by the VDC and central government influence access to environmental resources? Rural Ghana continues to suffer increasing economic and political peripheralization. The process is aptly described by the center-periphery model of unequal development. This perspective links changes in social and economic structure in a given society, particularly Third World nations, to different spatial boundaries.(25) The model is based on the assumption that in certain political economies there are distinct centers of power presiding over peripheralized regions. Center-periphery analysis has been used to investigate underdevelopment in developing countries, where the center is the national capital and the periphery is the rural region. In this framework the low standards of living in the rural areas can be seen as a function of the nature of interaction between the two regions. In other words, growth and prosperity in the center is inversely related to decline and pauperization in the periphery.(110)

Within the framework of the center-periphery model, this study contends that VDCs in Ghana are operating in a peripheral region. Rural Ghana is the major contributor to the GDP, at an average of 49% through agricultural production.(35:9) Visibly very little of this contribution is reinvested in the rural region.[9] Following Furtado's thesis this research operates on the assumption that rural under-

[9] It is difficult to calculate the exact size of public expenditure on rural development because of the highly sectoralized nature of resource allocation in the country.

development is a special form in capitalist evolution, and therefore, rural Ghana is not in a transitional state "from pre-capitalist structures towards capitalism."(30,43:45) Rather the situation here symbolizes another type of modern capitalism.(43)

As was mentioned earlier one aspect of this study traces the historical origin of the VDC, based on literature review and informant information. The next chapter focuses on the historical development of VDCs in Ghana. The rest of our study examines the nature of VDC leadership within the periphery, the extent to which the committees have access to resources controlled by the center, the types of linkages that exist between the committees and the district centers and the impact of all these factors on the success of self-help development organized by the VDCs. This process is discussed here as a specific example of the nature of rural development in a peripheral region. Each of the factors is discussed in great detail in the next five chapters. The next chapter is devoted to the historical evolution of grass-roots activism and leadership in Ghana, including the emergence of VDCs.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE EVOLUTION OF VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

SECTION 1:

ASAFO COMPANIES AND YOUNGMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

Rural Ghana, which like other African agrarian societies is typically described as resistant to change,(98) has nevertheless been the subject of certain violent historical transformations that sometimes left permanent changes in the social and political organization of the people. Some insight into these experiences will help us to appreciate the nature and outcomes of indigenous efforts at rural mobilization and activism in the country. In this chapter the names Gold Coast which was what the British named the country, and Ghana, which was adopted after independence, will be used interchangeably.

Historically, the rural population in Ghana has been an active participant in more than five centuries of international trade, marking different phases of the development of world capitalism.(125) Ghana is described as one of the regions to have suffered the heaviest raid during the mercantilist slave trade period from the 1700s to the 1800s. This was followed by a period of colonial occupation by Britain, from about 1874 to 1957, that enabled the consolidation of imperialist control over the economic resources of the country.(83:147-180) By the time of independence in 1957, the country was a full-fledged dependent, neo-colonialist nation. Her basic socio-economic, political and other structures had been reshaped in the service and interests of the world capitalist system.(114)

There is an abundance of literature on agrarian revolts in Europe, Asia and Latin America. It is popularly beieved that in these places peasant insurrections made critical contributions to the success of social revolutions.(135:112) In contrast very little interest has been shown by social scientists in the indigenous forms of rural mobilization in Africa.(132) A historical study of VDCs reveals that Ghana has had a long history of rural mobilization processes, even under the adverse conditions of colonialism. Such processes acquired organizational forms that at different periods emphasized different interests, in response to the changing socio-economic and political factors of their time. The types of political alliances that developed at each phase also come into our focus, as well as the limitations and opportunities for rural mobilization that accompanied each phase.

This section of Chapter Two is divided into two parts. The first part addresses the most prominent community organization in the latter half of the nineteenth century, namely the Asafo company. The second part focuses attention on the changes that took place in this basic structure which resulted in the emergence of a different type of organization around 1915, following the military defeat of the indigenous states of the Gold Coast.

ASAFO COMPANIES IN GHANA, 1855-1910

Although there are very few publications on Asafo companies in Ghana, there is a considerable wealth of information on the

organization to be found in the files of district and regional archives. Unfortunately, the financial and time constraints on a study such as this one make these documents virtually unavailable. Simensen's work on Asafo companies in Akim Abuakwa is one of the few extensive published works on the subject.(132) The Akim Abuakwa area is in the Eastern Region and overlaps with the district now known as West Akim. Atta and Porter's study of the companies also provides a good chronological account on the companies.(19) Other works on Asafo companies appear as sections of studies on chieftancy and politics in Ghana.(89,6,19) In most of these references there is a suggestion that in their time Asafo companies were a potential instrument of rural mobilization, but unfortunately this proposal is hardly elaborated upon. Our study also assumes that Asafo companies presented some possibilities for rural mobilization and that the VDC organization reflects the evolution of this tradition. Furthermore, the factors which limited the achievements of Asafo companies may have certain implications for VDC effectiveness in contemporary Ghana.

Asafo companies, literally translated as "war people" were commonly described as military-type organizations.(89) Although this was their original purpose, they later came to acquire broader characteristics that will be discussed below. The companies were particularly widespread among the southern states of the Gold Coast and were directly associated with the Akan political structure.(19:279) Typically every village was divided into wards or Asafos, led by a company chief or Asafohene. The ordinary citizens or Asafomma elected

somebody to this office on the basis of his or her service to the community. This position was almost invariably held by men. Traditionally the Asafo companies were supposed to have direct influence on the selection of a chief in a village or town. The chiefs were selected to the Stool through an indigenous democratic process that involved a committee of kingmakers led by a master kingmaker or Gyaasehene. The chief's nomination and enstoolment from a choice of one or two royal families had to be approved by the Asafo companies. (89:147; 132:27) In addition:

> "...they had the right of petition and could under special circumstances initiate depositions or destoolments by placing charges against the chief before the royal family and the council of elders". (132:27)

Through this network of company chiefs, the commoners were expected to participate in the decision-making processes of their society. This bears a close resemblance to basic democratic institutions at the local level all over the world.

The chief and his council of elders relied heavily on the Asafo companies to mobilize public support for policies and pronouncements of the traditional authority. Even when the companies respected this privilege, as regulators of the system, they tried to protect whatever democratic practices were available to them.(6) At first, on the side of the chiefs the companies frequently became involved in confrontations over the penetration of colonial power and control. Many such conflicts were marked by violent protests and the destruction of colonial property.

British military conquests and territorial control of the Gold Coast gradually eliminated a significant proportion of the military functions of the Asafo companies. It took over thirty years, however, to finally crush the organization and the influence of the companies. (89:142-3)

Chiefs and their company captains who were regarded as stumbling blocks or threats to British security were deposed or exiled to other parts of Africa, the West Indies and even Britain.(89:210;3) Earlier in 1892, a Native Customs Ordinance decreed powers to the district commissioners to restrict company meetings if they were likely to lead to disturbances. Again in 1909 district commissioners were instructed to stifle companies that were still active. Soon after, the government issued an ordinance vesting it with power for destooling or enstooling a chief.(89)

Whenever the kingmakers failed to produce a favorable candidate, the British "appointed" their own candidate in direct contravention of the laws of succession in the indigenous society. However, the companies found other outlets for their activities. Their political and social involvement in the affairs of their localities expanded, and the concept of Asafohene as war captain was in some places replaced by the idea of an Asafoakye, an "Asafo father" or social leader, who was quite likely to be elected from the file of the company. Of course the electorate often deferred to certain families, particularly to the sons of the previous leader.(39:26-7) The emergence of the Asafoakye can be seen as a sign of differentiation in political powers, or a

"detachment of the Asafo from the traditional authority structure". (132:28)

Chiefs did not react favourably to the independent outlook of less militarilized Asafo companies. As a demonstration of this disapproval they refused Asafoakyes seats on the traditional council. By now the commoners had formed an opinion that chiefs were not competent to confront and negotiate with the colonial master.(132) In response the companies initiated a riot of traditional authority that led to several destoolments of chiefs all over the southern half of the country. In Akim Abuakwa alone at least 35 chiefs lost their office by the 1940s.[10]

From a historical perspective it is difficult to separate the political interests of Asafo companies from their participation in the development of their localities. Indeed one of the sources of irritation with the chiefs was said to be their apparent inability to modernize the towns and villages.(132) In this context the companies do not appear merely as a "kind of public works department" of traditional authority.[11] The Paramount chief or Omanhene of Akyim on

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[10] Simensen, J. Rural Mass Action in the Context of Anti-Colonial Protest: The Asafo Movement of Akim Abuakwa, Ghana. Canadian Journal of African Studies. Vol. 8, No. 1. 1974. Pp. 25-41. Chiefs were successfully destooled in some places despite a Chiefs Ordinance enacted in 1904 by the colonial government, which gave it the power to over-rule destoolments by Asafo Companies and other radical elements. Ghana (Gold Coast). Legislative Council Minutes. January, 1904.

[11] Field did not consider the companies to be a serious political threat to the government, and expressed confidence that the colonial government would control their riotious behavior. Field, M.J. Akim-Kotoku. Crown Agents For the Colonies. London. 1948. P. 27. Three decades earlier Casely-Hayford had similarly underscored the political importance of the companies. Casely-Hayford, J.E. Gold Coast Native Institutions. London. 1903. Pp. 109-111.

several occasions sought to reinforce the image that "the Asafo system was intended as an instrument in the hands of chiefs", he also reiterated that chiefs had the powers to appoint and dismiss companies. (39) Apparently under these circumstances rural improvement suffered considerably. As part of their frustration Asafo companies organized community boycotts of the chiefs' call to communal labour. The situation grew worse when it was realized that the British were passing requests for communal labor through the chiefs.(39)

Many writers have stressed the delicate balance of power that is said to have existed between the traditional ruling class and the commoners in this political structure.(6:113-4) However, the evidence suggests that there were both vertical and horizontal power struggles in the system. Nkrumah, Fanon and Cabral all argue that by this time classes were already in formation in this rural environment. (113,37,15) Simensen offers the idea that chiefs were "in a position to exploit political office for personal privilege".(39:28-40)

The underlying cause of tensions between the Asafo companies and the chiefs, and the colonial government, has been linked to economic factors. Colonial advancement in the Gold Coast paved the way for new forms of exploitation of the commoners. The commercialization of land, for example, through the development of mining and the cocoa industry "increased litigation between local communities over traditional land boundaries" and inspired a greater interest in public office "because of the new money coming to the stools from land sales." In this process chiefs were accused of collaboration with the colonialist for

the sale of communal lands, and appropriating the revenue for their personal use.(39) Also, the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1910 introduced by the colonial government mandated that commoners utilize traditional tribunals administered by the indigenous ruling class. This provided another mechanism for extorting the surplus wealth of the ordinary people.(39)

If previously the Asafo companies were recognized as a social organization for mobilizing the people for community work, by 1910 they were in the rudimentary phase of becoming a political awareness group. Over the years Asafo leaders became better educated and sometimes wealthier.(39)

Quite clearly the revolt of the commoners against rapid political changes in the society forced the chiefs into closer relationships with the colonialist for protection. But despite the harrassment that this organization is supposed to have caused the dominant power structures, it is obvious that they were successfully suppressed by colonial regulations as well as police and military corps stationed at district headquarters.(39) After 1910, district commissioners would frequently seize and ban all Asafo equipment such as flags and emblems.(39) Despite these pressures, the colonial government learned that the companies had laid a foundation for grass-roots organization. Soon a next generation of dynamic youth was to pick up the struggles of their fathers, some also carrying the name of Asafo companies. Today most Ghanaian villages still have ceremonial Asafo companies, many of whom participate in deliberations over community welfare. Along the coast the term Asafo is even used now to describe church elders!

YOUNGMEN AND IMPROVEMEMENT SOCIETIES: 1915-1949

In their efforts to control the indigenous institutions of Gold Coast peoples, the British nalayed a lack of understanding and gross oversimplification of these structures. Nevertheless, they imposed their own laws to govern or regulate marriage, religion, annual celebrations, funerals, agricultural property ownership, artistic expression, and travel, to name a few.(89)

Between 1902 and 1910, for example, Ga chiefs had to send several petitions to the colonial government for the right or permission to celebrate the traditional annual festival of the Gas known as Homowo. It marks the main harvest season and is also the main fishing period along the coast. The British feared such merry-making among the people would encourage other kinds of riotous behavior and proceeded to take control over its celebration.

Generally the chiefs were given additional powers over the people in areas where they previously had little or no influence. In effect, with each new legislation on chieftancy, the colonial government took away some of the democratic features of the traditional constitution. (39) Asafo companies disappeared from the scene only officially. At the same time that they were banned from organizing the public a modified protest group was emerging, sometimes under the same name. It is not clear how the members of these new associations were linked to the membership of the old Asafo companies. One might speculate, however, that some of these people may have been politically active all

along, but had deferred to the companies. By 1915 they were in the forefront of local politics, and came to be known as "the Young Men", written as one word, "Youngmen" in official documents.(9:xiii) The latter version will be adopted in this chapter. In some parts of the country they were referred to as Improvement societies. In many villages they were still called Asafo companies, Scholars Union, Christian Fellows, to name a few.[12] Until recently it was believed that such rural mobilization efforts were limited to the southern part of the country. Now there is evidence that rural activism existed in the northern parts as well at the same time as it was evolving in the south. There is no indication, however, that they were known by the same names. Colonial officials described these groups of activists as "rifraff", "ringleaders" and "mobsters".(139:64-5) Here we will focus on Youngmen's groups in the south, especially in the Eastern Region and Greater Accra Region.

It is generally agreed that the terms Youngmen and Improvement Societies both referred to "educated commoners, namely store-keepers, petty traders, clerks, junior civil servants and primary school teachers".(40:21) The major distinguishing factor between the companies and the new forms of association was the latter's higher educational levels. But generally there were many similarities in

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[12] Simensen, J., op cit. He maintains the concept of Asafo company in his discussion of the activist groups of the 1920s and after. Austin noted that Youngmen's groups were known by other names, such as Scholars Unions. Also, sometimes two or more such groups may co-exist in one town or village. Austin, D. Politics in Ghana. Oxford University Press. London. Pp. 98-102.

their goals. They shared similar objectives in their struggles against the system, especially in their rejection of the changes that were taken place in the institution of chieftancy. Both groups also rejected the colonial government's uninhibited interference in the affairs of the people.

Genoud describes the rise of the Youngmen as a dialectical response to the colonial situation and its accompanying subjugation of the chiefs.(49:169-71) Fitch and Oppenheimer identify a third source of conflict, namely the wealthy commoners who were seen as cooperating with the chiefs and the colonial government. These were lawyers, cocoa-brokers and others.(40:22) An often ignored factor of conflict between the ordinary people and the authorities was the sometimes forced recruitment of almost 100,000 able-bodied men into the Gold Coast Regiment during the second world war.(88)

Partly because of their higher education the Youngmen were more articulate, and appeared more organized. In addition, they showed greater geographical mobility, forming alliances with similar groups in other towns and villages.(89) In effect they established the basis for the development of a network of peoples organizations in the country. The nature of the Youngmen's groups is perhaps best understood in the context of the events by which they defined their aims and strategies. Their relationship with chieftancy and the native authority, as well as their latter involvement in the nationalist movement illustrate this point.

While it was obvious to many Youngmen that the colonial government had co-opted the chiefs into the general administrative structure of

the colony, this action was conceptualized and sold to the people as a system of indirect rule through the chiefs. The impact of such a declaration on an already suspicious and disillusioned commoners organization cannot be overstated. The Youngmen by this time believed that "real effective power had passed into the hands of a people of another race." They understood quite well that indirect rule was no more than a cliche for direct rule of the people, using the chief as an agent.(29)

In advocating for the system Governor Thomas of the Gold Coast reassured the government that:

> "...under indirect rule the chiefs or native authorities are not independent rulers — they are delegates of governor...the disposal of the annual revenue of the native administration and all its important executive acts...are subject to the guidance and advise of the Political Officer".(140)

The advocates of indirect rule in the Gold Coast had grand plans for the scheme. They proposed that under indirect rule chiefs should be given three-fold powers of a judicial, executive and fiscal nature. (140) In reality, however, the chief's powers were grossly reduced and redefined by the government. Their role as a security agent increased tremendously, as well as their functions as an executioner of colonial orders. For example, chiefs were given unlimited powers in carrying out their duties as "conservators of peace." They were to spare no effort in the maintenance of peace and order among the people.[13] There were extensive powers in the Native Administration

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[13] See the Native Authority Ordinances of the Gold Coast enacted in 1927, 1944, and 1946.

Ordinances of 1927, 1944, 1946 which were the legal documents of indirect rule, that enabled chiefs to arrest and detain criminals or unruly persons, to prevent riots, to suppress unlawful public organizations among others. In addition they were to execute all orders of the ordinances of the colony, or decree or order of the supreme court at the instruction of the governor or supreme court.(89)

Some analysts suggest that despite the democratic language used by the colonialists to describe indirect rule, as an opportunity to promote local government through the people's own indigenous political institutions, it was nothing more than a carefully planned military strategy, designed to control and "threaten the enemy with his own weapons"...[14] Initially no effort was made to appoint representatives of the common people to the native authorities, nor the state councils of chiefs. Some government officials especially in the department of Native Affairs, anticipated the potential danger in ignoring the popular representatives of the people. Following investigations into the role of the Improvement societies and Youngmen's groups in different parts of the country including Akim Abuakwa and Accra, in 1931, the Assistant Secretary of Native Afairs advised that "the Asafo should be given a legally recognized role in the local constitutions and accorded his permanent representation on the state councils." The government rejected his recommendations (39).

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[14] About thirty years before indirect rule became official colonial policy in the British territories, Rowe in 1882 had envisioned how this strategy would give the colonial power military control over chiefs and, therefore, direct access to mining areas in the Gold Coast. Kimble, D., op cit. P. 462.

Youngmen's groups expressed their displeasure with the collaboration between their natural rulers and the colonial powers in several ways. But the most striking expression of this conflict perhaps was the wave of riots against taxation in the country. In order to help overcome revenue declines as a result of the drop in trade duties during the depression years, the colonial government attempted to introduce direct taxation in 1931.(39) Chiefs were asked to organize the collection of taxes in return for fifty percent of the revenue. The new Bill caused such serious protests and demonstrations against the chiefs and the colonial government that it had to be shelved till a later date. Several chiefs were deposed in the process and the paramount chief of Akim Abuakwa had to be guarded by extra police from the colonial district office. Direct taxation had to wait until almost fifteen years later when taxes were collected in the colony and elsewhere, with the introduction of the Native Authority Ordinance in 1944.[15]

The collaboration between chiefs and the colonial government in the Gold Coast hurt the commoners in other relatively unexplored ways. Military requirements during the Second World War caused serious disruptions in family structures, unemployment in the wage-labour

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[15] Simensen, J., op cit. P. 37. Women were very active in these riots against taxation. In a review of the opposition against these events Shaloff describes how the women organized themselves in Accra to stone the Ga and Jamestown chiefs at a rally at Bukom Square in 1920, for failing to oppose the tax bill. Shaloff, S. The Gold Coast Water Rate Controversy, 1909-1938. Research Review. Institute of African Studies, Legon, Ghana. Vol. 8, No. 3. Pp. 21-34.

force, interruptions in agricultural and other economic activities and exposed the subordination of the chiefs.

Chiefs were ordered to recruit assigned quotas of men for the war, and they received recruitment expenses to aid this operation. A Compulsory Service Ordinance was introduced by the government to aid in this task. Some eligible men bribed the chiefs to leave them alone, but over 40% deserted to other parts of the country. Although recruitment was supposed to be voluntary, many men were forcibly recruited within the provisions of the Ordinance. For the chiefs this was an official method for getting rid of "troublesome Youngmen." Serious opposition to the ordinance flared up among the men, and riots occured all over the country resulting in death for some. By the end of the war, 70,000 wage earners, farmers, artisans, and petty manufacturers had served in the service. Food production was noted to have dropped despite assurances from colonial officers that the recruitment of soldiers would not affect food production. The government still retained over 28,000 soldiers in Asia after the war. (88)

Some of the hostilities against the chiefs and the government extended to the wealthier merchants of the Gold Coast, first as a consequence of competition for trading capital among the two groups. But also, the wealthy merchants belonged to the wrong camp as far as the commoners were concerned.(40) Typically they were members of what appeared to be the reactionary forces of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), whose prominent members like Nana Ofori Atta, the

Paramount chief of Akim Abuakwa and his half brother, J.B. Danquah had publicly expressed distrust and disgust at the radical activities of the masses led by Youngmen's groups.[16]

Although chiefs were generally united in their alliance with the government, and the consequent conflicts with the radical elements in the rural areas, there were some chiefs who joined forces with the Youngmen's groups and helped to organize against the other chiefs. Interestingly, the chief of Asamankese was very radical and had numerous confrontations with the paramount chief of Akim, who was his overlord. The coastal chiefs were particularly antagonistic against the colonial government and more or less remained in the forefront of anti-colonial protests organized by the Improvement Societies in this region.(39)

By the end of the Second World War, the stage was set for the radical forces of Youngmen's groups and Improvement Societies to assume a significant role in the development and spread of nationalist agitation in the country. This process started off as a series of demonstrations and boycotts against high prices and scarcities in the urban areas. The business community comprising of Syrians and Asians as well as Europeans were the direct targets of these attacks. The government aggravated the situation by announcing that it would remain

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[16] Fitch, B. and M. Oppenheimer. Ghana: End of An Illusion. Monthly Review Press. London. Wright reports Danquah's concise statement on this issue: "I don't like this thing of massess...It's emotion." Wright, R. Black Power. Harper and Brothers. New York. 1954. Pp. 220-228.

neutral in the conflict. Tensions continued to mount and finally erupted in the riots and looting of 1948.(45)

The confrontation was heightened when some ex-service men were shot dead by the governor's police guards. This marked the beginning of the end to colonial rule in the Gold Coast. For the first half of the year, Youngmen and similar groups moved around the country organizing people to strike against colonialism. Their grievances were described as of a political, economic and social nature.(149:7) Later in 1949, Youngmen's groups, Improvement societies and ex-servicemen unions were recruited by the Convention Peoples' Party led by Nkrumah, who had resigned as secretary of the relatively conservative and slow United Gold Coast Convention. Nkrumah protested for "Independence Now" through "Positive Action", and found a ready communication infrastructure in the Youngmen. In effect, they became the mass leadership or cadres of the independence movement.[17]

It is worth noting that the flight of the Youngmen into urban based politics was also partly due to the conflicts that broke out between the less radical and the more radical elements of these groups in the rural areas. Typically the colonial government discriminated against the latter, and moderates were given preference over others in the appointment of local representatives to the post-war management committees that replaced the native authorities.(9)

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[17] Nkrumah explains "Positive Action" as a neo-Gandhian passive resistance approach to mass protest. Just as in Gandhi's India, this strategy resulted in violent protests in Ghana. Nkrumah, R. The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah. International Publishers. New York. 1957.

Obviously the community development interests of Youngmen and Improvement societies were greatly compromised for their other related interests. In several places chiefs were unable to summon their citizens to communal labour. A district commissioner in the Western Province once remarked that "clearing the town and maintaining the roads are to a large extent regarded as duties to government rather than as services to the chief".(20) The Youngmen believed that since the colonial government was in control of the native authorities it should bear the responsibility for paying someone to undertake development projects.(20)

By 1950 when the Department of Community Development launched its mass education and mobilization program around the country, the rural areas were left with the members of the Youngmen's groups. They were those who were too cautious to participate in the on-going militancy of their associates, and tried to achieve their modest goals, such as access to the local power structures, through appeals and petitions to these establishments.(9) Perhaps it was this group that provided a nucleus for the formation of VDCs under the direction of the Department of Community Development.

CHAPTER TWO:

SECTION 2:

GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION IN MASS MOBILIZATION

The balance of political authority and control in the rural areas during the late 1940s in the history of the Gold Coast was far from clear. This created the opportunity for new forms of rural community leadership to emerge. By then many factions had begun to develop in the towns or large villages reflecting a multitude of new values and ideals.[18] In several situations this was basically a three-way struggle between traditional authority, non-royal moderates and non-royal radicals. The moderates were the diplomats of the day. They were much in favor of traditional values and institutions, but wanted to "effect a necessary constructive reformation."(9:97) However, they still showed disgust at the "prodigously extravagant expenditure on funerals by the Omanhene (the chief) and the Elders."(9)

This section first investigates how the colonial government capitalized on the state of confusion and uncertainty to develop its own vanguard in the villages and towns in order to counteract the spread of activism of the nationalist parties. The United Gold Coast Convention (U.G.C.C.) and the Convention Peoples Party (C.P.P.) were the two major political parties at this time. Mass education and later social welfare and community development provided the bureaucratic and extension strategies by which the government operation was implemented.

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[18] This might be described as a selective Westernization process characterized by Western education, religion and economic activities.

This section also examines the struggle for the control of the rural population, after Ghana gained independent in 1957. By that time the issue had become one of a confrontation between the ex-colonial institution, namely the Department of Community Development (CDD), and the newly established post-colonial office of Local Government (LOG). The significant differences in the approaches to the VDCs by these two external agents will be discussed extensively. Briefly, CDD tried to suppress tensions between traditional authority and the newly formed peoples organizations of VDCs. On the other hand, LOG in the 1960s attempted to reintroduce radicalism into rural mobilization and encouraged the VDCs to extend their participation in community affairs beyond strictly developmental concerns.

Interestingly, however, both external agencies issued VDCs with directives and in the case of LOG, legislative instruments which more or less circumscribed a one-way, top-down communication network, with the VDCs. It is argued in this chapter that constraining historical relations between VDCs and higher levels of authority, negatively affected the extent of influence and power that VDCs were to have in the future. Although chiefs and their elders may be seen as aggravating the problem through chieftancy disputes and their involvement in other local power struggles, it is the actions of central government which ultimately decided how much access VDCs would have to the scarce resources in the larger social system. This section is divided into two parts, each examining the two different periods in the history of VDCs. Throughout the chapter particular attention will

be devoted to some of the characteristic features of VDC members in the study areas.

The Legacy of Community Development.

Officially CDD was established to prepare a social development campaign for the country. The colonial government made the gesture in recognition of the fact that the authority of the traditional rulers was under direct attack from the radical elements of the people, to the point where it was almost impossible to communicate with them through the chiefs in many parts of the country.[19] Indirectly CDD was expected to develop alternative channels of communication with the general population that would forge a compromise between the political factions in the rural communities.

A government memorandum in 1949 described community develoment as follows:

> "...a movement to secure the active co-operation of the people of each community in programmes designed to raise the standard of living and to promote development in all its forms... This is to be achieved by new techniques and methods which have as their principal feature a strong emphasis on the stimulation of popular initiative. ...Those concerned with community development will be required to devote their attention both to economic and social needs. On the economic side the field includes subjects such as agriculture, cooperatives, communications and forestry. On the social side it includes health, welfare and education.
>
> ...Unless the enthusiasm and participation of the community can be secured in the interests of its own development, government activities are likely to affect no more than a fringe of the people."(55:85)

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[19] Section One of this chapter discusses the protests against the chiefs and the colonial government in the early part of the twentieth century.

A very comprehensive programme of development was envisaged for the rural communities. It was expected to lead to an emancipation which would not only improve the living conditions of the rural population, but also transform them spiritually, leading them to take charge of their own lives.(55) A significant proportion of the material and non-material resources required for this process was expected to come from local contributions. In a sense this pronouncement established self-help development as the official doctrine of CDD. Rural communities in the country may have embraced the self-help strategy because of its compatibility with indigenous methods of communal collective action. VDCs developed as the institutional framework within which this process would unfold.

But CDD proposed some attractive innovations in this already familiar self-help strategy which Youngmen's groups and Asafo companies had not enjoyed. CDD's legacy to the growth and survival of VDCs is especially reflected in administrative and technical support networks that were instituted at the district and sometimes local level, to promote the development activities of the committees.

In 1949 the first mass education team graduated from the School of Social Welfare in Accra. The team was made up of three teachers, one nurse, one welfare officer and a musician, a clerk and two ex-service men. They had been trained in communication and mass mobilization skills, physical education, first aid and teaching literacy. Music was introduced as a means of attracting people to the meetings or campaigns of COD field workers. The primary assignment of this team was to train

literate community leaders in the techniques of mass education. After their training, this new leadership group was expected to organize and conduct mass education in their respective villages and towns.(55:52)

The mass education program was initially tested at Peki-Blengo, a small town in the Volta Region of Ghana.[20] There appears to be no obvious reason why Peki-Blengo was chosen for the pilot study. We might, however, speculate that the town may have been less corrupted than some others by riotous Youngmen's groups. Also, there is evidence the population here was already accustomed to direct government intervention in the form of technical assistance.[21] Following the success of the Peki-Blengo experiment, several more campaigns were carried out in the region. By the end of 1951, mass education teams were posted all over the country. There is indication that mass education teams met with some initial resistance in other parts of the country. No mention is made of mass education teams in the Greater Accra area during this period, which is hardly surprising. Even though the mass education program was organized from Accra, it was also the

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[20] Peki in the Volta Region is reported to be one of the first places where farmers were forced to cut down diseased cocoa trees, to prevent the spread of the swollen shoot disease. This may indeed have prepared the town for other kinds of government intervention programs. Ghana (Gold Coast). Minutes of the 31st Session of the Eastern Provincial Council. Accra, Ghana. 1939.

[21] There is evidence that there were Youngmen's groups in the Volta Region as well as Asafo-fia, or companies. Until today they are said to be an important element in the composition of VDCs in the region. Dorlvo L.T.K. Village Development Committees: A Retrospective Look at the Evolution, Functions, and Some Problems of a Local Government Institution in Ghana. 1954-1968. Greenhill Journal of Administration. Vol. 4, Nos. 1 and 2. Pp. 95-102.

cradle of intense political activism, creating very unfavorable conditions for the introduction of any "peoples" program by the government.[22] In the Northern territory mass education was delayed for other reasons. The colonial government showed very little interest in the region, primarily because of its apparently low economic wealth. Its major significance was as a security zone for British control of the interior. Secondly, the literacy rate here was the lowest in the nation.(11:62-3)

The curriculum of mass education teams in each region was based on a standard pattern, but a lot of effort was made to tailor this to the peculiarities of the environment. Everywhere the mass education team was expected to train local voluntary literates in teaching literacy. They were also instructed in organizing health care (child care and sanitation), infrastructural projects and village entertainment. Literacy was given prominence because it had become a highly valued skill in the country. The colonial government was quick to recognize it as an "obvious start for an approach to community development." (55:50-3) By 1952 the Gold Coast had a literacy rate of about 10%, with a population of about four million. That year mass education officers were able to register 75,000 people in literacy classes.(73,No.49:4)

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[22] In the Fanti area the team of mass educators is reported to have encountered some hostility. They consequently confined their program to the more remote areas in the region. Ghana (Gold Coast) Welfare and Mass Education in the Gold Coast: Report of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, 1946-1951. The Government Printing Department. Accra, Ghana. 1953. Pp. 46-52.

By 1953 the new voluntary leaders trained by mass education officers were forming literacy classes, groups or committees in their villages. Initially the duties of the committees were limited to overseeing the logistics of mass education training sessions. Specifically they helped to recruit instructors, to organize meeting places, and to ensure peace and order at the meetings.(23:95) However, discussions at the meetings gradually shifted from literacy to wider community concerns. Of immediate relevance to most towns and villages at this time was infrastructural development.

Soon VDCs and self-help programs spread all over the country and became an integral aspect of CDD activity. Structural arrangements coordinated by CDD between 1950-1959 significantly contributed to the effectiveness of VDCs at this time. Over this ten-year period CDD established or helped to administer several support services for VDCs, namely: technical assistance (rural training centers and technical field units), financial assistance (local development committees) and citizenship education.

Rural Training Centers.

Rural training centers were the first CDD extension facility to be established. An experiment center was established at Kpetoe in the Volta Region to train community leaders, including women's leaders. The success of the Kpetoe rural training facility encouraged many more pilot training programs around the country. By 1966 there were 15 rural training centers in the country with at least one in each region. (73, No.49:14)

These centers were usually located in rural towns, and served three categories of people: COD field staff, voluntary leaders, and field staff from other government departments. In each region the training centers taught simple administrative skills, and also simple methods of accounting. In addition there was instruction on how to write proposals for self-help grants.(73,No.35:12-19)

Resources available to rural training centers were not always commensurate with the high expectations of them. Many were constantly plagued by inadequate and inexperienced staffing, as well as financial problems.(73,No.41:14-15) Apart from rural training centers, CDD also lobbied for technical assistance for the Committees. Machinery and skilled personnel pools were formed to provide this service.

Technical Field Units.

Early in its mass education and self-help program, CDD realized that the limitations on VDC progress was partly due to a lack of tools and equipment. By 1954 simple building equipment pools described as Mechanical Field and Technical Units had been established in some of the regions. In 1955 the Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board responded to a request by CDD to help finance 17 units, with at least one unit in every region. Every unit was equipped with block-making machines, tractors, concrete mixers, pick-axes, shovels, water pumps, graders and haulage machines.(53:67-8) Their main purpose was to give advice and assistance to villages engaged in self-help projects. A remarkable improvement was noted in the rate of completion, and quality of VDC projects following the creation of the technical assistance facility.

VDCs received other kinds of technical assistance. With the help of a UNESCO team a Visual-Aids Unit was set up under CDD, to help train field teams in visual-aid techniques. Generally the Visual-Aids Units were expected to guide rural populations to empathise and role-play the problems of the rural region. A wide assortment of instruments and methods were used in this process. The most popular were village drama or village concerts, mobile cinema shows, puppet displays, posters and pamphlets and village brass-bands.[23] Many times VDC morale was greatly dampened as financial problems inhibited the completion of self-help projects. CDD and the government attempted to overcome this problem through the creation of local development committees.

Local Development Committees.

A government memorandum in 1949 outlined a scheme for the creation of local development committees at each district headquarters. Each local development committee was allocated a sum of 2,000 to 5,000 British sterling pounds, for disbursement to the VDCs. Grants were distributed to match the contributions of a village by a formula known as matching funds, where VDCs received grants equivalent to their own contributions. Critics of the method have pointed out that this helped to perpetuate poverty in some areas of the country.(55:88)

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[23] Some of the popular programs of the Visual Aids team were: "Progress in Kodjokrom", a movie about local government and the payment of taxes. Also a song called "Cocoa Highlife" was used to explain the significance of cocoa to the Ghanaian economy. Ghana. Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. Accra, Ghana. 1960. P. 50.

Naturally wealthier towns and villages benefitted at the expense of the poorer areas.

The membership of local development committees caused some problems for CDD. The department's efforts to broaden the leadership base in the rural areas were seriously threatened by the reluctance of the old power structures to share power with new leadership elements in the community. Many members of the traditional councils maneuvered their way into the local development committees. However, in certain places special efforts were made to accommodate those who had been strong advocates of advancement in the area.(55) CDD also sent its own representatives to the meetings of the committees.

In some ways the local development committee acted as a truly decentralized unit. It was given maximum powers in the distribution of development funds, such that no self-help proposal had to go beyond this unit for approval and assistance. Although the actual amount of government assistance to the local development committee was relatively small, this played a significant role in financing self-help projects. Table 2.1 describes the general significance of central government assistance to self-help projects between 1957 to 1962.

Apparently two things may have happened after the 1959 financial year. Either central government assistance increased by 100%, or VDCs became more dependent on the government for assistance. As we shall see later, by 1959 VDCs had lost some of their original sources of sponsorship, at the same time central government made some increases in

TABLE 2.1. Central Government Assistance to Self-help Projects Between 1957 to 1962 (% of Total Costs of Projects).

Self-help Projects	Year 57/58	58/59	59/60	60/61	61/62
			(In Percent)		
Type of Project Schools	-	15	72	77	78
Community Centers and other communal buildings	22	7	29	96	83
Post offices and agencies	15	21	84	87	85
Markets and lorry parks	65	100	78	78	51
Latrines	90	-	99	92	94
Water supplies	90	-	79	66	87
Hospitals and Clinics	78	83	52	100	88
Average	51	32	70	85	81

Source: Madge C., R. Binamira, B. Gil and J. Bahet (1963). A United Nations Evaluation of The Contribution of Community Development to the Economic and Social Development of Ghana. Accra, Ghana.

assistance to self-help projects. Table 2.2 below explains this further.

TABLE 2.2. Government Expenditures on Selected Development Programs From 1957 to 1963 (% of Total Government Expenditures).

Financial Year	Total Government Expenditure	Type of Program			
		Education	Health	Community Development	Self-Help
	(In £g)	(In Percent)			
57/58	58,772	15	6	0.4	-
58/59	79,886	9	5	0.3	-
59/60	88,043	9	5	0.6	0.4
60/61	113,604	11	6	0.8	4
61/62	154,964	12	7	0.6	3
62/63	127,746	12	9	0.5	3

Source: Madge, C. et al., op.cit.

Less than an average of 3% was spent directly on the self-help projects during the six-year period, and the figures have not improved today.

One of the failures of CDD was that it was unable to build long-lasting relationships between the different political interests in the rural areas. Even as it was introducing its self-help program the department's activities were seriously interrupted by factional conflicts in the towns and villages.(73)

For example, effectiveness of the VDCs was further jeopardized when CDD encouraged the active participation of chiefs in the membership and functions of the DcCommittees.(73) Historically, representing traditional power relations, the chiefs brought certain conflicts and allegiances into the political life of the committees. Rival claims to the Stool and other kinds of chieftancy disputes were naturally brought to bear on the organization, which both divided the VDCs and created problems of legitimacy for the committees in the eyes of the public.(124:131-169) To this day, this continues to be a crucial issue in VDC politics in Ghana. One of the sample villages in the Tema district council, the incumbent chief and his rival have both established VDCs in the village! Tanzania has taken a more radical step on the issue of chiefs. The institution of chieftancy there was abolished by the government in 1963. However, it appears that the ex-chiefs and their families still have considerable influence on the affairs of their villages. A Cornell University study found that at least one-quarter of current village leaders were former chiefs, or came from the royal family.(42:47-70)

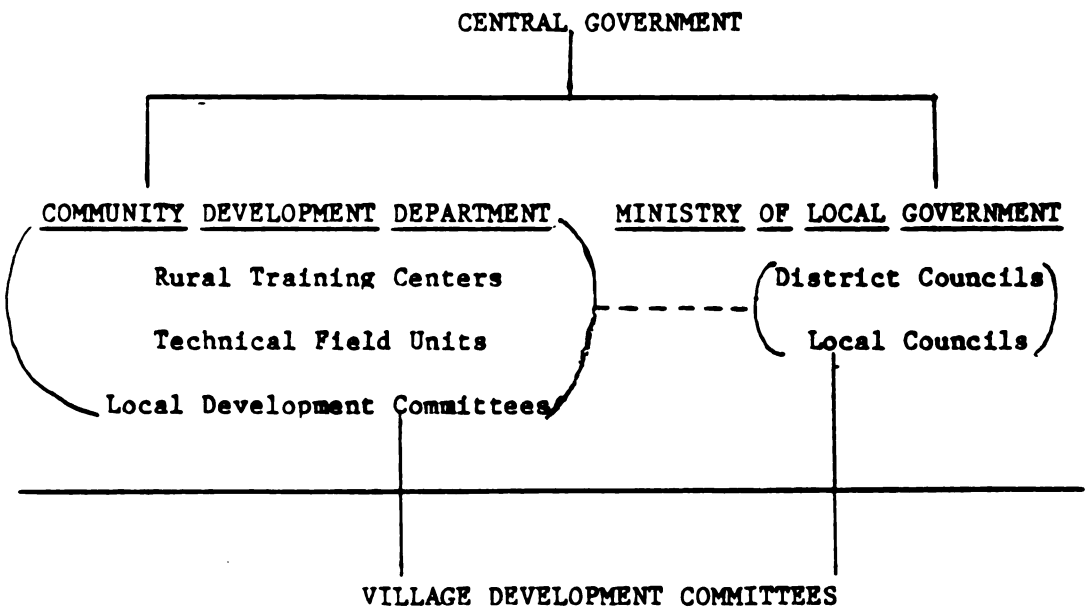
It is worth, noting that the direct participation of chiefs on VDCs may have declined in some parts of Ghana. In both Tema and West-Akim, less than 10% of Committee members were described as chiefs. Although in West-Akim 27% members were also said to belong to the traditional council, compared to only 8% in Tema. But even where they do not serve on the committee, chiefs usually appoint a representative to act as Chairman on their behalf! A decline in active participation

therefore is not necessarily an indication of waning influence. (See Appendix A, Table A.7.)

In an evaluative report a U.N. team highly commended CDD's programs, describing the agency as "a well-organized and effective program." The team proposed that the programs should be incorporated into the seven-year development plan for Ghana.(99:258) But the report also raised some critical questions about the CDD approach. First, it noted the excessive sectoralization and lack of coordination between this department and other government departments engaged in rural development, cautioning that it encouraged duplication and wastage in the delivery of services to the rural population. The Report also raised the classic question of social development versus economic development in rural programs, which Lele has discussed quite extensively. The team was biased towards the economic progress approach, and thus cautioned that CDD's programs over-emphasized social overheads, at the expense of economically productive self-help projects. Thirdly, the Report also advised the department to improve its data collection and analytical procedures.(99) In addition, the team gave their approval to the establishment of VDCs, describing them as an important new channel of communication between people and government.(99) Anybody that understands the local politics in rural Ghana would pardon this statement as a hasty conclusion. Throughout the fifties in Ghana, a confrontation was building up between CDD and LOG over the control of grass-roots organization, especially the VDCs.

Diagram 2.1 describes the general pattern of relationship that existed between the Ministry of Local Government, the Department of Community Development and its support services, and the VDCs, during this period.

DIAGRAM 2:1: Relationship Between the Ministry of Local Government (LOG), Community Development Department (CDD) and Village Development Committees (VDCs), 1951 to 1960.



VDCs and Local Government in Ghana.

The eventual relationship between VDCs and Department of Local Government in Ghana must be placed within the context of institutional development of the country. Following his Committee's Report in 1946, on an investigation into the "unhappy disturbance" in the Gold Coast, Watson, a British attorney, invited by the Gold Coast Colonial Government, recommended a series of constitutional reforms as a matter of urgency.(149) Principally the Committee advised that:

> "The constitution and government of the country must be so reshaped as to give every African of ability an opportunity to help govern the country, so as not only to gain political experience but also to experience political power."(149:26)

In effect they were calling for a decentralized government "to meet the legitimate aspirations of the indigenous populations."(149:24) Watson then proposed a type of decentralized government which closely resembled the structure of local government in his home country, England.(149:25-6)

As part of the reforms, the department of Local Government was established with the enactment of a local government ordinance in 1951. The ordinance provided for the creation of municipal, district, and local councils. This new process was intended to give the people an opportunity to elect the members of local councils. Furthermore, for the first time VDCs were acknowledged and congratulated for their role in local development.

Initially LOG made some slight efforts to democratize its relationships with the VDCs. Both the 1951 and the 1961 Local

Government Acts provided for open council meetings at the local and district levels, to which VDCs and the general public were invited. In addition, the Minister for LOG and the chairman of a council had the privilege to invite outsiders to address and participate in council debates. Such persons, however, had no voting rights at meetings. (56:44) In both Tema and West-Akim there is little indication that VDCs took advantage of this opportunity, to get involved in the deliberations of councils.

Over the years the increasing significance of VDCs as a foci for mass mobilization occupied the attention of central government. In the sixties the government of the Convention Peoples Party (C.P.P.) initiated a political process which bound VDCs to party politics to this day. As a part of the process of consolidating its power, the C.P.P. encouraged party cells in the villages and towns to identify strongly with the committees. Soon party members were heavily represented on the VDCs.[24] Chiefs were naturally at the center of these power struggles. They were directly threatened by the radical politics of the C.P.P. and many were forced to resign their positions as chairmen of VDCs. With the election of the C.P.P.'s biggest rival, in 1969, namely the Progress Party (P.P.) government led by Busia, chiefs were reinstated and encouraged to assume control of the VDCs. (79)

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[24] Yeboah complains that in the 1960s the VDCs became the grass-roots puppets of the Convention Peoples Party. Yeboah, E.A. On Working with Village Development Committees. Paper presented at a Workshop on the Guidelines and Program Directives - Community Development. Sunyani. Ghana. 1976.

In the new government's LOG Act of 1971, VDCs lost their statutory relationship with the department and once again they became voluntary organizations. However, this Act never became effective because of a military coup which overthrew Busia's P.P. government in 1972. In spite of the support they received from the government under Busia, chiefs still found themselves competing with Progress Party activitists for control of the VDCs.

In a country characterized by frequent coups, shifting political allegiance became a way of life for VDCs. They have been dissolved and reconstituted as many times as there have been changes of government in the country. In almost all of the committees, however, certain core members are re-elected or appointed on every new VDC. In both Tema and West-Akim district VDCs are said to have been re-established in 1979 and 1980, which coincides with the election of Ghana's third civilian government under Limann and his Peoples National Party (P.N.P.) One-third of the VDC sample in West-Akim and three-quarters in Tema reported that founding members still served on the committees. (Number of responses in both districts is 30 VDCs).

Interestingly, close to 80% of all VDC members in both study areas were described as P.N.P. supporters and active members. Naturally they had expected that this would qualify them for certain benefits from the government, but in several villages there were complaints that this had not occurred. Other parts of Africa have had similar experiences with traditional authorities and party activists. In Tanzania, Kenya, and Egypt local politicians have always played a key role ion the affairs

of village organizations (number of VDC members is 136 in both areas). (42, 103, 101)

By 1963 the establishment of VDCs had become compulsory in Ghana. Legislative Instrument 262(1963) specified that every town and village should have a VDC, and prescribed its membership as follows:

> "A committee established under these regulations shall consist of a chairman and not more than eleven members one of whom shall be a representative of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development."
>
> "The chairman of the committee shall be the chief, Odikro or headman of the village or town concerned or such other person as may be appointed by the district commissioner in consultation with the appropriate regional commissioner and approved by the minister." (See Appendix B for copies of legislative instruments 262 and 540.)

Despite allegations that VDC members are virtually hand-picked by the district councils, only 5% and 18% of the Committees in Tema and West-Akim, respectively, reported that appointment by the district council was a major form of recruitment to the VDC. In Tema it was reported that the popular vote accounted for at least 60% of the recruits compared to 43% in West-Akim. In both places the traditional authority directly selected VDC members in at least 30% of the cases (number of responses is 30 VDCs). In both Tema and West-Akim there is indication that every Ghanaian government has tried to interfere in the appointment of members to the committees. From 1951, local and district councils have had wide-ranging powers relating to the registration, regulation and dissolution of VDCs. In both study areas these powers have been used rather extensively. It is normal practice in a VDC election process for the District Chief Executive to delegate

an official to supervise the election. The councils maintain that this is necessary to ensure that "criminals" do not infiltrate the committees.

There appears to be considerable collaboration between the chiefs and the district councils in this process, which is not always obvious to the rural population. In the West-Akim District Council it was reported that a chief threatened to take land away from people who did not vote for his nominees. The council sometimes has a very lukewarm attitude in investigating such complaints from the people.

The new local government proposal of 1974 tried to bring some fairly radical reforms into the administrative and political structure of district councils, and to a lesser extent, regional councils. But this process did not bring any significant changes to the lives of VDCs. Generally the committees were expected to continue as before, which was mainly to carry out the instructions of the councils, to ensure peace and order and to keep begging for assistance from the district council.

However, some limited gestures were made to give the VDCs some feeling of authority over certain actions of the council. For example, the committee were asked to "ensure that monies collected and placed on deposit with the council in respect of specific village projects are not misapplied to other purposes than those for which the monies were collected." But the committees basic disadvantage, namely their lack of representation on the district councils remained unchanged. That makes it virtually impossible for them to properly check the use of VDC

funds on deposit with the councils. Diagram 2.2 shows the VDCs as the lowest unit of local government in the country.

The objectives of VDCs generally coincide with the functions spelled out for them by the Ministry of Local Government. At least 60% of the VDCs in both study areas said their major objective was to:

> "raise the standard of living of their people by providing basic social amenities like safe drinking water, good latrines, and health posts for our people."[25]

None of the legislative instruments on VDC gave any lengthy explanation of financial arrangements for self-help development. However, Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 540 outlined rules for organizing fund-raising activities. Briefly, the committees have to obtain approval from the district council in order to impose a special levy in the village. Money collected from this activity has to be deposited at the council.(59) Regulation of VDC funds became necessary due to the allegations of misappropriation of community funds by some committee and council members.(59)

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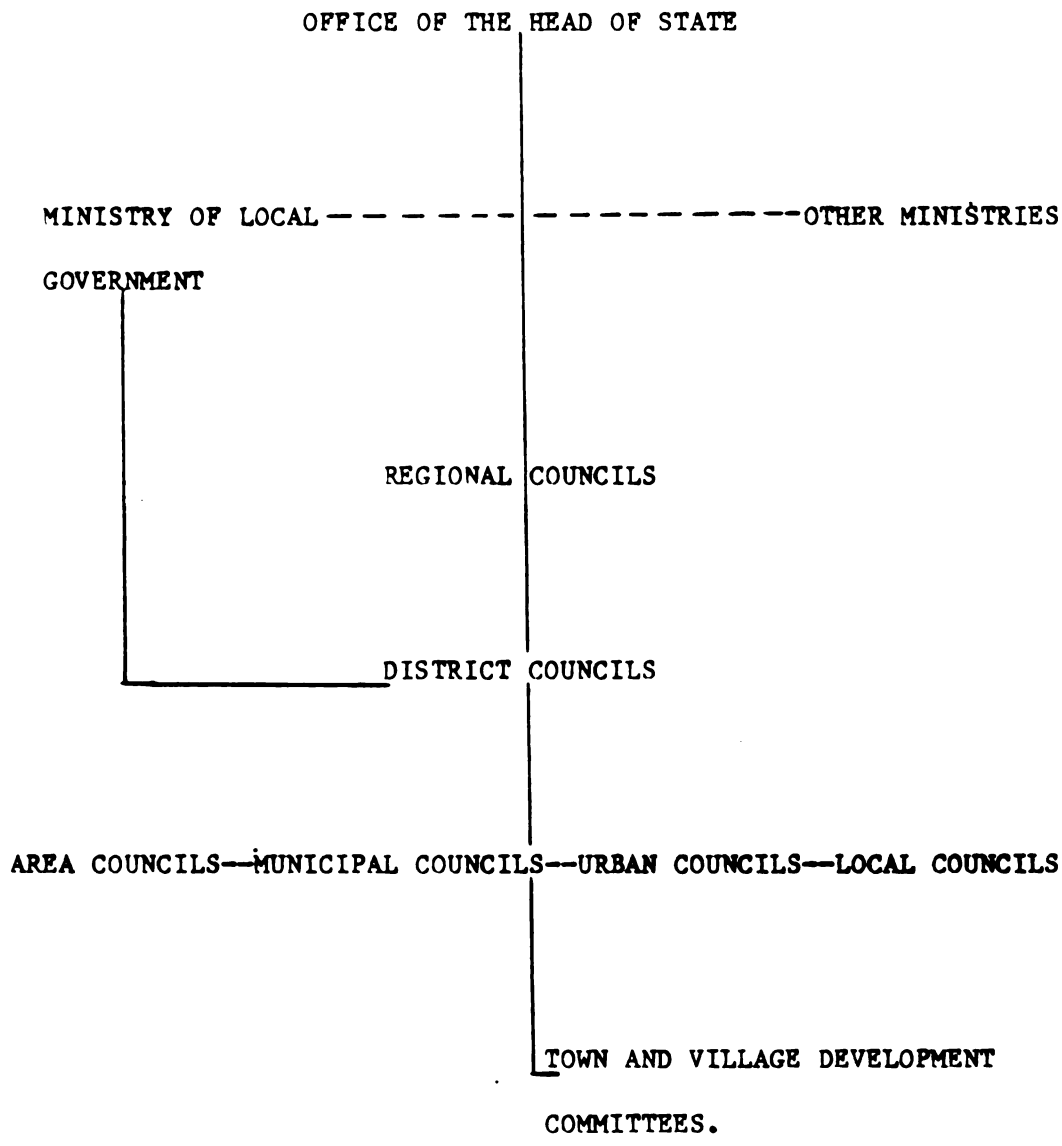
[25]This is a response taken from the Danfa VDC questionnaire in the Tema district council, 1981.

DIAGRAM 2.2: A Structural Chart of Local Government System in Ghana, 1974.



Source: Ministry of Local Government (Headquarters), Accra, Ghana.

See the next page for a description of the functions of each council.

Regional Councils:
They act as agents of central government in respect of national programs and development projects within the regions. For example, they examine and approve estimates of district councils; they ensure a fair and equitable distribution of resources and the efficient management of public services throughout the region.

District Councils:
They form the basic units of administration and sole rating authorities at the district level. Broadly, the district councils see to the provision and maintenance of public services. For example, they are directly responsible for the construction and maintenance of streets, bridges and culverts, public buildings and proper layout of towns and cities within the district.

Areas, Municipal, Urban and Local Councils:
They are subordinate to the district councils and perform functions delegated by the district councils. For example, these councils can be delegated to identify and sponsor projects at the local level; in the process they are expected to coordinate the activities of Town and Village Development Committees, to avoid duplication and ensure an even distribution of projects and services.

Town/Village Development Committees:
They act as agents of development in the towns and villages. They cooperate and collaborate with the local and district councils in performance of their functions. For example, the committees are expected to educate the citizens of the towns and villages in matters of revenue-raising, sanitation, and environmental hygiene. They are also expected to assist in revenue collection and ensure prompt payment of rates and fees. They are expected to check the use of all revenues raised. They are also expected to organize and supervise general sanitation and cleanliness in the towns and villages. These Committees are also expected to construct simple sanitary structures and incinerators for refuse disposal, and to construct public latrines for the rural communities.

Source: Ghana, The New Local Government System. Ministry of Local Government (Headquarters), Accra, Ghana. 1974.
N.B. By 1981 many regions still did not have regional councils, local councils, and area councils. Several district councils were still in the process of consolidating the sectoral departments in the district.

As the formal relationships between VDCs and the councils became more rigid and apparently less beneficial, the committees sought alternative ways of communicating their concerns to the external world

of power and resources. Often the VDCs tried to develop informal contacts with some influential people living in a big town.[26] The potential danger of manipulation in such a relationship seems to be off-set by the benefits that VDCs claim they receive in the interaction. For example, in return for scarce resources ranging from cement to textile products many "contact" persons are known to have been rewarded with pieces of land in the villages. The same observations have been made about friends of VDCs in Tanzania.(40)

Judging from the agenda of district council meetings, their focus on direct VDC issues is low compared to what is expected of the committees. At the Tema District Council of the 380 issues repeatedly discussed at council meetings between 1974-1981, 15% related to VDCs and self-help projects. In West-Akim, out of 80 issues repeatedly discussed in the same period 16% related to the committees. At the district council meetings the major issues focused on staff matters. The Local Government Bulletin, which is the major official news report of the Ministry of Local Government, did not have any category for VDCs during this period. However, the committees were indirectly referred to in the reports on the imposition of rates in the rural areas and district headquarters.

A major source of conflict between VDCs and the council related to poorly defined areas of jurisdiction between the two agencies.

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[26] Some aspects of this interaction is generally comparable to the type of security relationship offered by a patron on the hacienda in Latin America. Each party justifies this basically exploitative relationship by the value of the goods and services exchanged. In Ghana, however, the interaction appears to be far less rigid and visible.

Although VDCs were expected to ensure general cleanliness and civil order in the villages, sometimes they were penalized for pursuing these objectives. The chairman of the Mepon VDC in the West-Akim council area, for example, was taken to court by the sanitary overseer and the market toll collector for usurping their powers.(79) The VDCs were frequently accused of ignoring council regulations and rules of conduct, but it appears that quite often the council itself was not sure how to delegate powers to the committees.(124)

With their hands virtually tied by the council, VDCs assumed an increasingly conservative posture. Their inability to effect sustained development has become a constant source of frustration for the youth in the rural areas. Youth Associations have sprung up in some villages, in reaction to the apparent inertia of VDCs. These associations reminiscent of the Youngmen's groups of the 40s and 50s act as a form of pressure group on the committees. On many occasions they have forced the collapse of VDCs that were considered to be apathetic, and they have supervised the formation of new ones much to the displeasure of district councils.(79)

A fragmented rural development policy accompanied by bureaucratic expansion in the sixties and seventies, did very little to coordinate resources for self-help rural development. Resources were spread thinly between all departments that had a claim to rural development. Of all of these only CDD and LOG and to some extent, the Ministry of Agriculture, had active extension networks. With the reduction of assistance to the CDD support services, VDCs lost one of their most

important commitments from the central government to support rural development. CDD interpreted this reduction in assistance very personally, as part of a vendetta against the department. The struggle between CDD and LOG over control of VDCs and reources accruing to them, is a classic example of departmental power struggles in Ghana. From the point of view of LOG the active participation of CDD in development projects, and their control of material and non-material resources hampered and indeed, adversely affected the development of elected local government councils. CDD was seen as a rival institution which usurped and performed the functions of LOG.(5)

Historically, VDCs naturally owed allegiance to CDD. It was the responsibility of the two departments to establish a coordinated program of development to aid the committees. LOG had other grievances against the department. It complained that the self-help, felt needs strategy of the department was short-sighted. It pointed to projects which had become white elephants in some villages because they were found to have less priority than was claimed by the people. On the other hand, LOG was also reluctant to assume maintenance responsibilities for village projects it had not commissioned.(5)

But a more fundamental problem between CDD and LOG would appear to be their basically different ideological orientations to the concept of community and its development, especially in the early 1960s. CDD emphasized a micro-sociological concept of community develoment that focused on the internal organization of the villages and neglected their interrelationships with the wider political and economic

structure of which they are a part. On the other hand LOG was interested in assimilating VDCs into the general framework of local-central politics. Their programs were expected to fall within the national framework of development objectives and their politics was expected to foster good relations between the government and the rural population.

It appears that many of the problems of VDCs are related to their co-optation by the central government. While it legitimizes and broadens leadership, co-optation of local organizations by larger agencies does not always lead to an effective transfer of power, nor resources to the weaker organization.[27] Rural organizational leadership appears to be increasingly unimportant in the attainment of rural development goals, for two simple reasons. First, the leadership of Asafo companies, Youngman's groups and VDCs were not able to gain control of, or participate meaningfully in making key decisions on the transfer of resources for rural development. Poor relations between the two government departments of community development and local government adversely affected assistance to VDCs. The government demonstrated support for LOG by drastically reducing assistance to CDD, which curtailed all its support services to self-help groups like the VDCs. Since they were taken over by LOG VDCs have been promised

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[27] Selznick distinguishes between a substantive reallocation of power, and mere adjustments to the centers of power. Selznick, P. TVA and the Grass-Roots: Guiding Principles and Interpretation, in Rubenstein, A.H. and C.J. Hoberstroh (eds.). Some Theories of Organization. The Dorsey Press Inc. and Richard Urwin Inc. Illinois. 1960. P. 121.

various forms of assistance, but very little of this has been forthcoming. At the local level, public support for peoples' organizations since pre-independent times has been impressive, and community contributions has played a significant role in promoting self-help development at this level. By the end of 1959 LOG was enjoying full control of VDCs, including the selection of their leadership, the flow of resources to the organization from external agencies. By becoming a part of the local government structure, VDCs took on some additional responsibilities and burdens that no doubt relieved LOG of some of its duties, and also gave the impression of collaboration with the grassroots organization. But LOG did not relinquish any real authority to the organization. The co-optation of VDCs must be seen as an important adjustment by LOG to its institutional environment. In a way the action was an acknowledgement of centers of institutional strength which are in a position to strike organized blows and thus to enforce concrete demands. Specifically, by their legal association with LOG, they abrogated some of their rights to appoint members, to raise funds for development projects, and to police chieftancy. The next chapter reviews the theoretical perspectives on organizational effectiveness, as well as the nature of past research on the effectiveness of grass-roots organizations like the VDC. In addition, Chapter Three also outlines the analytical framework of our study.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE RESEARCH STATEMENT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

During the period of the study, VDCs were legally the smallest unit of local government structure in Ghana. In this position the VDC was required by mandate to interact with higher levels of local government, as well as other governmental service institutions. In mandated relationships, the legislature requires the participants to coordinate their efforts and resources at the local, district, and regional levels.(122:8)

Because of the underlying assumption of this study that the committee is an integral unit of a broad network of government institutions, it would be erroneous to approach it from a micro-sociological perspective. A study of VDC effectiveness must therefore reflect theoretical and methodological orientations that first take into account the bureaucratic and other kinds of relationships that exist between the VDC and larger environment. Therefore in this study the committee is viewed as an open-system organization.

This chapter examines the concept of organizations generally, and specifically looks at organizational effectiveness, its meaning and the various methods that have been used to analyze it. The chapter also focuses on the application of analytical tools used in effectiveness studies to conduct research on grass-roots organizations. Finally, a conceptual framework for studying VDC effectiveness is outlined, as well as the rationale behind the selection.

SOME PERSPECTIVES ON ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

The most prevalent literature on organizations describes and analyzes formal, most often business organizations. This condition presents a great challenge to the student of grass-roots organizations. There is not much agreement on what aspects of formal organizational theory may be applicable to the study of far less structured organizations that have different orientations.(128) Fortunately, formal organizational literature offers a variety of perspectives, some of which are more flexible and adaptable than others. Some of the broad perspectives in the field of organizational theory are outlined briefly below.

By far the most widely known perspectives on organization theory are the polarized models of the closed-system and the open-system organizations.[28] The closed-system sees in organizations an impersonal, persistent structure with offices rather than people. Actions are characterized by a high degree of predictability. This is a result of prescribed rules and regulations and structures of decision-making which ultimately determine the outcome of organizational activity. In the closed-system perspective

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[28] Scott, W.R. 1981. Organizations. Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey. He also discusses the natural systems approach that uses structural-functional analysis. The human relations school, the institutional approach and the social system model are cited as some of the best known examples of the natural systems perspective.

organizations seek a goal of optimal rationality or economic efficiency. The most notable approaches of this model are the scientific management approach of Taylor, the administrative management approach by March and Simon, and the bureaucracy approach by Weber. (14-1,100,150)

Scott defines the closed-system organization as follows:

> "An organization is collectively-oriented to the pursuit of relatively-specific goals and exhibits a relatively-high formalized social structure."(128:21)

By this definition, closed-system organizations are characterized by a normative structure which assumes that all organizational behavior is functional, "making a positive...contribution to the overall result". (128)

On the other hand the open-system approach views organizations as open to environmental influences, and indeed, dependent on the environment for resources and personnel. Also, individual members of the organization naturally have different expectations and interests which they attempt to fulfill through their membership in the organization. In this case optimal rationality towards goal attainment is mediated by bargaining for individual interests and the organization's needs for survival.(128:109-17) Scott's definition of the open-system organization clearly expresses these features:

> "An organization is a coalition of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiations; the structure of the coalition, its activities, and its outcomes are strongly influenced by environmental factors.(128:23)

While the open-system perspective shows influences from systems theory, it is also a neo-conflict model of organization. Like conflict theory this approach generally assumes that all social groups or organizations are engaged in conflict over the distribution of scarce and valuable resources.

This researcher accepts the proposition that the values of rationality and flexibility are both highly necessary in any conceptualization of organizational theory. The following definition of an organization is therefore proposed: organizations can be defined as parts or segments of whole societies deliberately formed to achieve specified objectives, by the best means possible, and within the limits of environmental pressure. The definition theoretically demands that a study of organizations must incorporate their interactions with the larger society. For all organizations to meet their goals, they must be able to influence decisions taken in the external world that affect their operations. This is important, as it affects the ability of organizations to procure scarce resources on a regular basis.

Implicit in the above definition is the notion of interest groups, that is, organizations formed to serve special interest groups. Much of their survival indirectly depends on political or power relations which in fact generates the environmental pressures experienced by organizations. Success or effectiveness are very vital concepts in any treatment of organizational survival.

After the mystique surrounding organizational rationality was seriously challenged by the Hawthorne studies,(102) researchers began

to reconsider all aspects of organizations. The claims to optimal rationality was a favorite target of this research community. Thompson points out that in order to achieve maximum rationality, organizations must be able to completely insulate themselves against environmental influences.(141:19-24) Hall adds that experience so far suggests that it is inevitable that organizations pursue models of operations which are not purely rational.(81:19) Evidentally decision-making in a highly structured organization (with a high degree of bureaucratic elements) is not necessarily related to rationality (scientific processes towards goal attainment).

March and Simon are particularly harsh in their criticism of the closed-system model. They criticize Merton's bureaucratic personality as a de-humanizing view of organizational man. In this form he is presented as a person who is totally open to be manipulated by the system to conduct the exact business required of him. As an alternative, March and Simon propose an approach to decision-making which would acknowledge that man makes satisfying rather than optimal decisons, even in an organization. They hoped that the approach of administrative office management would incorporate the impact of pressures which are brought to bear on the organization's personnel. (100)

Interest in systemic interaction which came to be widespread since the fifties, significantly affected theoretical developments in the social sciences. Modern functionalist theorists in sociology, for example, gradually shifted their emphasis from the study of man and his

interaction with his environment, to the interaction between different parts of the social system.(18:42-76) Organizational analysts were similarly affected by the interest in systemic interaction.

Katz and Kahn have made a thorough study of the open-system approach. In their findings they outline a nine-point description of such an organization. Broadly these can be summed up as: the effect of acquiring inputs on organizations; the processing of inputs; and the impact of output on the environment.(86:19-26)

For many organizational analysts, the extreme flexibility of the open-system model presented many opportunities for research within a wide range of topics. The problems that could arise in a situation of that nature did not escape the attention of Hall. He warned against a misuse of the model, noting that if carried to the extreme, the open-system approach may appear to negate the need for organizations. (81:26)

Ultimately, organizations can neither be totally closed nor totally open. Rather,

> "...organizations attempt to be rational, controlling their internal operations and environment to the greatest extent possible, but never achieving a totally closed rational system."(81:27)

DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

> "Organizational effectiveness is one of the most complex and least tackled problems in the study of social organizations. Many difficulties arise with attempts to define the concept of effectiveness adequately. Some stem from the closeness with which the concept becomes associated with the question of values...Other problems arise when re-

> searchers choose a priori criteria of effectiveness that seem intuitively right, without trying systematically to place them within a consistent and broader framework. In effect, specific criteria that might be proper in one case may be entirely inappropriate to other organizations. The question arises whether it is possible to develop a definition of effectiveness and to derive criteria that are applicable across organizations and can be meaningfully placed within a general conceptual framework." (46:534)

It is fair to say that the concept of organizational effectiveness gained widespread attention following the work of Georgopoulos and Tannenbaum. They made some key observations about the concept, namely, that it has functional, structural and development dimensions. Secondly, the concept is relative rather than absolute and is most useful in comparative research. As an evolutionary or developmental concept, it can be used to study the growth of an organization over time.(46)

The concept of organizational effectiveness is ordinarily used to refer to goal-attainment, or more specifically, productivity. This approach focuses almost entirely on results. Georgopoulos and Tannenbaum, however, suggest that effectiveness has a broader premise than productivity, and they identify a means-ends dimension in the concept. They define organizational effectiveness as "the extent to which an organization as a social system, given certain resources and means, fulfills its objectives without incapacitating its means and resources."(46:535) In this case the general criteria of effectiveness are said to be: organizational productivity, organizational flexibility, and the absence of inter-organizational conflict or

strain. An important conclusion that emerges from this work is that organizational effectiveness, or goal-attainment, is a group concept which cannot be adequately measured by the single criterion of productivity, as some have tried to do.(46)

The Georgopolous model was tested on an industrial service organization which specialized in the delivery of retail merchandise. Rank-order correlation tests showed that each of the three criteria was significantly related to an independent assessment of organizational effectiveness by raters. Secondly, the three variables were also shown to be interrelated, indicating that the criteria are statistically reliable.(46)

Many organizational effectiveness studies have been inspired by the work of Georgopolous and Tannenbaum. Mott's work follows closely along the same path. He selects the same criteria of effectiveness that were used by the former. However, he adds another dimension, namely, the role of power relations in organizational activity. Mott's three criteria are as follows:

1. organizing centers of power for routine production (productivity)
2. organizing centers of power to change routines (adaptability)
3. organizing centers of power to cope with temporarily unpredictable overloads of work (flexibility)

Product-moment correlations showed positive but moderate correlations between the three variables.(46)

Limiting organizational effectiveness to a measure of goal-attainment has created numerous problems for researchers. The difficulty arises principally because the average organization has a multiplicity of goals, each assuming priority status at different points in time. It is unclear therefore which of these goals should be considered as the primary focus in a measurement of effectiveness. (81:97)

Hall highlights the potential confusion in using goal-attainment to measure effectiveness by pointing out that effectiveness in the attainment of one goal may be inversely related to the attainment of other goals.(81) Although this observation is not helpful in finding solutions to the problem, it certainly focuses on the need to expand or develop alternative criteria of effectiveness. Two attempts to overcome this complexity are examined below under the behavior-attitudinal and the system-resource models of effectiveness.

The behavior-attitudinal model reinforces the view that organizations are primarily a collection of individuals. By this reference, they can only be understood in terms of the nature and quality of interaction among the members of the organization. In support of this view, Simon and Blau both warn of the dangers of reifying the concept of organization, stressing that the cornerstone of any association of individuals is the primacy of interaction.(133)

The types of evaluative criteria often selected for assessing effectiveness in the behavioral-attitudinal model reflect social-psychological considerations. Neghandhi and Reiman, for example, use

the following criteria as part of their evaluative scheme: employee satisfaction, absence of tension and conflict, psychological commitment, low turnover, low absenteeism, interpersonal relations and level of morale. These criteria reflect a strong bias towards formal business and other highly structured organizations in the application of the behavior-attitudinal model to formal business and other highly structured organizations. The model of organizational effectiveness which holds the greatest promise for studying less structured organizations such as the VDC, is the system-resource model.

Yuchtman and Seashore go to the root of the problem. Their system-resource model defines organizational effectiveness as the level of its bargaining position. This is reflected in its ability (in absolute or realtive terms) to exploit the environment, in the acquisition of valued and scarce resources. Such resources, of course, are those that are necessary for an organization to achieve its goals.(157)

The system-resource model is also based on the view that effectiveness is a group concept, best understood in terms of a multi-dimensional set of criteria. Several features of the preliminary work of Katz and Kahn, and Etzioni are reflected in this approach. The former argue that goal statements alone cannot be used to measure effectiveness, because they may idealize, distort or "conceal essential aspects of the functioning of the organization." Similarly Etzioni rejects goal statements as too abstract and diffuse to serve as a good measure of organizational effectiveness.(34:508)

Simply, the system-resource model is described as one which approaches the study of organizational effectiveness from the following perspectives.

1. It takes the organization itself as the focal point of reference rather than an external entity, or a particular set of people.
2. It explicitly treats the relations between the organization and its environment as a central ingredient in the definition of effectiveness.
3. It provides a theoretically general framework capable of encompassing different kinds of complex organizations.
4. It provides some guide to the identification of performance and action variables relevant to organizational effectiveness, and to the choice of variables, for empirical use.(157)

Even though it is not possible to develop criteria which will apply to all organizations, Yuchtman and Seashore suggest that this can partly be overcome by selecting criteria from categories of universal resources such as physical, human, and economic resources.(157) Fortunately, they acknowledge that shifting the focus of effectiveness measurement from goal-attainment to the issue of resources, does not automatically lead to a standard framework of effectiveness measurement. However, several standard criteria could be developed for different organizational types.(157)

Inasmuch as the sytem-resource model appears to simplify the measurement of organizational effectiveness, it has not become popular

because of its apparently arbitrary nature. Yuchtman and Seashore tested their model on a sales insurance network of companies in various cities in the U.S. Their findings yielded ten independent variables which may be regarded as measures of effectiveness in that particular organization. Some of the factors were: business volume; production costs; youthfulness of members; management emphasis; member productivity; and market penetration.(129) Obviously these specific items have little or no relevance for the study of other types of organizations, such as voluntary organizations.

In the system-resource model power relations implicitly affect an organization's bargaining position. Whether they are vertically or horizontally related, transactions for scarce resources necessarily precipitate competition and sometimes conflict between organizations. Normally the position of the organization in this hierarchy is indicative of its access to power in the system, and naturally, its bargaining status. Very often there is a direct link between this position and the potential effectiveness of the organization.(129)

Other concepts of fundamental importance in the system-resource model deserve special attention here, namely, the concepts of 'resource' and 'environment':

> "...Broadly defined, "resources" are (more or less) generalized means, or facilities, that are potentially controllable by social organizations and that are potentially usable — however indirectly — in relationships between the organization and its environment. This definition, it should be noted, does not attribute directionality as an inherent quality of a

> resource, nor does it limit the concept of resources to physical or economic objects or states, even though a physical base must lie behind any named resource." (129:900-1)

Even though the human resources factor is not clearly stated in this definition, it is considered to be a crucial aspect of the organization as well as a significant part of its environment.

Yuchtman and Seashore further stipulated that resources should have the following characteristics:

1. Liquidity. This is used in the traditional economic sense. Liquid assets have to be exchangeable by the organization for other kinds of resources. Money and credit are very high in liquidity.
2. Stability. That is, the ability to acquire transient resources (technical personnel) and to be able to utilize such a resource.
3. Relevance. This characteristic is very much based on the output of organizations.
4. Universality. Some resources have universal relevance, e.g., personnel, physical facilities, technology, and liquid resources. All organizations must have and be able to replenish these resources.
5. Substitution. This attribute refers to the ability to adapt and to exploit certain readily available resources rather than to acquire alternative scarce resources in hard competition.(129)

Organizational environment is a much widely researched concept. Emery and Trist describe the organizational environment as the units such as groups, collectivities, and individuals with which the organization interacts.(33) Hall restricts his definition to the units with which the organization interacts directly.(81) Interaction in the environment describes and determines linkages and dependencies in several ways. Inter-organizational linkages become necessary as every organization is essentially dependent on others in the environment for human, physical and economic resources, as well as political support and power. Human ecologists have introduced a concept to describe this interaction process. Jacobs describes the environmental niche of organizations as the total interaction of resource elements pertaining to an organization.(85)

Emery and Trist's widely accepted typology of organizational environments is based on the assumption that linkages within a particular environment occur within a delimited geographical area, namely, an interorganizational field. They describe four types of fields as:

1. Placid randomized environments. In this type the resources required by an organization are unchanging and randomly distributed.
2. Placid, clustered environments. In this type resources are unchanging but clustered, thus location becomes an important factor in survival.

3. Disturbed-Reactive environments. In this type the availability of resources if determined by the actions of the organizations, and the survival of an organization is dependent on the use of strategies that consider the behavior of competitors.
4. Turbulent environments. In this type all elements in the organizational field are related, which makes the network a powerful force.(33)

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN GRASS-ROOTS ORGANIZATIONS -- LITERATURE REVIEW

A grass-roots organization is defined here as a people's organization, established at the local community level, and operated by the local inhabitants. Some argue over the role of the initiating force behind such a unit, whether it is initiated by outsiders or from within the local community.[29] This is important since it directly affects the nature of influence an organization is likely to exert, as well as its

[29] The Food and Agriculture Organization (F.A.O.), Rural Organizations Action Program (ROAP) makes a distinction between peoples' organizations initiated by the people themselves, and those that are established and managed by external forces. The former strategy is said to be contrary to the principles of participatory development. In reality, however, many grass-roots organizations are initiated from outside the community, and they do not always become puppets of the outside (See Van Heck, B. 1979. Research Guidelines For Field Action Projects. F.A.O., Rome. Pp. 44-47).

resource base. Therefore local organizations that have been formed purely on local initiative can expect to have a more independent leadership, and perhaps more access to goods and services in the larger system, and vice versa. In situations where goods and services are highly rationed, however, as in the case of Ghana, organizations seek close relationships with external agencies.

Our review of literature covers multiple-purpose, VDC type organizations, as well as single-purpose, farmers cooperative type organizations. There is growing evidence that no matter what their initial objectives are, many grass-roots organizations grow to perform multiple functions geared towards community development.

The need for localities to establish and manage their own organizations have been a focus of study for social scientists since the nineteenth century. Ironically, it was conservative groups, fearing domination by the masses of revolutionary Europe, who were the loudest advocates of local organizations. Writing in the historical period of oscillating power between peasants and statesmen, de Tocqueville strongly warned against centralized power. He stressed that it must embrace measures for administrative devolution and the development of local governmental systems. For him voluntary associations in America held the key to ultimate expression of democracy, and he recommended them as the right kinds of social groups for crystallizing and publicizing individual contributions to development. Durkheim similarly warned that the state had the potential to develop into a despotic repressor, unless its influence with the people was moderated

by social groups. These groups would serve as organs by which the individual would be emancipated.(112)

There are, however, significant differences between de Tocqueville's visions of local organizations, and the grass-roots organizations typical of the developing countries today. The early propagandists were considering ways by which sections of the nobility and petty bourgeois with wealth and political power, could protect themselves by acting as autonomous groups within the larger system. (106)

The kinds of organizations found in developing countries like the VDC, are quite often not politically nor economically powerful. More typically they are almost totally dependent on various forms of assistance from both government and benevolent institutions. Their resource dependency has frequently been cited as one of the biggest obstacles to their continued success.

Evaluative studies on grass-roots organizations have taken two main forms. First, there are many which are primarily concerned with behavioral-attitudinal factors and how they affect the organization (a quasi-closed-system approach). The major conclusions coming out of this orientation is that acts of mal-practice constitute one of the most significant impediments to organizational achievement. Incompetency, or inadequate preparation for office, are also listed as handicaps to effectiveness. The research work of United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is an insightful example of this type of research. The study principally concentrates on evaluating leadership behavior.(7,8)

The second broad type of rural organizational research can be described as a holistic, systemic type research. The major focus in this type of investigation is on the impact of environmental interaction, particularly organizational linkages. Research work of this nature is divided as to the extent of linkage with higher level organizations, but is united on the principle of structured communication between different organizational units in the same environment. The contention here is that coordination rather than autonomy is ultimately more beneficial, especially for grass-roots units. The research work of Uphoff and Esman, Solomon, Stavis, Selznick and the Urban Institute (Florida), are good examples of this type of research.(145,136,138,142)

Organizations without an easily identifiable physical output, as are many non-economic types, appear too evasive to attract organizational analysts. Community-based organizations belong in this category, and until recently, effectiveness studies were unknown in this area. The motivating factor for such studies in community development may be traced to the competition for scarce resources. These days governments and non-government development agencies are making huge contributions, (or at least are promising substantial assistance) to community development. Evidence of success or effectiveness, has become a profitable quality for community development programs. Grass-roots organizations such as the VDC, bear the major responsibility for making such programs effective. Community researchers are being forced to borrow and adapt the theoretical and

methodological frameworks of traditional organizational studies to analyze grass-roots organizations.

Uphoff and Esman's study is one of the most insightful attempts at studying local organizations by methods which were hitherto restricted to investigations in formal business organizations. Under the direction of the Rural Development Committee of Cornell University in 1973, 18 case studies were commissioned in nearly all parts of Asia except the Near East. The major objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between rural development and local organizations. Local organization was treated as an independent variable. Rural development was measured by productivity, income distribution and composite welfare. The major question was whether effective local organizations as a variable, was in any way linked to successful rural development.(145)

In the Uphoff study, local organization was defined as an institution at the grass-roots level, linked to higher levels of organization, which together perform various functions aimed toward rural development.(145) The research team selected five criteria for the evaluative scheme for local organizations. They were: autonomy, linkage, participation, scope of functions, and scale of local units. (145)

In their major conclusions, the team singles out linkages as the most critical variable for establishing and maintaining successful local organizations. Linkage in this study is operationalized as the extent (frequency of contact) and relevance of communication (useful-

ness of channel) between local organizations and external development agencies. The overall extent of organization was determined for each country in the sample. This revealed a polarization of the sample into "more organized" and "less organized" countries. Further, those countries that were placed in the latter category were found to be more successful at achieving their rural development objectives than the other group.(145)

Nevertheless the success of local organizations in the Uphoff study is also contingent upon other environmental factors, namely, the distribution of economic assets, multiple-level units of organization, multiple channels of communications, multiple functions and decentralization of external agencies. Specifically, these describe material and non-material resources, authority and power. The researchers acknowledge the importance of these variables but choose to study them as attributes of linkage.

Based on "a comparative review of selected research and field studies on local organizations in the developing world," Solomon proposed an analytical framework for the study of grass-roots organization that would help administrators to understand the types of relationships that are required, "and the social processes to be facilitated both within the local system and the larger society" to promote the success of local organizations.(145)

The framework proposed by Solomon consists of the following variables:

- membership and leadership
- management of alienation and grouplessness

- access to training and education
- channels of communication of innovation and change
- mechanisms to mobilize resources
- access to markets
- access to power and influence
- other linkages and levels of organizations

Obviously the conclusions of his review greatly reinforce the findings of Uphoff and Esman. Even though he attaches more importance to other measures of effectiveness, linkage is still considered to be a key variable in this process.(145)

There are some clear contradictions in Solomon's work. For example, his views on autonomy versus linkage are rather vague. Early in the report it is suggested that farmers associations with a high degree of autonomy greatly facilitate horizontal communication among farmers and reduce the burden of, or radically increase the impact of, extension agents. At the same time, Solomon strongly recommends strong linkage with appropriate organizations for transferring resources from the center to the village farmer.(145:348-53) Furthermore, he states emphatically that the effectiveness of local organizations is indeed integrally linked to the kinds of support systems they are given by central government. Ironically, Taiwan's highly autonomous farmers' associations are said to have received their greatest support in the form of financial arrangements made on their behalf by central government.

In an overview of China's local organizations, Stavis concludes that these units were able to participate most fully when they had

power.(138:48) To be able to utilize such power effectively, the organizations must be supported by communication channels with the larger state machinery, as well as a program of extensive decentralization. Most researchers have acknowledged that local organizations must have access to power to strengthen their hand at the bargaining table. Unfortunately, we are not often told what power means in this context, and how it can be acquired, or how to use it effectively.(119:41-4)

In 1973-74, the Urban Institute (Florida), in conjunction with the International City Management Association, initiated a study to identify and measure a list of factors indicating service effectiveness. The cities of St. Petersburg, Florida and Nashville, Tennessee, volunteered as case-studies for the project.(142)

The aim of the Urban Institute study was to develop methods by which local governments can determine how well their services were being provided. One of the significant features of their report is a distinction between three types of performance measurements:

- Effectiveness -- the extent to which goals and objectives are being met.
- Efficiency -- the relation between amount of service output and the amount of input required to produce it.
- Workload Performance -- amount of work being done by units.

The clarification of these concepts is no doubt very important as there is a strong tendency to use the terms interchangeably, sometimes with grave consequences.(142:3-5)

Individual assessments were carried out on each of the nine services provided by the city offices studied. The final selection of measures of effectiveness was regulated by some very practical considerations, which could serve as a useful guideline for other such studies. The main issues in the guidelines are: appropriateness and validity, uniqueness, completeness, comprehensibility, controlability, costs of data collection and accuracy and reliability. Overall, the Urban Institute study provides a very detailed framework for effectiveness analysis in a public service agency. The outline of data collection illustrates a very skillful application of multiple data collection techniques.(142)

So far all the studies that have been examined show a preponderance of environmental factors in the analysis of local organizational effectiveness. Particularly, inter-organizational linkage, as a means to obtain resources is seen by many as the key factor. In agreement with the system-resource model of effectiveness, success is said to be subject to the available resource base, and that linkage with external agencies "which set policy and allocate resources are essential." (145:xii) Not all research on successful grass-roots organizations is influenced by the system-resource approach. Several of the earlier studies especially reflect a behavioral-attitudinal approach with emphasis on the internal character of organizations. Most of these

studies also assume that effectiveness is synonymous with goal-attainment.

During the period of the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies, the UNRISD embarked on an extensive multi-national study entitled Rural Cooperatives and Related Institutions as Agents of Planned Change. The study included 40 case studies from 13 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. So far seven volumes of research findings have been published out of this project. Volumes Four and Five are the African reports. The objectives of this project were very flexible: to try and determine the extent to which rural organizations serve as agents of development.(7,8)

The UNRISD study involved anthropological as well as survey methods to try to find out how rural organizations actually function, why they function the way they do, and finally to appraise the success or failure of the organizations. The general conclusions of the project emphasize the weak nature of rural organizations in the Third World, noting that on the average, they have been ineffectual when their achievements were matched against their objectives. Much of the negative observations were attributed to social, political and economic malpractices by the leadership of these organizations.(7,8)

Writing about VDCs in Nigeria, both Akpanu and Nwosu note that the committees are incapable of being effective as they are structurally deficient. They observed that VDCs were not equipped with the necessary skills to bargain for resources from central authorities. In addition, the VDCs had become tools of influentials and Committee

members whose sole aim was to manipulate the people for their own benefit.(117)

In spite of the significance of VDCs in the rural political and economic life of Ghana, the organizations have not attracted much academic interest. Much of the existing literature on the committees are in the form of fragmented official reports, or field notes in departmental archives. The Department of Political Science at the University of Ghana, embarked on a large scale study of local government in the country which devoted some attention to objectives of VDCs. Unfortunately, this study was never completed.[30]

The now defunct Advance Magazine of the Department of Community Development, is also a good source of information, and has vivid descriptions of VDCs, as reported by field workers. Almost all of the existing material on VDCs concern the early history of the organization, its functions and activities, and its general contributions to the rural development process.(73)

Robertson's study on VDCs in Ahafo appears to be the most in-depth research, so far, on the committees. It is a social anthropological study of eight villages. Robertson lived in Goaso in the Ahafo district council area for one year (1968-1969) to conduct this case study. Broadly, he was interested in the evolution of different authority structures in Ahafo and their pattern of interaction.

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[30] The preliminary data for the political science study on local government in Ghana, is still in storage at the University of Ghana.

Specifically, he looked at the structure of the committees, characteristics of their founders and present membership, reasons for their formation, style of meetings and the distribution of power among the different members.(124)

Theoretically, Robertson argued that the authority and power of the VDCs was significantly related to their perceived ability to take (and act on) decisions in matters affecting their towns and villages. Two criteria were selected as indicators of decision-making ability. These were legitimacy and competence. Robertson explained legitimacy as "the extent to which the committee can fairly represent the various interests of the townspeople and villagers of Ahafo." Therefore representation is an important measure of legitimacy. Competence is described as the skills possessed by a VDC to make decisions that "develop the town." In this process the public expects that the committee is able to modify and reduce development issues "to a set of practible alternatives."(124:156)

Regardless of statutory specifications of legitimacy and competence of VDCs, Robertson discovered that in Ahafo the acquisition of these qualifications depended on endorsement by the chief and his public. It was also the outcome of power struggles between the committees and the government through the district councils. In fact, the study indicated that statutory details changed as the committees established their authority in their communities. A significant proportion of the research was devoted to studying the interaction between VDCs and the local council of Ahafo; other central government agencies and political

parties; as well as their relationship with traditional authority. Although the public was aware of the interplay of power between the various authority groups that had established themselves in their environment, they did not show much awareness of the constraints placed on VDCs by such interaction.(124)

The Ahafo research is an excellent anthropological study for many reasons. It gives a vivid insight into the daily life of a VDC, its spontaneous responses to various complex situations, and its ability to accommodate the political realities of its environment. Robertson himself appropriately cautions anthropologists wishing to enter this type of research against over-simplification of political processes at the village level. Very often such accounts are presented in esoteric terms, making it difficult to understand such processes at the village level in terms of ordinary political relationships.

Robertson's work on VDCs is very valuable as an introduction to the subject but it leaves several questions unanswered. Although it describes interrelationshps in considerable detail, there is no great effort to give meaning to these relationships. Specifically what kinds of material and non-material resources were available to VDCs because of those relationships? But then his main interest was in the process of decision-making and not the acquisition of resources! For the same reason not much attention is devoted to the attainment of objectives by the committees.

In a three part overview of VDCs in Ghana, Andoh presents a historical analysis of VDCs, emphasizing their evolution, and later

confrontations with pre-existing authority both inside and outside the village. Andoh is very defensive of the committees, and much of his work in this area amounts to a critique of what he considers to be a gross interference in the affairs of VDCs by the Department of Community Development, and local councils. In his opinion, the positive spirit of the VDC was destroyed following its absorption into the local government structure in 1963.(15)

The general weakness of Andoh's study may also be his major finding! He concentrates on the role of personalities in deciding the gains and losses of VDCs. Obviously, this creates uncertainties concerning VDC support systems. The study does not say clearly what happens when those personalities are removed from their positions. But in reality Andoh may be giving us the exact nature of VDCs affairs. They have been noted to be highly dependent on certain individuals. Most people in the villages will remark that they prefer to have people with influential contacts as members of their committees. The popular saying in Ghana: "It's who you know", sums up the attitude of the people.

Dorvlo, like Andoh, devoted attention to the conflicts over VDCs often arising out of political differences between various government departments. The classic confrontation at this period (late sixties, early seventies) was between the Ministry of Local Government and the Department of Community Development. The former usually went with the government in power, the latter tried to remain neutral. VDCs were usually torn between these opposing forces. Unlike Andoh, Dorvlo

acknowledged that with its potential for mass mobilization, the VDC could not realistically operate outside the wider political network. (24)

All the studies reviewed here present many approaches to the study of grass-roots organizations beyond the features of membership, structure, and function. Some of the studies, more than others, have tried to evaluate local organizational effectiveness in non-attitudinal ways. From this exercise certain features of the subject emerge, which have important implications for the framework of our VDC study.

All the studies regard leadership as of paramount importance in the attainment of effectiveness. Linkage between organizations is also treated as a crucial variable in the process. The concept is widely interpreted as vertical linkage with the environment of government agencies, as well as linkage with the immediate environment of community institutions. The distribution of power is alluded to as an essential aspect of this process, describing whether or not local organizations are able to exert any influence on their environment or whether they have any control over their progress. However, power relations are treated as part of leadership characteristics, or as expressed in the strength and direction of linkages with other organizations.

The major issues missing in the studies noted above, and others not mentioned here, relate to the flow of resources. Access to material and non-material resources has been considered as part of inter-organizational relations in many studies.(126:60-71) However,

the central importance of resources to organizational effectiveness demands that this factor must be treated as an independent variable. It is a major assertion of the VDC study that ultimately the successful manipulation of leadership and linkages, and the expression of power, should culminate in the regular and adequate access and flow of resources to a local organization.

No matter what framework is chosen in an organizational effectiveness study, certain pertinent questions have to be addressed. These questions include the following:

1. What are the most relevant effectiveness criteria in a given situation?
2. Why are they relevant?
3. Who is imposing them on the organization?
4. What power do these organizations have to enforce demands?
5. Which organizational objectivess can be simultaneously pursued?
6. Which organizational objectives appear to be in conflict?
7. How might the conflict among organizational objectives be resolved?
8. Which criteria must be satisfied?
9. How can effectiveness against each of the relevant criteria be measured?(153:4)

In the past the most popular means of assessing effectiveness in an organization was to use productivity data. This variable was highly

favored methodologically, not the least because productivity is visible, quantifiable and fundamental to continued organizational support.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF VDC STUDY

The effectiveness of the VDCs has been predominantly viewed in the neo-functionalist perspective of goal-attainment (completion of development projects). As such the question of resource availability and acquisition is rarely discussed in the literature, even though it is that process which determines the ability of the committees to achieve their objectives. While acknowledging that output is a key factor in assessing effectiveness, our study of the VDCs will be partly biased in favor of the system-resource model, because of the assumption that the apparent ineffectiveness of the committee is directly linked to the question of resources.

Apart from human resources, Ghana as a relatively unindustrialized country, imports much of her development inputs at considerable cost. As has already been mentioned, the distribution of such resources are tightly controlled by the central government, and the determinants of distribution are not necessarily based on rational policy choices. This process is significantly mediated by political considerations. In that situation the more powerful urbanites in the country appear to have benefitted more from the prevailing pattern of distribution than their rural counterparts.

In addition to the question of resources, our VDC study will also focus on the other environmental factor of inter-organizational linkages, which describes the machinery through which the committees interact with the controller of resources, namely, the central government. Lastly, the study will also investigate the impact of one internal organizational factor, namely, leadership. It is assumed for this study that VDC effectiveness is related to inter-organizational linkage, resources, and leadership. Efforts will be made to measure effectiveness generally, as well as the different levels of interaction with each type of variable in the study. Effectiveness is perceived here as the dependent variable, and linkage, leadership and resources constitute the independent variables.

Chapter Four discusses the hypothesis of the study. The dependent and independent variables are also operationalized in that chapter. Furthermore, the research methodology is outlined in detail, as well as the analytical methods to be used in the processing of the survey and documentary data.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES: CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL VARIABLES AND METHODOLOGY

Many issues have been identified by others as possible factors that have direct positive or negative impact on the effectiveness of rural grass-roots organizations. Some of these arise out of the immediate environment of the community, such as the social organization of the people, their level of popular participation, the size of the population and rural incomes among others. Other factors can be found in the interaction between the organizations and their external environment, such as access to resources, inter-organizational linkages and political arrangements. Yet others are described as internal features of the organizations, such as leadership and the general demographic characteristics of the members of the organizations. As has already been mentioned, the focus of our study is on the impact of two external factors, namely access to resources and linkages, and one internal factor, namely leadership style, on the effectiveness of selected VDCs in the Tema and West-Akim district councils. The rationale for the selection of these three variables has also been discussed in Chapters One and Three.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first part will address the hypotheses of the VDC study, as well as the conceptual and operational aspects of the variables under study. The second part will describe in detail the important phases in the data collection process.

SECTION ONE

The Statement of Hypotheses; Conceptual and Operational Variables and Methodology:

The hypotheses in this study are intended to investigate whether selected environmental factors and processes act as forces that enhance effectiveness in this grass-roots organization. Later in this section the conceptual and operational features of each variable will be discussed.

I. Hypotheses.

The concept of VDC effectiveness, discussed in the previous chapter, is treated as a dependent variable. Inter-organizational linkage, acquisition of resources, and leadership style are the independent variables in the study. It is our general contention that VDCs are more likely to be effective when they have a high level of inter-organizational linkage, a high level of resource acquisition and an effective leadership style. The hypothesis for each of these independent variables is stated separately as follows:

A. A VDC is more likely to be effective when it has a high level of linkage with the district council in its area. This is specified in

the following sub-hypotheses:

1. A VDC that has a high frequency of contact with the district council office is more likely to be effective.

2. A VDC that has a higher extent of contact with the District Chief Executive is more likely to be effective.

B. A VDC is more likely to be effective when it has a high level of material and non-material resources. This is specified in the following sub-hypotheses:

1. A VDC that has a high level of access to financial resources is more likely to be effective.

2. A VDC that has a high level of access to raw materials is more likely to be effective.

3. A VDC that has a high level of access to technical resources is more likely to be effective.

4. A VDC that has a high level of access to development information is more likely to be effective.

C. A VDC is more likely to be effective when it has an effective leadership style. This is specified in the following sub-hypotheses:

1. A VDC that has a high level of executive functions performed by its chairman or president is more likely to be effective.

2. A VDC that has a high level of leadership management functions performed by its chairman is more likely to be effective.

3. A VDC that has a high level of avoidance of disruptive behavior on the part of its chairman or president is more likely to be effective.

II. Conceptual and Operational Variables.

As has already been mentioned in the third chapter, this study borrows concepts from the formal organizational literature that have direct relevance for the study of grass-roots organizations. The concepts of environment, interorganizational linkage, resource acquisition, and leadership, will be defined below, with special emphasis on their specific usage in the study.

A. Organizational Environment.

Earlier in Chapter Three, the VDC was described as an open social system, whose outcomes were closely linked to its interaction with the wider social system. What is described here is the interaction of the VDC with its environment. Researchers have turned to environmental studies in the recent past in order to help them place organizations in their economic and socio-political context.

There is little agreement on the definition, description or measurement of environment as a concept. Scott suggests that variations in conceptions of the environment stem from three primary sources: differences in which components or dimensions are singled out for attention; differences in levels of analysis; and differences in the degree of independence attributed to environments.(128:165 Generally, the organizational environment is viewed as a "residual category", that is, "everything else" not part of the organization. (128) System analysis has focused on the exchange dimension between an organization and its environment. They assume that there is a symbiotic relationship between environmental inputs and organizational outputs.(18:67-76)

Efforts by Emery and Trist to reduce the ambiguities in the concept of environment have already been discussed.(33) Dill narrowed the scope even further in his idea of a task environment, to describe elements in the environment which are "relevant or potentially relevant to goal setting and goal attainment."(23:409-43) In our study the task environment is described as the traditional council made up of the chief and his elders, and the district council, which has the closest proximity to VDCs, among government institutions.

Organizational environment has also been described as an ecological community. This draws attention to the linkages within a particular geographical area.(82) In our study four levels of environment are recognized as the ecological community, namely, the village community, the district council community, the regional council community , and the central government community. Apart from having an ecological community, environment in this study also refers to three types of social systems, namely:

1. The state machinery — This system includes all offices in the civil service bureaucracy whose decisions directly affect the operations of VDCs. However, particular reference will be made to the district and regional Councils of the Ministry of Local Government.
2. The political arena — This system includes leadership positions at the local and national level, and refers to both traditional political offices and state political offices. Particular reference will be made to chieftancy in the case study villages, and to the policy-makers and their representatives at the district and regional offices.

3. The economic/business environment -- This system refers to the producers and manufacturers of raw materials and equipment needed by the VDC to operationalize development objectives. It also refers to financial institutions and development corporations. In order to benefit from the resources available in the environment, organizations need to establish links with the relevant parties.

B. Inter-organizational linkage.

For community analysts and policy-makers in general, the subject of linkage has provided a necessary alternative to the model of autonomy. It has now become widely accepted that it is no longer viable to strive towards the independent, self-sufficient community as a goal in community development programs. The increase in the size of communities, the new complexities of community problems and the astronomical rise in the costs of community development programs simply make it impossible to strive after autonomy.(108) The situation has naturally focused attention on the need for coordination with other organizations. As has already been mentioned, the linkage is said to have a greater impact on the level of development than autonomy.(145) The proposal for a science of development organization suggests further support for the recognized centrality of organizational linkage in the development process.[31]

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[31] Sower proposes that development organizations would provide an alternative to "the legacy of a complex of authoritarian government agencies which were based on the concept of colonial bureaucracies directed to governing and revenue collection, instead of the "people".. Sower, C. Increasing the Effectiveness of Development Organizations. Revision of Paper presented at the Asian Regional Seminar on Increasing the Effectiveness of Development Organizations. Colombo, Sri Lanka. December 16-19, 1980. P. 1. (Also see Loomis,

Some of the best known dimensions of inter-organizational linkage are: formalization of relations, standardization of relations, intensity of relations, and reciprocity of relations.[32] An important observation in all of these dimensions is that the distribution of power which allocates resources, determines the nature of the linkage. This can be visualized on a scale, ranging from mutual inter-dependence to an extreme situation of dependence. Levin and White's model of exchange relations stressing voluntarism, consensus, and equality of exchange would indicate the equitable end of such a scale.(95) While generally accepting this model, Thompson concedes that there is also a degree of dependence among organizations. Thus, an organization may be relatively powerful or relatively dependent in relation to those who supply its inputs and those who utilize its outputs. Emerson takes a contrary position which is shared by Raelin.(52:31-40) They make the assumption that in inter-organizational relations, the power of one organization is normally at the expense of another. At this level it is possible for "an organization to be relatively powerless on all sectors of its task environment."(141)

C.P. and J.A. Beegle, Rural Sociology: The Strategy of Change. Prentice-Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. 1957. Pp. 271-278).

[32] Rogers advocated for the use of sequential scales in measuring the strength of inter-organizational linkage. His own scale items were: director acquaintance, director interaction, information exchange, resource exchange, overlapping boards and written agreements. These items were analyzed on a Guttman scale. Rogers, D.L. Towards a Scale of Inter-Organizational Relations Among Public Agencies. Sociology and Social Research. 59. 1974. Pp. 61-70.

To some extent, mandated relationships have the potential to make some of the organizations in the network relatively powerless. By definition the rules and regulations of such a relationship are dictated and non-negotiable. The VDCs find themselves in a similar situation in their relationship with the local government establishment. In our study, linkage refers specifically to the relations between the Committees and the district councils. However, other agencies which have direct contacts with the VDCs are also studied. These are the Department of Community Development, the Department of Agricultural Extension, and others such as the Community Health Department of the Ghana Medical School.

The distribution of power in a linkage is often expressed in the quantity and quality of the relationship, including the direction of linkage, the frequency of contact, the extent of contact and the relevance of linkage. In our VDC study frequency of contact and extent of contact are investigated. (See Section Two for an operationalization of these concepts).

C. Acquisition of Material and Non-Material Resources.

The significance of inter-organizational relations is shown through improved acquisition of scarce resources. In some instances the intensity of linkage has been perceived as a function of the amount of resources that have been invested as a result of the relationship. (126) Since the writings of Georgopolous and Tannenbaum, organizational analysts no longer assume that resources are naturally available. Neither are they described as in Eisenstadt's terms as

"free-floating and easy to mobilize."(31:99-164) The consensus now appears to be that resource availability shows considerable variation from one linkage to the other. Resource acquisition has itself become a measure of organizational effectiveness.

Generally resources have been categorized as material or tangible, and non-material or intangible. Under material or tangible resources, many include money or other financial arrangements, technical equipment, raw materials and energy. Under non-material or intangible resources, technical skill, labor, and information are included.(157) All of these types of resources except energy will be considered in this study.

Despite the efforts of the symbiotic school to prove otherwise, the relationship between the environment and the organization is hardly harmonious. It is characterized by a pattern of exchange that frequently results in the exploitation of one party. It is a common practice in Ghana, for example, for district councils to fail to distribute construction supplies like cement, to the villages. Perrow's perception of the environment as a threat system, visualizes organizations as under considerable strain to prove their legitimacy in order to share in the utilization of resources.(120)

D. Leadership Style.

It has frequently been suggested that dynamic leadership holds the key to the success of organizations. However empirical evidence fails to establish any significant relationship between leadership and organizational effectiveness. The connection still remains elusive.

Suggestions have been made that such a link might even be undesirable because it may cover up serious weaknesses in organizatinal structure, power distribution that blocks effective actions, a lack of resources and archaic organizational procedures.(81)

There is an opinion that the role of leadership in organizational effectiveness may be situational, i.e., in certain situations leadership is critical to performance, while in other situations it is not. Fiedler's contingency model of leadership is based on this assumption. It postulates that organizational effectiveness is dependent upon two interacting variables: the motivation system of the leader (training and experience), and the favorableness of the situation (the extent to which the situation itself gives the leader power and influence to act). The model raises two points: that leadership capability is not constant, and also, that training and experience do indeed improve leadership attitude and behavior, as well as the attitude of subordinates.(38)

There is a counter perspective on leadership, however, that holds the view that effective leadership skills can be developed that are flexible enough to accomodate different situations. This characteristic is a function of proper management of the emotional and rational nature of leaders, namely, management functions and executive functions, respectively.(92) In grass-roots organizations like the VDC, it is important to have leadership that is able to accomodate a variety of circumstances, especially because there is usually a heavy reliance on leaders for guidance by subordinates.(137) In this study

leadership refers specifically to the president or chairman, the secretary and treasurer of the Committee. Lassey's three indicators of leadership style are used to measure leadership in the study (see Section Two for description of the measures).

E. VDC Effectiveness:

Following the research findings of Georgopolous and Tannenbaum, and later Yuchtman and Seashore on the relevant dimensions of organizational effectiveness, our study presumes that the effectiveness of VDCs would be measured by their ability to consolidate their position in their environment through inter-organizational linkages, access to resources and quality leadership, and ultimately their ability to transform these assets into concrete results. In other words, VDC effectiveness at the level of mobilization and organization is an independent influence on the ability of the organization to meet its objectives. The dependent factor in organizational effectiveness therefore is the fulfillment of objectives. For our study one of the major objectives of VDCs in the Tema and West-Akim district areas, namely the implementation of self-help development projects, has been selected as the dependent variable of VDC effectiveness. Specifically, we will examine the extent to which VDCs were able to make progress on their development projects. The major question in the study is the extent to which the dependent variable is influenced by the extent to which VDCs generally have access to the selected environmental factors listed above. Past research on the measurement of output of local

organizations in developing countries have suggested the attainment of self-help development objectives could be measured by the extent to which grass-roots organizations are able to initiate and plan such projects, their ability to mobilize resources and to implement such projects. Our study will adopt these categories of activity to measure the extent of progress on self-help development projects in our two district areas.

SECTION TWO

The Method of the Study:

Generally this study can be described as a case-study of two district councils in Ghana. An attempt was made to compile exhaustive data on the VDCs and to construct a history of the organizations and their interaction with the different forces in their environment. The survey method was used extensively in the data collection process, together with documentary methods. Prevailing socio-economic circumstances in Ghana at the time of the research made it difficult for the researcher to reside in the villages and observe the activities of the VDCs, as is generally expected in case study research. Also, the VDCs had no immediate access to telephones or post-offices that would have enabled them to inform a researcher of their meetings. Finally, survey research was necessary because a significant proportion of the information required for the study could not be observed.

Section Two elaborates on the various steps taken in gathering data and related information for the study. The geographical location

of the research is first described, followed by a discussion of the sample of villages and their VDCs. The interview schedules or questionnaires are also described and the field assistants and the actual interview process are described. The documentary research process is also discussed, as well as the method of analyses of the data. Finally the source of sponsorship of the study is mentioned.

The Situational Context.

The VDC study was conducted between September 1981 and September 1982 but the field interviews were completed by December 1981. This date is relevant since a change of government occurred in Ghana on the 31st of December 1981, which dissolved the existing local government structure of which the VDCs are a part.[33] The research was carried out from the auspices of the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), at the University of Ghana. The writer was employed there temporarily as a Principal Research Assistant (May 1981 through November 1982), under very favorable arrangements.[34] The University of Ghana is located at the university town of Legon, about eight miles from the capital city of Accra. The distance from this location (which

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[33]The democratically elected government of Hilla Limann and his Peoples National Party (P.N.P.) was overthrown in a military coup on December 31st, 1981. The current government describes itself as a revolutionary government, and it is called the Provisional National Defense Council (P.N.D.C.). The chairman of the P.N.D.C. is Flt. Lt. Jerry Rawlings.

[34]I.S.S.E.R. allowed the researcher to use some of their facilities for her research, in exchange for participation in the Institute's own rural poverty research.

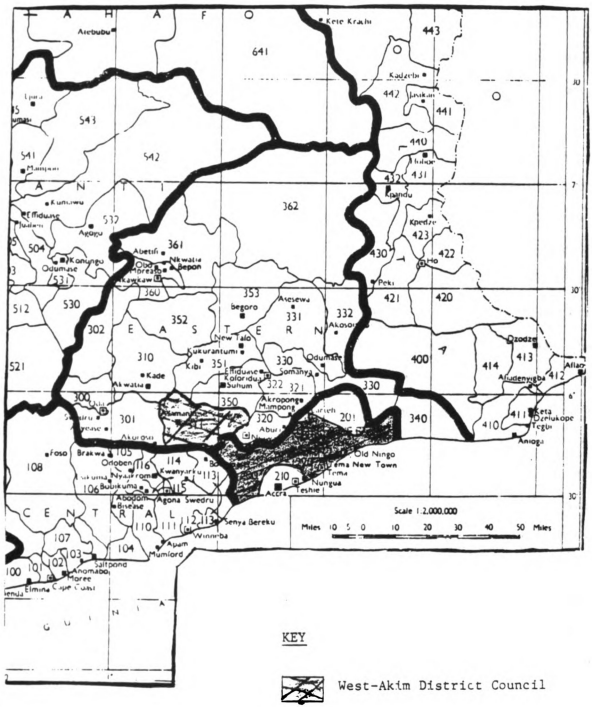
was also the researcher's residence throughout the entire period) was a major consideration in the selection of case-study areas. The prohibitive costs of transportation, as well as the poor state of roads and vehicles in the country at the moment, were important factors in this consideration. Language was another issue that had to be considered. Ghana is a multi-lingual country, with over twenty distinct languages. The researcher speaks only two of these languages, namely, Ga and Twi. It was imperative therefore that the case-study areas fall within these two language areas.

The Study Areas.

After considering several options, two district council areas were chosen from two regions in southern Ghana. It was hoped that increasing the number of case studies from one to two, would help to minimize one of the weaknesses of the case study approach, namely, the lack of comparative data. The two areas chosen were the West-Akim District Council and the Tema District Council. The West-Akim district Council is about 45 miles to the North from Legon, with its headquarters at Asamankese in the Eastern Region. The Tema district council is much closer, about 20 miles to the south of Legon, the Greater Accra Region (see Map 1).

Although the Tema and the West-Akim areas differ geographically and historically, they both share the harsh economic realities of rural Ghana and the apparent neglect by central government authorities. The offices of the Tema District Council are located in the Tema city area,

Map 4.1: Sectional Map of Ghana Showing the West-Akim and Tema District Councils (shaded areas).



SOURCE: Ghana, Survey Department. Accra, Ghana. 1972.

10 miles to the east of the capital city of Accra. There are about 299 villages here that contain about half of the total village population in the region. These villages are scattered unevenly on the Accra Plains. The most distant villages from the council offices are about 30 miles away, to the west. The villages closest to the council offices lie within 5 to 10 miles.[35]

Geographically, this is one of the most disadvantaged areas in Ghana. The Tema District Council embraces semi-savanna land, characterized by long dry seasons and short unreliable rainfall periods. The mean annual rainfall in the Accra Plains is under 30 inches, in contrast to 35-75 inches along the rest of the coast. The vegetation here is poor, made up of scanty grassland interspersed with bush.(22) The biggest asset of the Accra Plains is said to be its flat nature. Many agricultural plans have been formulated in the past two decades, aimed at irrigating the plains for extensive grain or livestock production.

The predominant inhabitants of the Tema District Council area are the Ga people. Apparently they were originally concentrated in towns on the Plains, but started to move south to the coast by the end of the 17th century, to take advantage of new economic opportunities in trading with the European merchants in the forts and castles. These movements transformed small fishing villages along the coast into large towns that have come to be the headquarters of the Ga people.[36] However,

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[35]The Tema district council was established in 1974, by N.R.C. Legislative Instrument 886. Accra, Ghana.

[36]The Abban Committee Report gives an indepth account of the political

oral tradition holds that some families started moving back to the ancestral lands on the Accra Plains, as the coastal towns became overcrowded and too many people went into fishing. Unfortunately these villages are almost totally ignored in the archives of Accra Native Affairs. An occasional reference to some of the villages helps to confirm that these settlements did exist by the end of the 19th century. We are told, for example, that by 1894 Abokobi was linked to two other villages by "a road overgrown with bushes."(1) To this day, the villages on the Plains still express allegiance to their parent towns along the coast. This has led to a complex network of chieftancy relations among the Gas characterized by a long history of chieftancy disputes.

The population of the Tema District Council area in 1970 was about 180,000. About 50% of the villages here have populations of under 1,000, and less than 30% are within the population size of 1,000 to 5,000. A few of the settlements here are large enough to qualify as towns (Madina and Dodowa). Another significant feature of this population is its highly youthful character. It is estimated that about 48% of the total population is under 15 years of age with an overall dependency ratio estimated to be near 111 in 1980.[37] While in

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history of the Ga people. Abban, I.K. Report of the Ga Traditional Council Committee of Inquiry. Ga Traditional Council Affairs, Instrument E.I. 111. Greater Accra Regional Administration. Accra, Ghana. 1975.

[37] Ghana. 1970 Population Census. Central Bureau of Statistics. Accra, Ghana. 1970. The population of this council area is now estimated at about 500,000 (See District Chief Executive. Draft Report on the Administration of Tema District. Tema, Ghana. 1982. P. 2).

the rest of the country the rural population is definitely a majority, the rural population in the Greater Accra Region is set at less than 30% of the total population of the region. This may rise a little when the new administrative boundaries reallocating settlements between the Eastern Region and the Greater Accra Region are taken into consideration.[38] However, the anomaly is understandable given the presence of the two cities of Accra and Tema. The population of Tema itself in 1970 was 60,000 and Accra was about 600,000.(67) Both of these cities are estimated to have more than doubled in size since 1970.

The economy of the Tema District Council area can be described in two sharply contrasting images. On the one hand, the city of Tema has the highest concentration of light and heavy industry in Ghana. The city was literally built between 1954 and 1960, from what was originally a small fishing village. The need for this city port was prompted by the decision to construct Valco, or the Volta Aluminum Company, a subsidiary of Kaiser and Reynolds Inc. as a condition for building the Volta Hydro-Electric Power Plant in Ghana. The country continues to pay dearly for this project, which so far has failed to fulfill the dream that it would revolutionalize industrial growth in the country. Until recently VALCO consumed about 70% of the total energy output of the plant. The relationship between Ghana and VALCO

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[38] The Greater Accra Region finally gained legal recognition in 1982. The area became an administrative region in 1964, but continued to exist as part of the Eastern Region (See P.N.D.C. Law 26, on July 23, 1982).

has become one of the classic cases of multinational exploitation in the Third World. (Unfortunately it would be inappropriate here to dwell on this subject).[39]

Apart from the aluminum industry, Tema also hosts the largest fishing industry in the country, made up of local and foreign companies. Tema also handles passenger services and sea freight which makes for a very busy city, with a slightly more lively social atmosphere than other cities in the country. This city also has the additional attraction of being one of the earliest completely planned cities in West Africa. It has a beautiful layout of roads, apartments and community facilities, set apart from the industrial area.(13)

In contrast, the rural sector of the Tema District Council is probably one of the poorest rural areas in the country. As has already been indicated, the climate in the Accra Plains does not support a thriving agricultural industry. Still the people here are predominantly farmers and they depend entirely on the scanty rainfall for their vegetable culture. The main crops grown here are peppers, eggplants, okra, greens and recently, maize. In some of the villages cattle grazing is an important activity, but most farmers keep some livestock (sheep and goats) as well as poultry on a non-commercial basis. These extras serve as some kind of insurance against bad times,

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[39] A four-part series of articles outlines the relationship between Ghana and VALCO, in the London-based West Africa magazine (See A Correspondent. Imperialism and the Volta Dam. West Africa. March 24, 1980. Pp. 518-523; March 31, 1980. Pp. 571-573; April 7, 1980. Pp. 611-616; April 14, 1980. Pp. 655-660).

then they are put up for sale. In recent years, many inhabitants of the villages here have sought jobs in Accra or Tema. The droughts of the past five years have made farming less and less attractive, especially for younger people. They prefer to take up full time jobs in the city, while farming is a part-time occupation.

Although a few miles from Accra, these villages in the Tema District Council have the same harsh appearance as their counterparts in less developed regions of the country. Housing is one of the biggest issues here. Many of the plastered mud houses are in various stages of disrepair, and other kinds of community infrastructure are either absent or available in minimal form. The only advantage that these villages seem to have over their counterparts in other parts of the country, is their access to roads. Many of the villages are strung along dirt roads which are motorable most of the year. Some, however, are only accessible by footpaths, often overgrown with bush.

Geographically and economically, the West-Akim district area offers quite a contrast to the Tema district. The West-Akim district area falls within the wet semi-equatorial climate zone, with mean annual rainfall ranging from 50 to 70 inches. The area also enjoys two rainfall seasons, May to June and September to October, which allow for two planting seasons a year.

Temperatures here do not differ much from the rest of the country, at 75 F to 95 F.(22) It is often assumed that villages in the West-Akim district area are relatively more prosperous than their counterparts in the Tema area. Judged by agriculture alone the

West-Akim area indeed has a more thriving economy in both food crop and export crop farming. Many of the staple food crops of the country such as maize, cassava, yams and plantains as well as peppers and other vegetables, grow abundantly here. This is no doubt one of the major food producing areas of the country. In addition cocoa which is Ghana's main export crop is also grown widely in this area.(22)

Industry, however, is far less developed in the West-Akim district area. Timber is a very important industry here, and the West-Akim area is characterized by widespread cottage industries producing simple farm tools and household equipment (baskets, mats, furniture, mortar and pestles and brooms). Food processing is also an important occupation in the area. It is a significant palm oil processing district. An agricultural research station at Kade in the district conducts research into efficient methods of palm oil processing.[40] The West-Akim district also has what was once a prosperous diamond mining industry at Akwatia, in the Birim River Basin.(52:88)

Historically and politically the West-Akim peoples are Akyims, and are part of the Okyeman state, with its headquarters at Kibi in the East-Akim district area. But there are also significant numbers of Anums and Krobos in the area, as well as people of Nigerian ancestry. (21) In 1970 the population of this district was 187,240, a size greater than that of the Tema district,(67) but the population density in the Eastern Region as a whole is only 142 per square mile, as compared to 494 in the Greater Accra Region.(22)

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[40] The Kade Agricultural Research Institute is supervised by the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Ghana. Legon, Ghana.

Asamankese, the administrative capital of the West-Akim district, is best known as a commercial town or market center. On periodic market days, several trucks of middlemen or food contractors file into the streets to purchase produce to be retailed to sellers in the daily markets of the large urban centers. In addition most other infrastructure in the district are located here, such as medical services, government offices, banks, communication links and social and recreational activities. The population of Asamankese in 1970 was about 17,000.(67)

Both the West-Akim and Tema District Council areas share certain common social, political and cultural characteristics with villages in the rest of southern Ghana. Throughout this region villages tend to be small with population sizes ranging from 50 to 1,000 people. Many big villages refer to themselves as towns, especially if historically they were recognized as headquarters of a group of villages. Because of migration many refer to the population of rural Ghana as made up of old people, women and children.

Settlement types in the Southern half of the country are described as nucleated rather than dispersed. This implies that villages are geographically removed form their farm lands, usually within a radius of 3 to 10 miles. Compound housing with several households sharing the same plot of housing predominates. This is characteristic of the extended family pattern that is prevalent in Ghana. Traditionally kinship is the major source of stratification, and each village is made up of clans often claiming the same lineage or ancestors. The clans

are led by clan heads, a position that is rotated among the prominent families of the clan.

Clan heads are automatically members of the traditional or chieftancy council of the village, which is the indigenous political structure of the country. Every village has a royal family or two, from which a chief is selected through a complex democratic process involving kingmakers and the general public. These days, however, wealthy or influential individuals are able to buy themselves this position in alliance with the kingmakers. Not surprisingly this has caused serious chieftancy disputes and riots in several villages. Chieftancy is open to both men and women, especially among the Akans who are a matrilineal people. Even in situations where the chief is usually a man as among the Gas, a queenmother is always elected to participate in the government of the village.

Division of labour in the villages is typically along the lines of gender and age, and the exercise of power in Ghanaian society can generally be described as male dominated and gerontocratic. Old age in both sexes elevates one's social status in the family and the community. Men tend to hold all the visible positions of power in the political system, and in other non-familial areas. Although men are regarded as the heads of households (even among the matrilineal Akan peoples), the society generally acknowledges women's power and influence in the home as the principal agents of family welfare and family continuity. In recent times women have also been accredited as the major producers, distributors, and processors of food in the

country. Along with women, children are an important labor force in the rural economy. On the farms they participate fully in the planting, care and harvesting of crops, and at home they run errands for women. Sometimes these involve walking several miles to fetch water for the family.

The major economic activity in rural Ghana is agricultural production of food and export crops such as cocoa and tobacco. Food crop farming which describes the majority of farmers is usually carried out on small 1 to 3 acre plots. There has been very little technological change in this activity, and most farmers still depend on the simple hoe and cutlass to do all their work. Similarly organic rather than chemical fertilizer is the common method for replenishing the soil. In addition irrigation is very limited, and in recent years Ghana has paid the price for this heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture, as a rapidly advancing drought has contributed to serious declines in agricultural production.[41]

In addition to agriculture, the Gas are also prominent fishermen, but this occupation is naturally limited to towns and villages along the coast. Livestock raising is also common on the Accra Plains. However, none of the villages studied can be described as a major

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[41] It has been argued that "the coercion of Africans into a large migratory labor force during the colonial era contributed to the collapse of pre-existing irrigation systems." Men left their farms to go and work on export crop farms and in construction projects in the new urban towns (See Pala, A.O. and A. Seidman. A Proposed Model on the Status of Women in Africa. Paper presented at the Seminar on Urbanization and Rural Development. July 11-17, University of Ghana. Legon, Ghana).

stock-raising area. Finally in all parts of the country the rural population is actively engaged in indigenous industrial production popularly described as cottage industries. These cover a wide range of products from blacksmithing and the production of household and other utensils, to the processing of locally produced foodstuffs. Kenkey, a popular Ghanaian fast-food made from corn, is widely produced here.

The Case-study Samples.

In 1981 the Tema District Council had 60 out of the 124 registered VDCs in the Greater Accra Region. The West-Akim District Council had 130 of the 680 registered VDCs in the area (see Table1.2). In each of the councils, these lists served as the basis for the selection of VDCs to be studied. Out of this frame, at least 10% of he villages were chosen in each district, based on expert advise of the field and other staff of both councils.(148) Thus, a total of 30 villages each district area were selected for the study. The following criteria were used to select the VDCs to be studied: 1) that the VDC is accessible via a motorable road; 2) that the VDC has been "active" for the past five years (otherwise it was classified as dormant); 3) that the VDC has attempted at least one development project in the past five years.

The conditions specified above constitute some modifications in the original plan. Originally it was proposed that the selection process should be based on distance from an urban center, literacy/ illiteracy of the leadership, and age of the VDC. Distance from an

urban center was dropped as a major consideration since research has demonstrated that physical distance by itself plays an insignificant role in the level of development in rural Ghana. Ewusi suggests that the size of a locality appears to have greater impact on its level of development than actual physical distance from an urban center.(36) Adarkwa has recently made the same observation, and suggested further that communication links, in terms of media and transportation facilities, may have greater significance than distance on the development level of a locality.(2)

Similarly, the age of a VDC was found to be a complex criterion of vitality since it was discovered that the average VDC is ad hoc in character. Typically VDCs become dormant or appear to have collapsed at certain times in their existence. Although the factors associated with this may be internal, they are frequently external. For example, every time there is a change of government in the country VDCs, along with the rest of the local government councils, are dissolved by the new government. In addition the district chief executive has the power to dissolve a VDC if he or she sees it as a threat to peace and order in the village. In this way some very active VDCs are forced to cease operating. Thus dormancy is not necessarily indicative of a lack of effort or interest on the part of the Committee. For this reason reorganized old VDCs may show as much enthusiasm as newly created VDCs.

In the Tema district, it was possible to verify the list of VDCs by informally asking around some of the villages that the researcher had prior contact with, to name committees in their area that were

currently active. Fortunately their recommendations compared reasonably well with that of the council. Altogether 24 VDCs were selected for the Tema district council case study. At the end of the survey, however, six VDCs had to be dropped because of incomplete data. The final list is made up of 18 villages, as follows:

Name of VDC	Population (1970)
Oshiyie	784
Otinibi	339
Adoteiman	232
Danfa	484
Kweiman	584
Ayimensa	248
Oyarefa	920
Teiman	327
Abokobi	536
Pantang	421
Ofankor	368
Pokuase-Djaman	1,990
Samsam	178
Mayera	484
Amanfrom	112
Adusa	474
Afiaman	109
Medea	809*

Source: Ghana, 1970 Population Census. Central Bureau of Statistics, Accra, 1970.

Medea is not in the Tema District Council, but the people claim that they belong in this administrative area. Legally they are a part of the Nsawam sub-district council. At the moment they do not pay their basic rates or taxes to the Nsawam office, and have sent various

petitions to the Tema office to be included in that area of jurisdiction. This office has been reluctant to act on the request for fear of encouraging rampant "seccessionist" acts among other villages. At the moment the Tema office continues to refuse to accept basic rates collected from Medea (poll tax).(67)

The list of the West-Akim District Council was compiled in the same way as the Tema list. Unfortunately, here the researchers did not have any prior knowledge of the villages in the area so it was difficult to cross-check the list before going to the field. This turned out to be a great disadvantage. At least ten of the 30 VDCs which had been recommended by the council had to be dropped in the field because they were found to be dormant. In addition, eight more were dropped due to incomplete data. The final list of 12 VDCs is as follows:

Name of VDC	Population (1970)
Amako	229
Asikasu	1,402
Owurakesim	211
Obinnimda	327
Abankrom	873
Asuotweree	1,228
Esaso	232
Kwiarshe	1,051
Oboadeka*	249
Ntoaso*	239
Awuraso*	844
Damang	548

Source: Ghana 1970 Population Census, Control Bureau of Statistics, Accra, 1970.

*Oboadeka, Ntoaso, and Awuraso are all officially in the Nsawam sub-district council area. However, they identify closely with the West-Akim District Council.

Although our VDC sample is not statistically representative, it is comparable to VDCs that appear to possess characteristics that are similar to other VDCs in the Tema and West-Akim district areas. For example, all VDCs tend to follow the same organizational pattern and perform similar functions. However, at the time of the study those in our sample were described as relatively more active than some of the others.

The Interviews and Documentary Search.

Three interview schedules or questionnaires were prepared for the VDC study. In addition, informal interviews were conducted with various officials in government agencies. After some discussion with fellows at ISSER, it was decided that only VDC members in key positions needed to be interviewed to provide information on the VDC unit. The president or chairman and his or her secretary were selected as the most appropriately placed persons to answer questions about the committee.

It was not easy to select questions for the three questionnaires, simply because there were few appropriate previous research questionnaires to serve as models. The ideas for the questions were assembled after a laborious process of reviewing a wide variety of documents from administrative/organizational journals, such as the Administrative Science Quarterly. The FAO Reports on Research Guidelines for Field Action Projects have been of invaluable help. (146) Robertson's work in Brong-Ahafo (Ghana) also provides some

useful insights into the kinds of information that one might look for when researching VDCs. The questionnaires were first pretested as one long questionnaire in three villages in the Tema District Council area, namely in Amasaman and Abokobi, in August 1981. The immediate problem arising from the pretest exercise, was the length of the questionnaire. This necessitated that it should be reconstructed as three separate questionnaires. Each of these interview schedules is described below: The first questionnaire, labelled the Part One Questionnaire, is divided into four sections as follows: 1) History and background, 2) Membership and structure, 3) Functions and activities, and 4) Relationships with external agencies.

The significant number of open-ended questions is this interview schedule created a few problems in the interview environment. Field assistants often reported instances where a VDC president attempted to answer all the questions in one response! On the average it took about three hours to complete a Part One interview. However, there were some instances in which interviews lasted five hours! The president of the VDC was the respondent in this interview. The second questionnaire (or Part Two interview) schedule is divided into three sections as follows: 1) Inter-organizational linkage, 2) Resource acquisition, and 3) Leadership skills. The Part Two interview schedule, though longer, took a shorter time to complete than the former. The average time spent on this questionnaire was two hours. Some of the difficulties experienced with this interview related to the respondent's failure to recollect past events and figures accurately. This interview was

administered to the secretary of the VDC. Unfortunately, there was little opportunity of filling in the missing information with documentary sources, because the VDCs keep very poor records of their activities and transactions with other organizations.

On the average the third questionnaire (or the Part Three interview) took only thirty minutes to complete. The questionnaire focuses on popular attitudes towards the VDCs. Three people in each village were asked to respond to the questionnaire. They were chosen on the basis of their reputation as informed members of the community. The three interviewers had to include one woman. Typically the fieldworkers would go to the market place to ask ordinary people to make this selection. Nearly all the questions in the third questionnaire are open-ended.

The Fieldworkers and The Interview Process.

Ten high-school level men and women within the age range of 19 and 23 were recruited in September 1981 to carry out the field interviews. The criteria for their selection was rather simple: 1) a proficiency in English, and in Ga or Twi, 2) a satisfactory writing skill, and 3) preparedness to stay in the field and to walk long distances.

A three-day training session organized for the fieldworkers took place at ISSER in the first week of October, 1981. Each day was devoted to discussing one of the questionnaires. At these training sessions considerable attention was devoted to a major requirement of the questionnaires, namely translation from English to Ga and Twi. The

questionnaires are written in English partly because it is the official language of Ghana, and also because neither the researcher nor the field assistants could read or write Ga or Twi satisfactorily.

Many expressions in English do not have the same meaning or impact when translated literally into Ghanaian languages. It was a major task for the fieldworkers to remember some of the peculiarities in this translation exercise. A vital mistake was committed at this stage when the writer failed to make it compulsory for all the fieldworkers to write notes during the training exercise. Instead, some notes were prepared for the supervisor of each team of five interviewers. He or she was expected to review the instructions with the team once they were in the field. The supervisor was also given the additional responsibility of compiling field notes. Once again the researcher failed to extend this request to all members of the teams.

The training session posed other problems. The ten fieldworkers had to be paid an allowance and transportation during this period. The biggest constraint on employing fieldworkers for interviewing is the extremely high cost of maintaining a field force. In Ghana at the moment the problem is aggravated by the astronomical rise in the cost of all goods and services.

The research team was in the field from near the end of October, 1981, to the middle of December, 1981. Five field workers each went to the West-Akim and Tema District Councils. They stayed in one village for a period, and tried to cover nearby villages from there. In West-Akim they stayed at Adeiso and Asamankese, and in Tema they stayed

at Pokuase and Ovarefa. Many times the field assistants had to walk to their interviews, sometimes this involved making 16 mile round-trips in one day. Even though all the selected villages were dotted along country roads, they were irregularly served by any form of transport service. In this situation, the only quick way to keep the interests of the interviewers alive to their duties was to give them monetary incentives.

During the survey period the researcher visited the fieldworkers at their stations. This turned out to be a very useful exercise since on one of those occasions, it provided a timely opportunity to solve a problem which was threatening to delay the work of the Tema District Council team. They had walked eight miles to a village only to find out that the VDC here was actually non-existent. The team leader was in a dilemma about eliminating this committee from the sample. Eventually we substituted another VDC from a supplementary list of VDCs that had been prepared in anticipation of such situations.

Attempts to visit the West-Akim field team were not so successful. The first time we arranged to meet at Adeiso, they had left by the time the writer arrived. She had been delayed by several hours, waiting for the vehicle on which she was to travel to return from the garage. The second time we were supposed to meet, the team sent a message that they would have to reschedule the meeting in order to finish some interviews. The next time the writer saw this team was at ISSER! Judging from the disturbing amount of missing data in the West-Akim inteviews, the team would have benefitted very much from such a visit.

This caused some tension between the researcher and some of the fieldworkers who had consistently failed to complete questionnaires. (The names of interviewers were recorded on the interview schedule).

In nearly all cases the interviews had to be set up a couple of days in advance. After entering a village, the supervisor and one other member of the team would introduce the others and explain their mission to the chief and his elders. Each supervisor was given a small amount of money to buy some local gin known as akpeteshie, or some palm wine, for the occasion.[42] On this occasion the team would also present letters of introduction to the traditional authority. After this, if given permission, the team would proceed with its work.

It was pre-arranged during the training session at ISSER, that the supervisor and one other member would interview the president and the secretary of the VDC. The other three members of the team would then go out to seek three informants to interview. In addition to interviewing the president, the supervisor was also required to copy relevant notes from the records of the VDC, particularly from the minutes of VDC meetings and from the accounts of the treasurer. The team reported that the aspect of this process which made them most uncomfortable was the first meeting with the chief. The letters of introduction which helped them gain some credibility was also much appreciated by the chief. It must be remembered that rural Ghana has

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[42] Palm wine is a mild alcholic drink tapped from the trunk of the oil palm tree. It is customary in many parts of southern Ghana to refresh visitors with water, followed by a drink of palm wine.

seen much interviewing by outside agencies, especially the villages in the Tema District Council. Consequently the people here have become very suspicious of outsiders "who come and waste their time and give them nothing in return."[43]

The interviewers had other problems which could not so easily be solved. They complained about the poor housing facilities they suffered, very high food costs, water that was too muddy, and living by candle and kerosene light was difficult. Well, this describes the living conditions of a dweller in Ghana, throughout his or her entire life. After this phase of the research, eight of the ten fieldworkers were released from their duties. But, a man and a woman were retained at a much reduced salary to work as research assistants for the other phases of the study. They worked with the writer until she left for Michigan State University in November, 1982.

Informal Interviews and District Council Documentary Search.

By the first week of November, the researcher had started her own interviews, with the help of one research assistant. The target populations were the external organizations. At this point the focus was on four organizations: 1) The Eastern Regional Administration at Koforidua, 2) The West-Akim District Council at Asamankese, 3) The Greater Accra Regional Administration in Accra, 4) The Tema District Council at Tema. In each of these establishments interviews were

[43] This expression was frequently used by the respondents during the interviews in the villages.

conducted with officials who were either directly involved in organizing the affairs of VDCs, or officers whose decisions greatly influenced the outcome of VDC activities. There were usually about eight officers in this catetgory. They are the following: 1) Regional Administrative Officer or his deputy, 2) The Chief Local Government Inspector, 3) The Health Superintendent, 4) The Chief Engineer, 5) The Agricultural Officer, 6) The Community Development Officer, 7) The Education Officer, and 8) The Information Officer. The district council list of officers was almost identical to the regional list. In Tema, however, there was a welfare officer who played a vital role in identifying relevant files here. Instead of Regional Administrative Officers the district councils had District Chief Executives and deputies. Although the interviews at this level were supposed to be informal, a questionnaire (Part Four) was nevertheless prepared for use whenever possible. This questionnaire consisted mostly of pre-coded questions, and took roughly 45 minutes to complete. Many times the questionnaire had to be abandoned for the interview to proceed informally. However it still served as a useful guide.

By the third week of December the writer had completed interviews in the Koforidua regional office, and the district council office at Asamankese. The process was time-consuming because officers could not easily be reached for an appointment. With the very poor internal phone services between regions in the country, it was impossible to set up these interviews in advance from Legon. In the West-Akim District Council, we spent a lot of time scanning through the files of the

council. We looked at the following documents: 1) Minutes of the Council (1963-1981), 2) Minutes of the Financial Committee of the Council (1970-1981), 3) Files on VDCs in the district (1979-1981), and 4) Audit Reports of the council (1981). Since there were no xeroxing facilities at the council office, we had to copy all extracts by hand. This was no doubt the most painful part of the whole exercise. Thus, there was a strong temptation to ignore all marginal information.

The District Chief Executive released his files to us only after a lengthy interview about the project. Given the frequent allegations against misappropriations in district councils this caution was understandable.

The interviews scheduled for the offices in the Greater Accra Region took much longer to complete. The exercise was carried out from about the end of January, 1982 to the end of September, 1982. The pace was much slower here for a number of reasons. The change of government in Ghana had slowed down life in the offices as people seemed to be wondering about the future. Also, it was considerably more difficult to find people in their offices in Accra. The researcher also tried to combine these interviews with archival work in other places, which naturally led to a very slow-paced research process.

For the Tema District Council the writer made an improvement in procedure. After reviewing the previously identified sources of information (refer to the West-Akim list of sources), she asked for the

file list of the council, which included all the files that had been opened in the council recently. This made it possible to make a selection of specific files that were relevant to the study. Many of the files requested by us had been closed, but they were recovered from the archives for our study. This gesture was much appreciated. The list of files selected include the following: 1) Public latrines and toilets, 2) Development projects, 3) Grants-in-aid, 4) Members of Tema District Council, 5) Organizations and associations, 6) Water supplies, and 7) Village development committees.

Generally the council officials were very supportive. Apart from the District Chief Executive who naturally expressed suspicion about our intentions, everybody (including a classmate from under-graduate school) was very eager to find the files needed. The Welfare Officer was very enthusiastic about the study saying that he had always felt that somebody ought to pay more attention to the problems of the VDCs and their relationships with district councils. He proceeded to introduce us to the secretaries and clerks. This proved to be a very helpful gesture, which made it possible for us to move very freely about the offices. Once or twice we were allowed to ride on the heavily crowded council bus back to Accra.

Not surprisingly, there was a price to pay for this easy access to the Tema office. Once when the audit report file was misplaced, it was naturally suspected that we had taken it home by "mistake." The writer received a note from the office asking her to return the file. Fortunately the file was soon recovered from the wrong office, clearing us of any suspicion.

The Greater Accra Regional Administration was the most difficult place to work. The Administrative Officer here was very busy during the period because the region was in the process of achieving legal (de jure) independence from the Eastern Region. Chiefs and government officials were constantly filing in and out of his office. Most times we had to wait for several hours to talk with him. Fortunately, he was a very receptive official and tried to provide us with all the information we needed.

Between visits to the Tema District Council, the researcher spent extensive periods of time in many offices and libraries trying to formulate a historical and statistical account that would help explain the position of VDCs in the history of grass-roots activism in Ghana. The places visited include: 1) The Ministry of Local Government, 2) The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 3) The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 4) The Department of Political Science (University of Ghana), 5) Balme Library-Africana Section, (University of Ghana); 6) The Institute of African Studies (University of Ghana); 7) The Ghana National Archives; 8) The Local Government Grants Commission; and 9) Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (Rural Broadcasting Program).

Method of Data Analysis.

The data from five questionnaires for each of the 30 village development committees or VDCs, was coded and punched on cards for analysis, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences or SPSS

Programs.(111) The size of the samples indicated as N, refer to the number of VDCs in a district rather than the number of respondents in a district. The chairman or president of a committee was selected to respond to the first questionnaire, which includes questions on the characteristics of VDC members, structure and organizational procedure as well as the process of self-help project planning and implementation.

The second questionnaire was administered to the secretary of the VDC, and it includes questions on the main independent variables selected for the study. These are: the extent of inter-organizational linkage with the outside world, the process of resource acquisition by the committee and, the style of leadership portrayed by the chairman of the committee. The three other interviews were administered to people who were viewed as informants of the village. These interviews unlike the others were based on a common questionnaire. For the first two questionnaires the chairman and secretary were asked to participate in the interviews on behalf of the whole committee, because they were considered to be most familiar with the activities and members of the organization.

In order to make it easy to compare results for Tema and West-Akim District Councils, joint frequency distributions or cross-classifications by district, form the primary method of analysis in the study. Despite the growing criticism on statistical significance testing, it is still one of the simplest ways to present the potential strength of statistical data. Non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficients are

computed to further describe the strength and direction of the relationships between selected variables.

For the purposes of our study, the independent variables of inter-organizational linkage, resource acquisition, and leadership style, and the dependent variable, progress on self-help project will be computed as follows:

1) Inter-Organizational Linkage: This is a composite variable, made up of the frequency of contact and the extent of contact variables.

a) The inter-organizational linkage index or IL =

$$\frac{\text{the total sum of the frequency of contact items and the extent of contact items}}{n}$$

n = total number of variables is 2.

b) The frequency of contact index or FC =

$$\frac{\text{total sum of frequency of contact items}}{n}$$

n = number of contact items is 1 and:

c) The extent of contact index or EC =

$$\frac{\text{total sum of extent of contact items}}{n}$$

n = number of extent of contact items is 1.

d) Therefore: $IL = \frac{FC + EC}{2}$

2) Acquisition of Resources Index or AR: This is a composite variable with four components, namely a financial status index, raw material index, technical resources index and development information index.

a) The acquisition of resources index or AR =

$$\frac{\text{the total sum of the financial status items, the raw materials items, the technical resources items and the development information items}}{n}$$

n = the number of variables is 4.

b) The financial status index or FA =

$$\frac{\text{the total sum of financial status items}}{n}$$

n = the number of variables is 8.

c) The technical resources index or TR =

$$\frac{\text{the total sum of technical resources items}}{n}$$

n = number of items in TR, which in our study is 6.

d) The raw material index or RM =

$$\frac{\text{the total sum of raw material items}}{n}$$

n = the number of items in RM is 6.

e) The development information index or DI =

$$\text{the total sum of development information items}$$

n = the number of development information is 11.

f) Therefore: $AR = \frac{FA + TR + RM + DI}{4}$

3) Leadership Style Index or LS: This is a composite index made up of three components, namely leadership executive functions index, leadership management functions index and leadership non-disruptive behavior index items.

a) The leadership style index or LS =

$$\frac{\text{the total sum of the leadership executive functions items, the leadership management functions items and non-disruptive leadership behavior items}}{n}$$

n = the number of variables is 3.

b) The leadership executive functions index or LEI =

$$\frac{\text{the total sum of leadership executive functions items}}{n}$$

n = the number of items in LE is 8.

c) The leadership management functions index or LMI =

$$\frac{\text{the total sum of leadership management functions items}}{n}$$

n = the number of items is 8.

d) The leadership non-disruptive behavior index or LB =

$$\frac{\text{the total sum of leadership non-disruptive behavior items}}{n}$$

n = the total number of items is 8.

e) Therefore: $LS = \frac{LE + LM + LB}{3}$

4) Satisfactory Self-Help Project Completion Index or SP: This is made up of several items of project planning and implementation, namely initiation of project, funding of project, raw material acquisition, technical assistance acquisition, information acquisition, and implementation of project.

a) The satisfactory Self-Help Project Completion Index or SP = $\frac{\text{the total sum of satisfactory self-help project completion items}}{n}$

n = the total number of items in SP is 8.

b) Therefore: SPI = $\frac{\text{sum of SPI items}}{8}$

The extent to which our 30 VDCs consider that they have adequate levels of IL, AR, LS, as well as the extent to which they have made adequate progress on SP will be determined by a rank-order scale with scores ranging from a low of 1=below average or none, 2=average and 3=high. This self-rating scale is an adaptation of Likert's attitudinal scale method. (See Appendix C for a description of the items used to calculate the dependent and independent variables).

The next chapter presents the empirical results of our study on VDC effectiveness.

CHAPTER FIVE:

LEADERSHIP STYLE RESOURCE ACQUISITION, AND INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL LINKAGE AS FACTORS IN VDC EFFECTIVENESS

This chapter presents the empirical results of our study of some of the factors which influence the effectiveness of Village Development Committees (VDCs), in the Tema and West-Akim District Councils of southern Ghana. The study was carried out in 1981, and included 12 VDCs in West-Akim and 18 in Tema District Councils (refer to the list of villages in Chapter Three). The results will be examined to see whether or not there is support for our general hypothesis that VDC effectiveness is influenced by the extent to which committees have access to high levels of leadership, access to resources, and inter-organizational linkage.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first part compares the extent to which VDCs made adequate progress on self-help projects (SP), symbolising VDC effectiveness in the 1980 to 1981 period, with the extent to which they report their leadership style to be adequate, the extent to which they have access to material and non-material resources, and the extent to which they have inter-organizational linkage with the district councils. The second part of the chapter investigates the relationship between the rate of progress on self-help projects and the extent of adequacy reported by VDCs for the three independent variables just listed. Non-parametric Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficients were calculated to measure these relationships, using the SPSS computer programs.(111:276-300)

LEADERSHIP STYLE, ACCESS TO RESOURCES, AND THE INFLUENCE OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL LINKAGE ON THE RATE OF PROGRESS ON SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The prevailing attitude in Ghana is that the success of VDCs is a function of the nature of the leadership of the organization. As an administrator at the Eastern Region Administration Headquarters at Koforidua put it: "Leadership is the key to the securement of resources and information for development." An informal survey of administrators concurred in this belief. A total of 15 officials from the Eastern Region Administration, the Greater Accra Administration, and the district councils of West-Akim and Tema, including both extension and top officials, were asked to rate the selected independent variables in their order of importance. A four-point scale was used for this exercise, ranging from a low of 1 = below average or not important; 2 = average importance; 3 = important; and 4 = very important. All of the 15 officials, or 100%, reported that leadership is important or very important to VDC effectiveness. Table 5.1 also depicts the rating for access to resources and inter organizational linkage. The former was rated as being somewhat more important than the latter.

The several members of the extension staff interviewed stressed the importance of resources and inter-organizational linkage in the self-help development process. They took the position that a lack of

TABLE 5.1: Administrators Opinions as to the Importance of Leadership, Access to Resources, and Inter-Organizational Linkage to the Effectiveness of VDCs, West-Akim and Tema District Councils, in percent.

Variable	Number of Responses	Below Average	Average Importance	Important	Very Important	Total
		Percent				
Leadership	15	-	-	40	60	100
Access to Resources	15	7	7	53	33	100
Inter-Organizational linkage	15	20	20	40	20	100

resources and other forms of assistance from the district council are major obstacles to VDC effectiveness. The emphasis of administrators on leadership is understandable given the factional nature of local politics in rural Ghana. (Chapter Two discusses rural conflicts and how they affect VDCs, especially where the position of VDC chairman is held by a chief or his representative, or by an elder of the traditional council.) The administrators also expressed concern that VDC leaders were incompetent or ill-prepared to perform their functions. In addition some leaders were suspected of fraud and other malpractices involving the use of VDC resources.

Our results, however, suggest that there is a disparity between the external ratings of the impact of leadership on VDC effectiveness by administrators and the influence of this variable on the success of

committees in Tema and West-Akim District Councils. In West-Akim 5 out of 12, or 42% of the committees studied, reported that they were working on self-help development projects, or had completed a project in the 1980 to 1981 period. In the Tema District Council only four out of 18 VDCs, or 22%, reported that they were undertaking self-help development projects or had just completed such a project.

All the committees were asked to rate the extent of progress they had made on their development projects in the one year period, as well as the extent to which they had access to inter-organizational linkage, to resources and had adequate leadership in the same period. In both district areas, nearly all the VDCs reported that they had highly adequate leadership. Similarly the ratings on inter-organizational linkage variables were found to be high progress on self-help development projects. The following sections will examine the relationship between the dependent variable and each independent variable in more detail.

Leadership Style and VDC Effectiveness

Although we ordinarily assume that leadership provides the bedrock for the success of any collective venture, past research on the subject suggests that there is only a weak statistical association between leadership and organizational effectiveness.[44] Part of the problem with measuring leadership is the highly subjective nature of this variable.

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[44]Refer to Chapter Three, the section on leadership.

What people generally consider to be good leadership is deeply rooted in their cultural-political definition of good leadership. That definition may indeed overlook or tolerate a lot of the weaknesses in the leadership structure. In our study leadership appears to be very slightly related to the progress of self-help development projects in both Tema and West-Akim District Councils.

TABLE 5.2: The Relationship Between the Extent of Progress on Self-Help Development Projects, and the Extent of Adequacy of several Leadership Dimensions in West-Akim and Tema District Councils (1980-1981).

Progress on Self-Help Development	Below Average	Average	High	Number of VDCs
		Leadership Executive Style		
Below Average	-	2	1	3
Average	-	1	4	5
High	-	-	1	1
Sub-Total with Project	-	3	6	9
No Project	-	6	15	21
Grand Total	-	9	21	30
		Leadership Management Functions		
Below Average	-	2	1	3
Average	-	1	4	5
High	-	-	1	1
Sub-Total with Project	-	3	6	9
No Project	1	3	17	21
Grand Total	1	6	23	30
		Leadership Non-Disruptive Behavior		
Below Average	1	2	1	3
Average	-	2	3	5
High	-	-	1	1
Sub-Total with Project	-	4	5	9
No Project	-	5	16	21
Grand Total	-	2	21	30
		Leadership Style		
Below Average	-	2	1	3
Average	-	-	5	5
High	-	-	1	1
Sub-Total with Project	-	2	7	9
No Project	-	3	18	21
Grand Total	-	5	25	30

Table 5.2 summarizes the extent to which these two variables are related. All the variables in our study discussed in this chapter were rated on a three point scale, increasing from 1=none or below average; 2 = average; and 3 = high. In both Tema and West-Akim District Councils, VDC chairmen were reported to be performing their executive and management functions at a high level (21 and 23 out of 30, respectively), even when there were no on-going projects in their villages. Similarly, a high proportion of all VDCs in the study claimed that their chairmen avoid disruptive behavior at meetings (21 out of 30 VDCs in both districts). However, it appears that VDCs in West-Akim are more interested in the decision-making process than their counterparts in Tema. At least 58% of VDCs in the former district as compared to 35% of VDCs in Tema, reported that they do not automatically accept their chairman's recommendations. Perhaps this is because VDC members in the West-Akim sample came from a more heterogenous ethnic background than the members in the Tema sample. Therefore, it is likely that the West-Akim VDC members feel less obliged to support the ideas of the chairman (Refer to Table A.8, Appendix A).

The chairmen are also rated as having a very high degree of control over VDC members (almost 40% of all the VDCs). An even higher proportion (70%) are reported to be confident that the chairmen are able to lead the committees to achieve their goals. Over 40% of the VDCs in both districts indicated that they consider the VDC chairmen to

be the most influential persons on the committees (number of responses, 12 for West-Akim and 18 for Tema).

Very few of the chairmen, secretaries and treasurers of the selected VDCs in both district areas were found to have had any organized training for community leadership. Four of the chairmen and ten of the secretaries and treasurers were reported to have attended some orientation programs, (number of responses for both districts, 29). This might suggest that the Department of Community Development's training programs for community leaders, popular in the 1950s and 1960s, may have declined in recent times. These training programs were usually carried out at the rural training centers, although in some instances the extension officials took the training programs to the localities in which they were needed. Despite their lack of organized orientation to the role, 60% of all VDC chairmen were described as democratic, which supports the popular argument that indigenous political processes in Ghana are ordinarily regarded as democratic processes by the general population. It seems that VDC chairmen have the general support of their people. Some informants were asked to comment on the general attitude of the people towards VDC chairmen. About 90% of the informants in both districts reported that their VDC chairmen do not face any major threats from the people. Further, nearly all of the informants claimed that people give average support to the activities of the VDCs, especially in the form of communal labor (number of responses, 3 informants per village, i.e., 90 informants in 30 villages). In many Committees today, absence from communal labor is

punishable by a fine, or other penalties defined by the by-laws of village.

Thirty percent of the informants asserted that the people like VDCs "because they keep the village clean." Others reported that people liked the VDCs because they "enforce harmony in the town" (33%). In some VDCs there are by-laws against quarreling or fighting between citizens of the village. Others noted that people like the committees because "they try to get essential commodities for the village" (30%). This reflects the wide range of expectations that people have of VDCs. For some people they are a channel for development as well as non-development inputs (80 informants in Tema and West-Akim together responded to this question). However, the informants noted that the people disliked certain things about the committees. For example, some realized that the VDCs "lack the influence necessary to secure amenities and essential commodities for the village" (20%). Others remarked that people have complained about the fund-raising activities of the committees, about communal labor, about the irregularity of meetings, about the lateness of executive members to meetings, about the fact that VDCs do not render accounts to the people, and the election of an alien to be the chairman of the committee.

The VDC leadership itself is reported to be very sensitive to the attitudes of different groups towards their activities. The committees make a special effort to cooperate with the traditional authority in their villages. In their efforts to preserve the traditional line of authority in the village, VDCs often have to defer to the chief and his

council of elders. Many committees have sanctions against disrespectful behavior towards the traditional council. Two members of a VDC in the Tema District Council, for example, were suspended for beating the town gon-gon (village siren) without the permission of the chief.[45] In the same context VDCs expect that Youth Associations will defer to the committees in their plans to improve life in the village. As indicated earlier, these relationships can be quite complicated.

Access to Resources and VDC Effectiveness

Extension staff and others, including the author, who have had the opportunity to participate in the meetings of VDCs agree that the most visible problems confronting the functioning of the committees is their lack of access to tangible and intangible resources. The results of our study in the Tema and West-Akim District Councils supports the proposition that access to resources has a greater impact on the rate of progress on self-help projects than leadership. Access to resources was operationalized as access to financial assistance, access to raw materials, access to development information, and access to technical resources. VDCs were asked to rate the extent to which they have access to adequate supplies of these resources on the three-point scale described above. Table 5.3 indicates that in both West-Akim and Tema District Councils, there is a positive relationship between the extent

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[45] Ghana. Town and Village Development Committee. File, D12. Vol. 2. Tema, Ghana. Report on Pokuase Djamang, 10/10/81. The VDC members were fined a sheep and some money.

of progress that committees report they made on self-help development projects and the extent to which they had adequate access to financial, technical and raw material resources. As Table 5.3 shows, at least 65% of the VDCs that have on-going projects in both district councils reported similar ratings for the extent of progress on projects, and the extent of access to resources. The ratings ranged from 1 (none or below average) to 2 (average). Similarly at least 89% of VDCs in both districts that reported they were not engaged in a self-help project also reported below average or no access to resources (VDCs with self-help projects in West-Akim and Tema, 9; VDCs without self-help projects, 21).

However, one resource variable did not conform to the pattern described above. Most of the VDCs in both Tema and West-Akim rated their access to development information high, irrespective of the rating they reported for progress on self-help projects, (including absence of a project in their communities). We might speculate that this is because VDCs have far greater access to different channels of information than they have for other resources. The higher rate of access to development information tends to inflate the general rate of access to resources (AR) for the committees. Access to development information will be discussed later in this section.

The early community development models which gave prominance to leadership as the critical factor in community development are now competing with approaches that emphasize regular access to resources as a key variable in the process of community development. Given the

widespread depressed economic conditions that prevail in many Third World countries such as Ghana, the distribution of resources has become even more limited and inaccessible for relatively powerless groups like VDCs. Even in developed countries like the U.S., there are indications that the results of local development programs depend more on the political institutions, or leaders that supervise the programs.(28)

Despite claims by District Chief Executives that VDCs are too dependent on the government for resources, committees in both West-Akim and Tema seem to rely on community contributions to a greater extent than they rely on the district council. About 80% of the VDCs in both district areas report that their major source of finance is through the imposition of levies on the people. Only fourteen percent of all committees mentioned the district council as a major source of finance (total responses, 28). The amounts of taxes levied on the people has increased steadily over the years, from about 50 pesewas per adult in the 1970s to about C100.00 in the 1980s in the wealthier communities.[46] Adult women usually pay half of that assessed the men. In addition to levies, the committees also raise revenue by imposing fines on those who violate the by-laws of the village. In some villages VDCs have attempted to establish income-generating activities such as farms, but 90% of the committees that have taken this step reported that their economic ventures have not been successful. However, at least 40% of

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[46] West Africa. October 31, 1983. P. 2536. The Ghanaian currency is read in pesewas and cedis. The dollar at the time of the study was C2.75 = $1.00. Currently the official exchange rate between the two currencies is C30.00 = $1.00.

TABLE 5.3: The Relationship Between the Extent of Progress of Self-Help Development Projects and the Extent of Adequacy of Access to Resources in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils (1980-1981).

Progress on Self-Help Project	Below Average	Average	High	Number of VDCs
Access to Financial Assistance				
Below Average	3	-	-	3
Average	-	5	-	5
High	-	1	-	1
Sub-Total with Project	3	6	-	9
No Project	20	1	-	21
Grand Total	23	7	-	30
Access to Raw Materials				
Below Average	3	-	-	3
Average	1	4	-	5
High	-	1	-	1
Sub-Total with Project	4	5	-	9
No Project	20	1	-	21
Grand Total	24	6	-	30
Access to Technical Resources				
Below Average	3	-	-	3
Average	4	1	4	5
High	-	-	1	1
Sub-Total with Project	7	1	1	9
No Project	20	1	-	21
Grand Total	27	2	1	30
Access to Development Information				
Below Average	-	2	1	3
Average	1	3	1	5
High	-	-	1	1
Sub-Total with Project	1	5	3	9
No Project	4	11	6	21
Grand Total	5	16	9	30
Access to Resources				
Below Average	2	1	-	3
Average	-	5	-	5
High	-	-	1	1
Sub-Total with Project	2	6	1	9
No Project	14	7	-	21
Grand Total	16	13	1	30

the committees in both districts still believe that they can improve their financial resources through income-generating activities (total responses, 28). Other sources of financial assistance are virtually unavailable to VDCs.

Asked whether there was a rural bank in their areas, all of the VDCs in Tema and 80% in West-Akim were not aware of any. Two VDC respondents in West-Akim who claimed that there was a rural bank had never used it (number of responses, 10 in West-Akim and 18 in Tema). In addition, no VDCs in the study had received financial assistance directly from the regional council, or other government and non-governmental agencies. Until 1976 when the first rural bank was established at Nyarkrom in the Central Region, there were no rural banking facilities outside the cities and district capitals in Ghana. By the end of 1983, 83 rural banks had been established as a result of intensified government efforts to extend banking facilities to the rural areas.(151) On the whole, VDCs in the Tema District Council area have a greater potential access to financial houses than the committees in the West-Akim district. This is due to Tema's proximity to the capital city of Accra, to the town of Nsawam, and to the industrial city of Tema.

The low ratings that VDCs reported on the extent of access to financial assistance can be considered as a function of many factors, among them the low income of the rural population, the low revenue base of the committees, and the limited number of channels available to VDCs

for financial assistance. The problem is aggravated by the low revenue base of the district councils as well as discriminatory resource allocation practices of the councils. In spite of their increased role in the rural development process, district councils in Ghana have very limited budget resources available to them, relative to their commitments.

The main sources of revenue for the district councils include annual taxes levied on adults and immovable property, fees for council services and court fines, the sale of licenses to businesses, central government reimbursements, and grants-in-aid. In Tema District council, general rates, including poll tax on adults and property taxes generate about 32% of the total revenue as compared with about 13% in the West-Akim district. Tema District Council probably earns more revenue from property rates than any other district council in the country, because of the high concentration of large-scale, high technology industries in the city. The council boasts that it is the wealthiest district council in the country, but Tema still receives 55% of its revenue from the central government as reimbursement for salaries and wages of council staff. Two percent of this assistance is classified as development assistance. In West-Akim, central government reimbursements account for at least 72% of council revenue, of which one percent is classified as development assistance. Table 5.4 describes the functional classification of expenditure for Tema and West-Akim District Councils for the 1979 to 1980 financial year.

TABLE 5.4: Functinal Classification of Actual Current Expenditure in West-Akim and Tema District Council for the 1979 to 1980 Financial Year.[47]

Functional Classification	Current Expenditure, 1979-1980 (Percent) West-Akim	Tema
General Services and Administration	83	90
Community Services	10	4
Economic Services	6	5
Unallocable Services	1	1
Total	100	100

Source: Statement of Accounts from Tema and West-Akim District Councils.

Both West-Akim and Tema District Councils have made efforts to establish commercial activities such as farming, block-making for building projects, transport services, cold storage for fish and meat, and even restaurants. Unfortunately, these have generated less than 3% of council revenue in both areas. It is worth noting that no new development program was initiated in the 1979 to 1980 financial period in either council. Also there is an obvious imbalance between the

[47] Functional classification shows how expenditure is distributed over different activities or purpose, which is expected to help planners to adjust their priorities. Ghana. Local Government Financial Statistics, 1956-57. Statistical Reports Series, No. 2. Government Printing Department. 1959. P. 3.

expenditure on general services and administration and the other categories shown in Table 5.4. Additional data on West-Akim suggest that in the 1980 to 1981 financial year, expenditure on community services increased to about 21%, while expenditure on general services still dominated the expenditure pattern at 74%.(78.74)

As a gesture towards improving the financial conditions of district councils in Ghana, the Local Government Bill proposed by the Limann administration at the time, suggested that at least 15% of net revenue from land and mineral resources in a particular district area should be paid to the council for the development of the district. (47:137) In addition, the Bill outlined conditions for the establishment of a Local Government Grants Commission to protect the councils from central government discriminatory allocation practices, and to devise an equitable formula for the distribution of financial assistance to the councils. Unfortunately, the Grants Commission which was established in 1980, has been unable to accomplish its objectives because it still depends almost entirely on the central government for all its funds.(47:136) Other means of funding for district councils such as loans from central government and banks have received little attention from policy-makers, even though they have repeatedly been suggested by other parties.[48]

Some critics blame the financial problems of district councils on certain actions taken by the central government in the 1960s and

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[48]The central government used to give loans to local councils to fund development projects. Siriboe, J.B. Part Three of the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Central and Local Government Reform. Accra. Ghana. 1968.

onwards. For example, in 1962 the C.P.P. government transferred the management of Stool lands from the district councils to the office of the Administrator of Stool Lands. Today the major complaint of the councils is that revenue from this source is neither transferred regularly nor punctually. In fairness, this action was taken to counteract widespread corruption in the distribution of revenue from Stool lands. Also the central government is accused of having appropriated to itself certain receipts from vehicle licensing, bus services and court fees. Finally, unlike other government departments, local government councils are required to pay purchase taxes and customs duties on their purchases.(134:41-9)

VDCs seem to have an equally limited access to raw materials for their development projects. The kinds of raw materials most committees in Ghana are interested in are cement or cement blocks, roofing sheets, nails, paint, wood, and other building materials. This study shows that there is a direct relationship between the extent to which VDCs have access to raw materials and the extent to which they have made progress on their self-help development projects in the past year. This supports our expectations about the relationship between the two variables. In both district areas, 95% of the 24 VDCs that reported below average progress on their self-help projects (or were not engaged in a project), also reported below average or no access to raw materials. Similarly, nearly all the VDCs that reported that the extent of progress they achieved on their self-help projects was average or higher, also claimed that they had average access to raw materials (five out of six VDCs).

It appears that government strategy in Ghana has moved away from direct financial assistance to self-help development in favor of providing them with raw materials and technical assistance. For this resource the district councils and the village communities appear to be the major sources of assistance. At least 20% of the VDCs in West-Akim and 6% in Tema identified the district councils as their main channel of access to raw materials (number of responses, 12 VDCs in West-Akim and 17 in Tema). Because of Ghana's limited development in heavy industry, many development inputs such as the types required by the Committees are imported at considerable cost and are rationed by the government, mainly through its own agencies like the district council. Although such goods can be found on the open market, the committees can hardly afford the black market prices at which they are sold.

A positive relationship was also found to exist between the extent of progress on self-help development projects and access to technical resources. Three VDCs that reported making below average progress on self-help projects described their access to technical resources as below average. Also, twenty out of the twenty-one VDCs that reported tha they were not engaged in any development projects at this time also reported below average or no access to technical resources. Much of the equipment of the district council offices are described as old and in need of repair. Similarly the ratio of technical personnel to VDCs in the districts is generally reported to be low. In addition to private agencies and district councils, VDCs also receive some technical assistance from non-government agencies.

One of the resource variables, namely development information, does not appear to be related to the dependent variable, as shown in Table 5.3. At least 80% of all 30 VDCs reported average or high access to development information, irrespective of the degree of progress on self-help development projects, (including absence of projects). This observation does not support the assumption of our study that VDC effectiveness is directly related to the extent of access to development information in Tema and West-Akim District Councils. The reason for the relatively high access to this resource may be due to the large number of channels of information available to the committees.

VDCs in Tema District Council, according to our results, had greater access to basic type of communication infrastructure than their counterparts in West-Akim. In Tema 94% of VDC secretaries were reported to have their own radios, and about 19% have access to television sets (number of responses, 16). In West-Akim considerably fewer VDC secretaries (50%) have their own radios and no secretary has access to television services (number of responses, 12).[49] In general, the secretaries in both districts remarked that they prefer to listen to Ghanaian radio stations. At least 80% of the secretaries in the two

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[49] Between 1975 to 1977 there were over one million radio sets in use with an audience of about 9 million in Ghana. This includes 60,000 rediffusion boxes. Head, S.W. and J. Kugblenu. GBC-I: A Survival of Wired Radio in Tropical Africa. School of Journalism and Communication. Legon. 1977. The number of TV sets is said to be 40,000 in the same period. Frost, J.M. (ed.). World Radio and Television Handbook. Billboard Inc., New York. 1976. P. 155.

districts claim that they learn new ideas for the development of their villages from the radio (number of secretaries responding, 29). The most popular radio programs among VDCs informants in the two district areas are Rural Radio Form,[50] Regional News Reports and Agricultural Front. In West-Akim other rural radio programs such as Akurate Sem (Village Life News), Ablato Be (Planning Time), and the Christian Program are also popular.

Mobile cinema services, mentioned earlier as one of the most popular instruments of the Department of Community Development's mass education campaign in the 1950s, seems to have dwindled in significance. At the time of the study, 44% of the VDC secretaries in West-Akim and 66% of those in Tema, had not seen a mobile cinema van in the last six years. In addition VDC secretaries also remarked that they held frequent discussions, went on excursions, and some had access to newspapers and other reading materials.[51]

Surprisingly, almost 40% of VDC secretaries in the Tema District Council and 18% of the secretaries in West-Akim reported that they had

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[50] Rural Radio Forum were introduced in Ghana in 1964, with assistance from UNESCO. The main aim was to develop a participatory or two-way communication process between a rural audience and extension broadcasters. Budu-Manuel, K. Broadcasting and Rural Development. Paper presented at Seminar on Communication and Rural Development. Social Advance Institute. November 30 - December 3, 1981. Accra, Ghana. Pp. 4-5. Also Owusu-Prempeh, R. reports that there are about 400 rural radio forums in Ghana, with 135 in the Eastern Region and 2 in the Tema District Council, outside the study villages. Rural Broadcasting in Ghana. COMBROAD. No. 27. 1975. Pp. 57ff.

[51] There are two state-owned daily newspapers in Ghana, namely the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times. The Daily Graphic had a circulation of about 105,000 in 1978, the Times had a circulation of about 130,000 in the same period. Ghana. Licensed Newspapers in Ghana. 1978/79. Pp. 3-4.

acquired some information about how to develop their communities from attending training or orientation sessions. An even greater number commented that they found informal sources of information such as visitors from the towns very useful (number of secretaries responding, 12 for West-Akim and 18 for Tema).

Contrary to popular belief, some communities in Ghana do have reasonable access to extension officers. In West-Akim, 67% of the VDCs were reported to have received visits from extension agents. This compares with 39% in Tema. Nearly 70% of the Committees in both areas commented that these visits occurred almost yearly, although one VDC in each of the areas said they receive weekly visits from extension staff (number of responses, 12 in West-Akim and 18 in Tema). The extension officers were usually from the departments of Health, Social Welfare and Community Development, Agriculture, and the Department of Information. In order for all the resources described above to flow from the external environment to the rural community, and in order to receive a feedback of needs, it was assumed in our study that VDCs must have strong links with external agencies, in order for them to be effective.

Inter-Organizational Linkage and VDC Effectiveness

Problems of linkage and coordination exist right from the top of the Ghanaian bureaucracy to the lowest units of this structure. The modern administrative history of the country is characterized by several Reports of Enquiry into the lack of linkage and coordination between different sectors of the civil service. The Mills-Oddoi and

the Siriboe Commissions of Enquiry are worth noting here.(104,134) One of the most important features of the current plans for decentralization in the country is to consolidate the independent district offices of the different ministries in Accra into one district council structure such that the district offices become departments of the district council.(62)

One of the underlying assumptions of our study is that VDCs require linkages with external agencies that have access to national and private resources in order to compensate for their own apparently weak resource base. For our study the relationship between VDCs and the district council is considered to be the most important linkage, as it is mandatory for the committees to channel all their communication to the outside world through that office.

It was expected that VDCs in Tema and West-Akim would show a positive relationship between the extent of progress on their self-help projects and the extent to which they have linkage with district councils. Surprisingly neither the VDCs in Tema nor those in West-Akim exhibit such a positive relationship. In all 43% of the VDCs reported that they had an average or higher score for linkage with the district council, including those that were not engaged on a self-help project (number of responses, 30 VDCs). Table 5.5 shows ratings for both linkage variables, namely, the frequency of contact and the extent of contact with the district councils.

TABLE 5.5: The Relationship Between the Extent of Progress of Self-Help Development Projects and the Extent of Adequacy of Inter-organizational Linkage in West-Akim and Tema District Councils (1980-1981).

Progress on Self-Help Development	Below Average	Average	High	Number of VDCs
Frequency of Contact				
Below Average	3	-	-	3
Average	2	3	-	5
High	-	1	-	1
Sub-Total with Project	5	4	-	9
No Project	4	16	1	21
Grand Total	9	20	1	30
Extent of Contact				
Below Average	1	1	1	3
Average	3	-	2	5
High	-	-	1	1
Sub-Total with Project	4	1	4	9
No Project	10	4	7	21
Grand Total	14	5	11	30
Inter-Organizational Linkage				
Below Average	1	2	-	3
Average	2	1	2	5
High	-	-	1	1
Sub-Total with Project	3	3	3	9
No Project	3	11	7	21
Grand Total	6	14	10	30

Well over half of the 30 VDCs in the councils studied have had some level of contact with the district councils. The Committees were asked to rate their frequency of contact with the councils generally, and their extent of contact with the District Chief Executive in particular. About 70% of all the VDCs in both areas reported that they had average contact with the district council in the 1980-1981 period (number of responses, 30 VDCs). The extent of contact between the committees and the District Chief Executive was more frequent than expected. The extent of contact with the top official of the district council is described as average or high by 53% of all the VDCs in both places (number of responses, 30 VDCs).[52]

The lack of a direct relationship between the ratings for the extent of progress on self-help projects and frequency and extent of contact ratings, may be attributed to the content of the communication between these two parties. There is reason to believe that most of the meetings between VDCs and the District Chief Executive, for example, are not inspired by development interests directly but rather, stem from chieftancy disputes or other internal conflicts in the village community which involve the committees. Development interests may or may not be discussed at such meetings.

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[52] Hayword also found a high level of contact between respondents from four villages in Ghana in 1971 and government agencies. Hayward, F.M. Rural Attitudes and Expectations About National Government: Experiences in Selected Ghanaian Communities. Rural Africana. No. 18. 1972. Pp. 40-59. Michigan State University. East Lansing, Michigan.

Although they are not directly represented on the councils, VDCs reported that they are invited to attend meetings at the district office. In West-Akim 40% of the VDCs reported that they have been invited to send delegations to meetings at Asamankese in the past year as compared with 35% in Tema (number of responses: 10 in West-Akim and 17 in Tema). It was discovered that the committees do not attach much importance to these meetings. Over 60% of the VDCs in both district areas reported that the meetings were not beneficial because they did not result in any financial or other kinds of benefits for their people (number of responses, 27 in both districts). The committees have very high expectations of the councils and are not easily impressed with what the latter might consider as their significant contribution toward rural development. In a letter to the Tema District Council, the Abokobi VDC asked the council to include in its budget for the 1978-1979 financial year the construction of the following facilities for the town: a clinic, community center, library, day-care center, and a youth hostel!(75) It is important to note that the meetings to which the committees are invited are not regular council meetings -- they are frequently specially arranged to discuss emergency situations facing a village generally, or the VDCs directly.

Typically VDC contact with the district council is initiated by the committee, in the form of a letter petitioning for goods and services or arbitration, or even an inquiry into conflicts in the village or in the committee. This action is usually followed by a delegation to the District Chief Executive's office. As Ghana's

economic problems have intensified, so have the lists of requests for goods addressed to the district council. In one letter, for example, a request might be made for roofing sheets as well as for canned milk!

Generally VDCs are very skeptical of the extent to which district councilors protect their interests at district council meetings. The committees feel neglected by their councilors, unless they are able to influence the transfer of resources to the villages. It was found that the committees do not automatically regard elected councilors as their representatives at the district council. About 55% of all VDCs in both study areas reported that they have no representatives on the councils (number of responses: 28 VDCs in both areas). Through informal conversation with secretaries of the VDCs, it was discovered that the committees may identify with a councilor only if he comes from a similar ethnic background. Many of the councilors were described as urban residents who infrequently visited their constituencies. In addition almost all councilors are said to be males who have had at least some elementary education. The committees commented that they have poor relations with their councilors.

District councilors have had their own battles to wage which indirectly may encourage the despondent attitude they have towards VDCs. After the Nkrumah government was overthrown in 1966, district councilors lost a lot of their powers, as successive governments have tried to shift the balance of power from politicians to bureaucrats or administrators. Today councilors no longer have an executive role, and have been confined to particpating in general policy discussions and performance appraisal of district council administrators.

Although 97% of all VDCs are reported to be aware of other government agencies, only 52% have had any contact with these institutions (number of responses, 29 VDCs in both areas). The agencies most frequently mentioned are those engaged in infrastructural and agricultural development. A few non-government agencies are located in the Tema district council area. They are almost all church-sponsored organizations that are trying to introduce agricultural and other kinds of development projects in the villages. The Basel Mission of Switzerland, for example, has been operating an extension service from Abokobi for about eight years. Similarly the village of Danfa and its surrounding villages were exposed to about seven years of intensive rural health and family planning research and extension services, as part of a UCLA/USAID/Ghana government sponsored project on primary health care in the country. In addition, VDCs in both Tema and West-Akim District Councils also receive official and unofficial visitors on tour. The district councils complain about such visits in that contacts between the committees and other agencies are unplanned and uncoordinated. Under these circumstances many false promises are made to the committees that create misunderstanding between them and the district offices.

THE EXTENT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROGRESS ON SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND THE LEVEL OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL LINKAGE, LEVEL OF ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND LEADERSHIP STYLE

This section examines the magnitude of relationship between the extent of progress on self-help projects on the part of VDCs, the dependent variable, and the independent variables used in this study. These variables include the degree of access to financial, raw material, technical and development information resources, and satisfaction with the style of leadership of the VDC chairman. Non-parametric correlation coefficients were calculated for each of those relationships. The results support our previous assumption that access to resources appears to have a greater influence on the rate of progress made by VDCs on their self-help projects than the style of leadership of the VDC chairman.

Unfortunately, only 30% of the VDCs in Tema and West-Akim District Councils were working on development projects at the time of the study. Hence, the correlation coefficients were calculated using the 9 villages with self-help projects (Total, 30 VDCs). Despite an extremely small number of cases of self-help projects, the results are used here for their suggestive value. Table 5.6 depicts the relationship between the extent of progress on self-help projects and the selected independent variables.

TABLE 5.6: Spearman's Rank-order Correlation Coefficients Between the Extent of Progress on Self-Help Development Projects, and Inter-Organizational Linkage, Access to Resources, and Leadership Style in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils.

Independent Variables	Coefficient of Correlation	Significance Level	Number of Responses
Frequency of Contact	.4000	.187	7
Extent of Contact	.3162	.271	6
Inter-organizational Linkage	.4082	.248	5
Financial Status	.6236	.037	9
Raw Materials	.6614	.027	9
Technical Resources	.1118	.417	6
Development Information	.6956	.063	6
Access to Resources	1.0000	.001	4
Leadership Executive Function	- .0598	.440	9
Leadership Management Function	.5477	.102	7
Leadership Non-Disruptive Behavior	1.0000	.001	9
Leadership Style	- .0913	.423	7

Table 5.6 shows a perfect relationship between the extent of progress on self-help development and the composite variable of access to resources as well as with the non-disruptive leadership variable. As was expected, financial assistance and raw materials were found to be strongly related to the extent of progress on a self-help project, suggesting that these are potential core environmental factors of organizational effectiveness. Our initial findings of a strong positive relationship between progress on self-help development and the extent of access to technical resources is not supported by the weak statistical correlation that was found between the two variables. Perhaps this is due to the fact that 44% of the VDCs reporting average progress on their projects, claimed that they had below average access to technical assistance. In contrast, development information which was initially thought to be only moderately related to the extent of progress on self-help development was found to be highly related with the dependent variable.

Inter-organizational linkage, however, was found to have a weaker relationship with the extent of progress on self-help projects development than was expected. As has already been suggested, the content of linkage no doubt must be taken into consideration in such a relationship. The negative and weak coefficients of correlation between the extent of progress on self-help development and leadership function and style further contradicts our hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the two variables. This finding tends to

challenge the general opinion of external agencies that leadership is the major factor in VDC effectiveness.

SUMMARY

The results of our study of 30 VDCs in the Tema and West-Akim District Councils lend partial support for our general hypothesis, that the effectiveness of VDCs is positively related to high levels of leadership style, a high level of access to resources, and a high level of inter-organizational linkage. VDC effectiveness was defined as the extent of progress on self-help development projects. Leadership style was operationalized as the executive and management functions of the VDC chairman, as well as the non-disruptive behavior of the chairman. The categories of resources included financial resources, raw materials, technical assistance and development information. The dimensions of inter-organizational linkage we looked at were the frequency of contact between VDCs and the district council, and the extent of contact between VDCs and the District Chief Executive of the council.

Our findings did not support the popular assumption that leadership is the key variable in VDC effectiveness in our two district areas. Contrary to our expectations a weak and negative relationship was found to exist between VDC progress on self-help projects, and the level of leadership style of a committee. However, a strong positive

relationship between VDC effectiveness and access to resources supported our hypothesis on the direction of relationship between these two variables. Financial resources and raw materials were found to be most strongly related to effectiveness. But the results on the relationship between VDCs and the extent of progress on self-help development and its level of inter-organizational linkage did not support our prediction of a strong positive relationship. We found a positive but weak relationship between the two variables. First, our results suggest that the level of access to resources might be improved through multiple linkages or channels of access. Secondly, there is indication that the influence of leadership style, and to a lesser extent, inter-organizational linkage on VDC effectiveness, are contingent upon other factors which were not taken into consideration in our study. The next chapter discusses the implications of our findings, and some of the recommendations to overcome them.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

SUMMARY

The major objective of this study was to investigate the strength of selected indicators of Village Development Committee effectiveness in 30 villages in the Tema and West-Akim district councils of southern Ghana. Effectiveness was defined in the study as the extent to which the VDCs reported that they made progress on their self-help development projects in 1980 to 1981. The independent variables of effectiveness were leadership, access to resources and inter-organizational linkage. Our general hypothesis was that VDCs are more likely to be effective when they have access to high levels of these inputs. In particular, it was assumed that access to resources and inter-organizational linkage are more strongly related to VDC effectiveness than leadership style, which is the favored influential factor among government officials in the two districts.

The 30 VDCs were selected after consulting with knowledgeable experts on the council staff. A survey involving personal interviews with the chairman and secretary of each VDC was conducted at the end of 1981. In addition, extensive documentary research was carried out to collect data on the historical evolution of grass-roots activism in Ghana and the relationship between that and VDC development.

Nine of the VDCs in both study areas were found to be actively engaged on self-help development projects, at the time of the study.

The other twenty-one reported that they were not engaged on any projects at that time. Even though this latter group may be described as dormant for the purposes of this study, it is important to note that they may be actively involved in pursuing other VDC objectives, such as the weekly mobilization of the public for routine sanitation projects. In addition other groups may be actively involved in organizing development projects to fulfill their special interests in the village. There are usually many special interest groups in any reasonably sized Ghanaian village, although there are many places in which the VDC is the sole community organization. Even in situations where there other rural organizations exist, VDCs are usually regarded as the dominant form of community organization in the locality.

Generally VDCs can be described as self-help grass-roots organizations that appeared on the rural scene in the early 1950s. By 1960 they had gained recognition as the main agents of development in the rural community. Initially they seemed to be very successful at mobilizing ordinary people to participate in the construction of minor projects, and in general sanitation routines as well as civic educational programs. VDCs showed great interest in the construction of basic amenities such as roads, schools, health-posts, markets and community centers. Although statistics on their accomplishments were poorly kept, it is popularly acclaimed that in the fifties and sixties VDCs were responsible for several minor development projects that were completed around the country. In recent times, however, planners and policy-makers have become less enthusiastic about the ability or

effectiveness of the committees as agents of development. Such doubts followed widespread accusations against the financial dealings of the Committees, their involvement in chieftancy disputes, and other conflicts which sometimes involve the district councils. Generally there have been charges of incompetent leadership of the VDCs. Of special interest was an examination as to whether factors arising outside the external environment of the VDCs also have an impact on the effectiveness of these organizations.

Theoretically, there is very little agreement on what constitutes an appropriate definition of organizational effectiveness, especially because analysists have been trying to improve upon the traditional conception of organizational effectiveness which views it in terms of productivity. For organizations that do not produce tangible goods like many service-oriented establishments, productivity is not regarded as a relevant factor of organizational effectiveness. Relatedly the broad concept of goal-attainment has been heavily criticized because Etzioni among others, has pointed out that an organization usually has many goals, some of which are ideal rather than practical. The models which provided the most direction for our study are Georgopolous and Tannenbaum's means-ends dimension of organizational effectiveness and Yuchtman and Seashore's system resource model, both of which acknowledge that the concept is multi-dimensional and closely associated with the resource base of the organization. Other studies have defined organizational effectiveness as partly related to the strength of inter-organizational relations between the organization and

others in its environment, which determines the level of flow of resources to the organization. The most frequently mentioned internal factor of effectiveness is leadership, although few studies have shown a strong relationship between the effectiveness of organizations and their leadership pattern. Most of the studies on organizational effectiveness have been done on formal business organizations rather than grass-roots institutions like the VDC. However, those concepts that are relevant for our purposes have been adopted for our study.

A review of the past literature on the success of local organizations suggest that leadership is often considered to be the key issue in the performance level of such organizations. Behavior patterns of leaders including their moral standards have received considerable attention. In addition authors like Robertson mention the impact of inter-organizational linkages at a horizontal and a vertical level, on VDCs in the Ahafo district in the late sixties in Ghana. Other factors which have been associated with the extent of success include the size of population of the community, the social organization of the community and the political dynamic of which the unit is a part. Holmquist's studies on the Harambee self-help movement in Kenya led him to conclude that the political arrangements in Kenya at the time of independence largely account for the high level of successful self-help developments during this period.

Resources were defined as financial, technical, raw material assistance, and development information. Inter-organizational linkage was operationalized as the frequency of contact with the district

council, as well as the extent of contact with the District Chief Executive. Leadership style was operationalized as the executive and management functions performed by the chairman of the VDC, as well as his non-disruptive conduct.. In a series of sub-hypothesis each of these variables was assumed to be positively related to the progress of self-help projects.

In our investigations we found that in twentieth century Ghana there were peoples organizations at the grass-roots that professed to protect the interests of ordinary people. At different historical periods different groups have been united under these organizations, and have been forced into confrontation with the government or have compromised with the same, as the times dictated. In the early part of this century, the organizations were led by an indigenous organizational form known as Asafo Companies. The companies were made up of non-royal commoners who had considerable influence in their towns. Later, after they had been outlawed by the British colonial government the role of rural vanguard was taken over by mostly educated commoners who came to be known as Youngmen's groups or Improvement Societies. These groups did not confine themselves to the affairs of their small localities as did their mentors, but rather they tried to coordinate their activities between localities and even regions. Later, in the political upheavals that led to the independence of Ghana, Youngmen's groups proved to be a very useful mass organizational weapon for the Convention Peoples Party (C.P.P.) that won the 1951 elections. Many left their rural communities to join the C.P.P. in the urban areas.

The conservative and more cautious elements in this group stayed at home.

By 1950 the general flight of Youngmen's groups from the rural areas had created a vacuum in rural mass mobolization, especially because these were difficult times for the institution of chieftancy. The chiefs were still recovering or suffering the attacks of Youngmen, and for many of them their credibility was at stake. It was at this point that the colonial government introduced mass education to revitalize the rural population and win them over to his side. It is through this program that mass education officers encouraged the formation of VDCs with the active participation of the chiefs and their elders, contrary to past practices of mass organization. The department of Community Development took several steps to provide support services for the VDCs which helped to make them very successful self-help organizations.

In 1963 the Department of Local Government passed legislation which gave statutory recognition to VDCs and made them the lowest unit of local government in the country. Unfortuantely, this department is also credited with trimming away several of the assistance programs that helped to make VDCs in the fifties very successful agents of grass-roots development. A struggle for the control of these committees between the departments of Local Government and Community Development ended in favor of the former, which had the direct support of central government. As an institution that was created by the colonial government, to mobilize the rural population in the framework

of traditional apolitical community development theory, the Department of Community Development was always regarded with suspiciously by the newly elected Ghanaian government. From the late fifties the Department of Local Government tried to broaden the political influence of the committees to the apparent neglect of their development functions. Some of the actions of central government at this time helped to deepen the economic disadvantage of VDCs which persist to this day.

CONCLUSIONS

Our research findings led us to conclude that the three selected independent variables of effectiveness, namely leadership style, access to resources and inter-organizational linkages, were differentially related to the dependent variable, namely the extent of progress on self-help projects. Access to resources was found to be the most positively related to the dependent variable. In nearly all cases, the total of 9 VDCs reporting that they were engaged in self-help projects in 1980 to 1981, reported that they had the same levels of access to resources as the extent of progress they had made on their projects. Therefore, VDCs that reported below average progress on their projects also reported below average access, especially to financial and raw material resources. A weaker positive relationship, however, was found between the extent of progress on self-help projects and the level of

inter-organizational linkage between the committees and the district council. The relationship between the extent of progress on self-help projects and the level of leadership style was found to both very weak and negative, contrary to our expectations. This was interpreted to mean that the significance of leadership declines as VDC progress on self-help projects increase.

The apparent weakness of the leadership variable in VDC development activities perhaps can be partly explained by the historical evolution of grass-roots leadership. Although rural activism introduced new forms of rural leadership, this was not necessarily accompanied by a transfer of power and authority from the traditional source of power. In other words VDC leadership, for example, has been unable to build its own power base independently of the chief and his elders, nor of government institutions. The committee finds that it is still expected to defer to the traditional authority. Consequently, disagreements at this level are not regarded as differences of opinion between equals, but rather as disputes developing from a challenge of traditional authority. The basic structure of VDCs which makes provision for the participation of chiefs was expected to overcome this power struggle. Its impact on the occurrence of conflicts is not available, but there is indication that this move has not successfully curbed the outburst of conflicts between the two groups at the village level. At another level, the influence of VDC leadership was further circumscribed by their co-optation by the central government. Since the committees became a part of the local

government system their interests as agents of rural welfare have been persistently compromised by the center in favor of concern for peace and order in the villages.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Several issues emerge from our research on VDC effectivenss in Tema and West-Akim District Councils. The implications of our findings on leadership, resource acquisition and inter-organizational linkage and their impact on the extent of progress on self-help development are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The general findings that leadership is a weak independent variable in the assessment of organizational effectiveness suggests that, among other things, the usual measurement criteria of the variable need to be reconsidered. Typically, the measurement of leadership effectiveness focuses on leadership as an internal feature of organizations. However, the intimate relationship between leadership issues within the organization, and leadership issues outside of the organization, for example, with the traditional authority, or at the district council, has led us to believe that this variable has important external dimensions which are often neglected. For the VDCs in our district areas, the distribution of power and influence in the interaction between the committees and the other power structures mentioned, appears to have had a direct influence on the

role played by leadership in the accomplishment of developmental goals. Such influence would be judged by the extent to which VDC leadership would be regarded as responsible for the transfer of resources to the committee. Many of the inputs required by VDCs are obtained from rations of limited supplies of building inputs allocated to the district councils. The District Chief Executive closely supervises the distribution of such inputs.

This implies that the more influence a VDC leader is able to exert on the District Chief Executive the more positively he or she will be connected to the success of VDC projects, and vice versa. Relatedly, the leader that is unable to influence the decisions of the D.C.E., develops dependence on the power and control of this official. In this case Fiedler's contingency model, which describes leadership as a situational phenomena would be an indadequate framework of analysis. Lassey's approach that describes the ability of leadership to adjust to different situations similarly neglects the influence factor. Interestingly our study suggests that there is a decline in leadership importance as progress on self-help development increases. It appears that in certain circumstances, once an organization is able to mobilize resources for its development programs, the style of leadership becomes irrelevant to the activities of the organization.

The disadvantaged position of VDCs is also reflected in their low level of access to resources, as well as the limited number of channels of resource acquisition that are available to the committees. In a wider context this supports the argument that Ghana's current economic structure is not an adequate support base for sustained rural develop-

ment, nor the involvement of the rural masses in this process. The economy has been described as dependent, its strongest features being an outward oriented export crop sector that thrives on cocoa production.

Ghana's urban economy has been unable to reciprocate the flow of goods from the rural sector by supplying inputs that foster economic growth and others that promote infrastructural development at the local level. Industry, financial institutions, skilled personnel, transportation facilities and other economic overheads are notably concentrated in the centers or large cities of the country. Similarly, social welfare and development so far remain an urban prerogative. This lopsided distribution of goods and services is reinforced by the type of industries that are developing in the country. Many of them are import-substitution industries that depend on imported concentrates or other inputs rather than local inputs. Also, many of the goods produced are classified as luxury items (cigarettes, alchoholic beverages, food processing, etc.) that are mainly distributed in the centers. In addition, Ghana's limited foreign exchange reserves imply that only small quantities of goods can be produced by such industries, which is often hardly sufficient to meet the needs of the 30% urban population. Traditionally high imports of consumption goods have made up the deficit for the center.

On the other hand, the rural economy made up of mostly small-scale food farmers and export crop (cocoa) farmers, generates a significant proportion of both the gross domestic product and gross national

product of the country. In many ways the rural economy subsidizes the relatively much higher standard of living in the center, while its own basic needs remain largely unsatisfied. In many respects rural Ghana is a silent periphery, the backyard of Ghanaian politics and development. In fact, there is evidence of increased polarization of this sector from the large center and smaller regional and district centers, including Asamankese and Tema. At the time of the study, many farmers were complaining that they had watched their farm produce spoil in the fields because they had no access to transport services to ship their produce to the market centers. In 1982 it was disclosed by a government official that the capital city of Accra, the largest center, alone consumes about 50% of petrol imported into the country.

By all practical indications at the time of our study the periphery was neglected and partly forgotten. Central government, quite rightly, operated on the assumption that as an unorganized mass, the periphery is not capable of posing any threat to the government. The urban population, however, with its educated population and several interest groups, is well known as a dangerous source of opposition. All governments have been compelled to accommodate the interests of the center (including the state bureaucracy), as part of their strategy for staying in power. The low economic surplus of the periphery and our findings that the rural population relies mainly on its own resources for self-help development suggests that rural development in this environment is inevitably slow and perhaps unattainable.

The characteristics of Tema and West-Akim District Councils clearly illustrates the center-periphery dimensions of Ghana's regional

political economy. In both district areas the villages are isolated from the so-called district headquarters due to poor communication links. Although many of the villages in the West-Akim District are only about 10 to 25 miles from the district headquarters of Asamankese, there is virtually no regular transportation service that links all of these villages to the center. In Tema District the villages are located within a radius of 15 to 25 miles from the center. Here many of the villages are linked by dirt roads, but there are no regular transportation services here. In both towns there are very few industrial activities that have a direct impact or relevance on the economic and social life of the periphery. Asamankese is mainly an administrative town and a market town. There are limited facilities here to serve the needs of the government officials and others that live here. Although Tema is a large industrial city, the industries are not required to make any special provisions for the needs of the rural population. Apart from paying their property rates to the council, these industries have very limited interaction with the district council.

In the past and even now, the rural people have demonstrated that they are aware of the unequal treatment they receive from central government and the private sector in the allocation of resources. Perhaps one of the major weaknesses of modernization theory is its failure to acknowledge rural perceptiveness or sensitivity to the parasitic nature of the urban sector. What is often interpreted to be apathy and the psychological resistance of rural people to change,

might be more correctly understood as a cultural resistance to historically unreliable relations and mistrust between them and urban or outside agencies. In other words, communities lack the incentive to develop when they perceive that the rewards of their extra labor are captured by the center. Rural inactivity could therefore be seen as a reaction to the center-periphery relationship between the rural and urban areas in the country.

By the end of the 1940s there were strong indications that the elite of the Eastern Region, which at that time embraced both the West-Akim and Tema district areas, were beginning to conceptualize embryonic forms of center-periphery relations. At Provincial Council meetings they talked about the unfair distribution of social amenities between the towns and the "bush" areas. Interestingly, there was general agreement at these meetings that the situation could only be overcome through collective action and organization on the part of the rural areas.

Contrary to views of council officials that VDCs expect the government to do everything for them, the VDCs in both Tema and West-Akim overwhelmingly said they have come to see themselves as the most responsible agents of improvement in their communities. About 83% of the VDCs said the development problems of their village could be overcome only through communal labor and private contributions.

In addition to the limited resource base of the district councils that were studied a lot of valuable resources are lost to the councils through fraudulent practices of council members. Almost every year

audit and inspectorate reports in both places show a high level of embezzlement by revenue collectors, purchasing officers and others. In 1981, for example, one of the Ghanaian daily papers reported an alleged embezzlement of C134,228.00 in the West-Akim District Council. Earlier in 1978 there had been allegations of irregular practices against the chief revenue officer and some junior officers. Tema District Council has had a similar experience with revenue collectors, clinic attendants, transport supervisors, store keepers and others. In general there appears to be an extremely relaxed attitude towards the misappropriation of council resources. The treatment of such irregular conduct is even more interesting. A junior officer found to have misappropriated council resources is either asked to pay back the amount, or is dismissed from the council. On the other hand, senior officers who are found to have committed a similar crime are more likely to be transferred to other district councils than to be fired, or asked to pay back the amount.

Economically the district councils are not in a position to help VDCs in any significant manner. Up until now they have not been able to find ways of improving their budgetry resources. This has made the district councils very dependent on central government for assistance. Both Tema and West-Akim district councils receive over 50% of their revenue from government assistance. Also the general commitment of the councils to rural development is likely to be low, for the simple reason that council staff are employed and paid by the central government. Naturally they owe allegiance directly to the center,

rather than to the periphery that they are expected to serve. Under these circumstances the council may act only as far as is necessary to maintain itself as a district center.

Under the circumstances described above the central government and its allies at the district council have welcomed and manipulated the so-called spirit of self-help development, they emphasize savings for the government, and remind the rural population that the government is incapable of providing an adequate standard of living for everybody. Some officials carry the concept of self-help really far hoping that VDCs, for example, would never request any assistance from external agencies. Efforts by the committees to obtain some of their inputs have thus drawn sharp criticism from some quarters. Since 1963 by-laws have been written with the assistance of district councils which make it compulsory for rural people to contribute their labor and other kinds of goods and services to self-help projects in their villages.

The apparent lack of interest in the resources of VDCs shown by external agencies is evident in the weak relationship between the extent of progress on self-help projects and the high level of inter-organizational linkage found between the VDC and the district council, in our study. On that basis we accept Rogers' approach to the measurement of inter-organizational linkage which focusses on the content of linkage, specifically whether it enhances the flow of resources. Uphoff and Esman's approach that also measure the relevance of the linkage channel would also be appropriate. Leonard's method that distinguishes between control linkages versus assistance linkages resolves the problem of linkage measurement to some extent.

Records on the interaction between our two district council offices and their areas of jurisdiction revealed that the nature of communication from the council to the VDCs was very much oriented towards the control and supervision of the committees. Also the councils clearly have the upper hand in this interaction. For example, the VDCs have to write several letters on the same issue before they receive a response from the council. Some of the responses follow a year after the initial enquiry is received.

By the tone of their letters the VDCs seemed to have accepted a subordinate role vis-a-vis the council. Almost invariably the letters are petitions for assistance, or reports of emergency situations caused by natural disasters or conflicts in the villages. The records further revealed that the relatively high level of acquaintance with the District Chief Executive stem from the frequent meetings over chieftancy matters, rather than issues related to development projects in the areas. It is note worthy that most of the committees reported that they did not find their meetings with the D.C.E. beneficial because he did not offer them any financial assistance.

Control linkages rather than assistance linkages would appear to dominate in the relationship between district councils and VDCs in our two study areas. In this situation the government has come to regard its meagre direct assistance to self-help development as a charitable gesture to the rural communities rather than a responsibility. For many of the committees, resource mobilization appears to be a haphazard, uncoordinated experience, very much dependent on the

goodwill of benefactors. By all indications the periphery is at the mercy of the center since the former has so far failed to organize itself to exert pressure on the center for more equitable distribution of national resources. The periphery has made some adjustments of its own to counteract this neglect by the external authorities. Generally VDCs have become more inward-looking hoping to find all the assistance they need from their immediate environment. Secondly, the committees try to co-opt individuals who are wealthy or have access to the distributive channels at the centers as a means of improving their access to resources from that environment. However, their efforts will not be enough without the simultaneous cooperation of the center.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence suggests that a main step towards improving the capability of VDCs as agents of grass-roots development would be to improve their access to resources. Given that the central government is the chief controller of resources in the country the major impetus for a redirection of inputs to the rural sector will have to come from this source. The future of VDCs, therefore, is integrally tied to the extent to which the government is able to make concessions in this direction. In addition, the committees must seek ways of exerting pressure on the center, to make resources more available. VDCs must therefore co-opt some of the leaders of the center, who are committed to the periphery. This requires that the committees should become involved in the political process as active participants and not just passive recipients.

By all indication from the historical origins of grass-roots organizations to the present, it would be irrelevant to continue to focus on leadership as the major factor in the success of self-help development. This would only be meaningful if leadership were to be given back control of the VDC, as well as power to influence government decisions on the resources accruing to the committees. Holmquist strongly supports the idea that it is the extent of the political dynamic or political arrangements more than any other variable that determines the release of resources from the central government to self-help projects.

But first the government must clarify its relationship with the different power structures at the local level. It must declare what is expected of the traditional authority, on the one hand, and VDCs, on the other. As an indigenous political institution chieftancy has naturally become more focussed on judiciary matters of customary law, and other issues which directly threatens its power base. In many ways the institution survives for its own sake. VDCs, on the other hand, are still considered to be purposive, action-oriented organizations with specific intentions of promoting development.

It would seem logical, therefore, that the center would give its moral and concrete support to the VDCs. Following our study of the committees we suggest they would be more successful if the district councils would give them the necessary support. Given the tensions that have existed between the traditional institution of chieftancy and the secular VDCs, and the district councils, it is suggested that the

government and these other parties should work towards clearly demarcating the powers and responsibilities of each party in this triangle. Chieftancy especially could be further democratised, or transformed into a ceremonial institution with limited executive and judiciary duties. The automatic election of chiefs to the VDCs, for example, and the one-third seats reserved for chiefs on the district council, must be eliminated. In its place elections should be held which make provision for chiefs and VDC members to stand for elections to the council.

On their part VDC leaders must realize that these changes will be unlikely to occur unless they actively seek representation on the district council. In the absence of that VDCs might consider forming themselves into district and national congresses of VDCs. The specific duties of such a hierarchical structure would be to bargain and negotiate for resources for the periphery.

The findings suggest that the Ghanaian government needs to take drastic measures to overcome the further stagnation of the rural areas in our study. There are several options, some of which are described below. First, the district council can re-order its priorities to transfer emphasis from some sectors of the budget to others, particularly in direction of community and economic services that benefit rural localities. In order to support this change, the district councils would have to expand their tax base, or bargain for larger grants from central government. In addition, the government would have to consider reinstating some of the sources of revenue it

took away from the councils. However, there are alternative and less burdensome ways of improving the resources of VDCs.

Some have suggested that local government banks should be established to operate only in the rural areas. Such a program could be planned as part of a comprehensive decentralization program. The author's approach to decentralization differs slightly from the typical government approach that focuses on administrative decentralization. By our conception, decentralization implies administrative, as well as social and economic infrastructural decentralization. The main aim of such a process would be to re-direct capital investment to the less privileged regions of the country, to exapnd the distribution of business institutions, establish labor-intensive processing and manufacturing industries, build research institutes for local raw materials, build agro-allied industries to produce inputs for the predominantly agricultural rural economies and to establish transport and communication links with the rural areas. In many ways this is very similar to the design of service center concept that regional planners have been proposing for Ghana for the past decade.

In this context administrative decentralization must go further than has been proposed by the government. It must focus on the devolution of powers and responsibility at the district level. This must incorporate strategies for the redistribution of authority between the people and the district council. For example, VDCs could be given the opportunity to send representatives to the councils. In the past such proposals have been rejected because of the enormous costs

involved in transporting large numbers of VDC representatives to the councils for meetings. Also the general illiteracy of the committee members has been mentioned as a constraint.

However, it should be possible for the councils to arrange mobile council meetings where some members of the council and a translator would meet with VDCs at different locations in the district area, on a rotational basis. The second problem of language could be solved by conducting meetings in the common language of the area. A translator would then transcribe the minutes into English which is the official language of the country.

From our discussion on the close relationship between VDCs and events in the external environment, it is clear that the effectiveness of the committees is not just a function of internal organizational or other community factors but also a result of the inter-relationships with the external environment. A measurement of VDC effectiveness, therefore, should not be limited to any one of these dimensions of VDC interaction.

Based on our VDC effectiveness study, we would like to propose possible modifications in the existing conceptual perspectives on organizational effectiveness. The premise of this proposal is that all of the so-called mutually exclusive models of effectiveness represent parts or objectives of an organization, that together form a holistic basis for the measurement of organizational effectiveness. Therefore, serveral effectiveness studies can be conducted for the same organization. Naturally, some objectives in an organization are more

difficult to achieve than others, and the attainment of some levels of effectiveness would be dependent upon the prior attainment of others.

By this approach we have identified three possible levels of effectiveness measurement in the same organization, namely a primary level of effectiveness, an intermediate level of effectiveness, and an advanced level of effectiveness. The average measure of effectiveness for these three levels would then give the total effectiveness measure for an organization. The three levels are described in Diagram 6.1.

Primary level effectiveness would be achieved by an organization that has a high level of leadership. This would be a leader that is able to perform his executive and management duties, is able to influence both the traditional authority and the district council, and is able to avoid disruptive behavior at meetings. Measurement of the primary level of effectiveness is potentially difficult because it is subjective and culturally based.

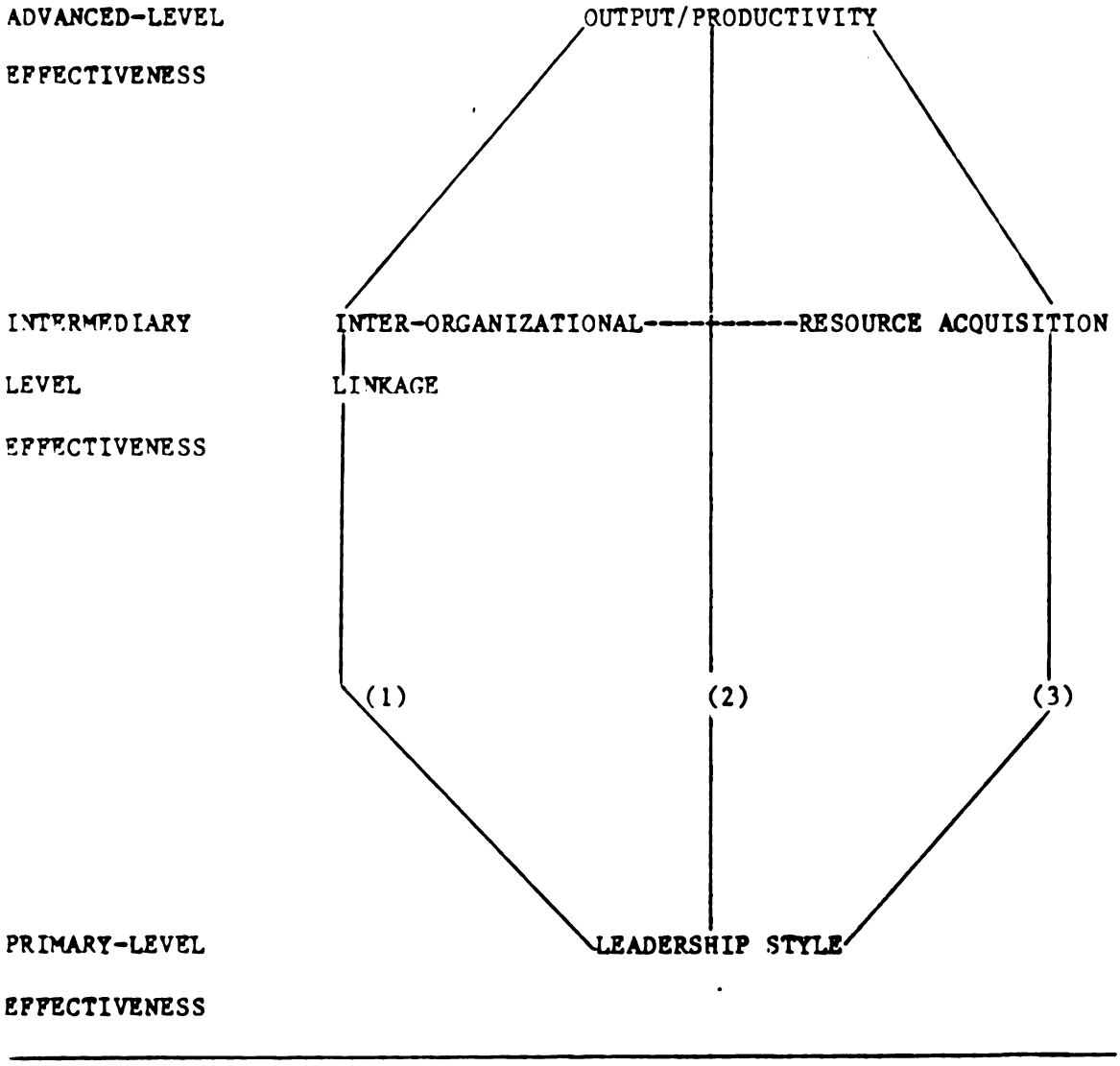
Intermediary effectiveness would refer to an organization's ability to maintain high levels of inter-organizational relations with other members of its task environment in order to help the organization maintain high levels of access to resources. At the intermediate level there are three possible types of biases that might develop, described as 1, 2, 3 in Diagram 6.1. In the first bias an organization would be biased in favor of maintaining high levels of linkages with other organizations that may or may not guarantee the organization an adequate flow of resources. This appears to be the kind of linkage between VDCs in Tema and West-Akim district areas and the council

offices. In the second type of bias an organization would seek high levels of linkage only when it is assured of high levels of access to resources from these channels. This appears to be the ideal type (2) of intermediary effectiveness. In a third bias (3) an organization would seek to obtain high level of access to resources from whatever source is available, irrespective of its level of linkage with that source.

At the advanced level of effectiveness, an organization would be able to show results or proof that it has fulfilled its functional objectives. It is usually possible to find items or other visible evidence of results or output or productivity. In the case of VDCs one of such visible criterion would be the extent of progress on self-help development projects or the completion of such a project.

The important feature of this approach to the study of effectiveness is that it forces researchers to look beyond single criterion measures and to adopt holistic models of measurement. For example, the general belief that leadership is the crucial variable of VDC effectiveness in Ghana, no doubt clouds the grave issue of resource allocation, and poor inter-organizational linkages between the committees and other organizations.

DIAGRAM 6.1: PROPOSED MULTI-LEVEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS



SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Since our VDC study concentrated on the impact of external environmental factors on the effectiveness of VDCs, it is important to understand each of these variables in greater detail, in order to appreciate their impact. It is suggested here that VDCs in parts of Ghana should be studied on the basis of the three levels of effectiveness just introduced, either on the basis of single levels, or all three levels of effectiveness.

Also, our study of VDCs grossly neglected the existence of other grass-roots organizations in the village community that may or may not pose direct competition to the committees. It would be helpful, therefore, to study the horizontal power struggles that go on. Such a study should indicate the extent to which VDCs are representatives of the people, and not just of a select elite in the communities. In our study about 70% of VDCs members described themselves as ordinary citizens. Another interest which was abandoned along the way in the VDC study is the nature of involvement of women in the affairs of the committees, and what objectives convince women to join the activities of the organization. In addition, further research on VDCs should study some of the following factors that have been linked to the success of grass-roots organizations in other parts of Africa, namely the extent of popular participation, the population size of the community, the indigenous communal activities of the people and the political dynamic of development in the country.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE A.1: Age Distribution of VDC Members in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils, in percent.

Age Category	District	
	West-Akim	Tema
	(In Percent)	
25-34	2	16
35-44	29	34
45-54	31	19
55-64	24	21
65-74	12	7
75-84	2	2
85-94		1
Total	(100)	(100)
Number of VDC Members Reported on by President	(58)	(58)

TABLE A.2: Sex Distribution of VDC Members in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils, in percent.

Sex	District	
	West-Akim	Tema
	(In Percent)	
Male	90	86
Female	10	14
Total	100	100
Number of VDC Members reported on by President	90	99

TABLE A.3: Educational Levels of VDC Members in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils, in percent.

Level of Education	District	
	West-Akim	Tema
	(In Percent)	
No formal education	52	56
Elementary education	34	28
Secondary education	14	12
University		4
Total	100	100
Number of VDC members reported on by President	92	101

TABLE A.4: Marital Status of VDC Members in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils, in percent.

Marital Status	District	
	West-Akim	Tema
	(In Percent)	
Married or engaged	98	100
Single, Divorced, Widowed or separated	2	
Total	100	100
Number of VDC members reported on by President	65	89

TABLE A.5: Religious Affiliation of VDC Members in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils, in percent.

Religion	District	
	West-Akim	Tema
	(In Percent)	
Christian	60	88
Moslem	8	1
Traditional Religion	23	-
Pagan	9	11
Total	100	100
Number of VDC members reported on by President	65	93

TABLE A.6: Occupation of VDC Members in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils, in percent.

Occupation	District	
	West-Akim	Tema
	(In Percent)	
Farmer	69	70
Trader	2	6
Technicians, Teachers, Clerks	18	9
Traditional Medicine	-	3
Artisans	9	8
Vocational Skills	1	2
Professionals	1	2
Total	100	100
Number of VDC members reported on by President	93	99

TABLE A.7: Status of VDC Members in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils, in percent.

Status	District	
	West-Akim	Tema
	(In Percent)	
Chief	7	9
Elder	28	8
Traditional Healer	1	1
Asafo Captain	1	-
Youth Leader	5	1
Evangelist	-	1
Ordinary Citizen	58	80
Total	100	100
Number of VDC members reported on by President	96	100

TABLE A.8: Place of Origin of VDC Members in the West-Akim and Tema District Councils, in percent.

Place of Origin	District	
	West-Akim	Tema
	(In Percent)	
Same Village	15	84
Another Village in Same Region	48	12
Another Region	34	4
Non-Ghanaian	3	-
Total	100	100
Number of VDC members reported on by President	65	95

APPENDIX B

The following documents outline existing legislation on the rights and duties of VDCs in Ghana.

L.I. 262

VILLAGE AND TOWN COMMITTEE REGULATIONS, 1963

In exercise of the powers conferred upon the Minister by section 34 of the Local Government Act, 1961 (Act 54) the following Regulations are hereby made this 19th day of March, 1963.

1. (1) There shall be established in every village or town or any part of any such village or town committee as the case may be. — Establishment of committees.

(2) The District Commissioner shall keep a list of all village or town committees established for his district and the membership of any such committee.

(3) A committee established under these Regulations shall consist of a chairman and not more than eleven members one of whom shall be a representative of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development.

(4) The chairman of the committee shall be the Chief, Odikro or Headman of the village or town concerned or such other person as may be appointed by the District Commissioner in consultation with the appropriate Regional Commissioner and approved by the Minister.

2. A committee established under these Regulations shall: — Functions of Committee.

(a) take over all the functions formerly performed by the town and village development committee concerned;
(b) organise and supervise the general sanitation and cleanliness of the village, town or area concerned and encourage the inhabitants concerned to undertake self-help and voluntary projects;
(c) co-oeprate and collaborate with the Council within whose administrative area the committee is established kin the performance of the Council's

functions and in particular ensure that rates are promptly paid to the rate collectors; and

(d) provide a focal point for the discussion of local problems and make recommendations to the council within the administrative area of which the committee is established.

Meetings.

3. (1) A committee established under these Regulations shall meet at least once in every week or as the chairman or the District Commissioner or as one-third of the members of the committee may require.

(2) Any such committee may with the approval of Minister make rules for the conduct of its affairs.

(3) The quorum for any meeting of the committee shall be one-third the membership of the committee including the chairman and the representative of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development.

VILLAGE AND TOWN COMMITTEE REGULATIONS, 1963

4. The Town and Village Committee Regulations, 1962 (L.I. 199) are hereby revoked.

K.A. Ofori Atta
Minister of Justice.

Date of Gazette notification: 29th March, 1963

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VILLAGE AND TOWN COMMITTEE REGULATIONS, 1967

IN exercise of the powers conferred on the Member of the National Liberation Council responsible for Local Government by section 34 of the Local Government Act 1961 (Act 54), the following Regulations are made this 8th day of March, 1967.

1. (1) There shall be established in every village or town or any part of any such village or town a village or town committee as the case may be. **Establishment of Committees.**

(2) The Secretary to the Local Authority shall keep a list of all Vilalge or Town committees established within the area of his Local Authority and the membership of any such committee. The list thus compiled shall be subject to periodical inspection by the District Administrative Officer in charge of the area.

2. (1) A committee established under these Regulations shall consist of a chairman and not more than eleven or less than seven members appointed by the District Administrative Officer. **Membership.**

(2) The chairman of the Committee shall be the Chief, Odikro or Headman of the village or town concerned or such other person as may be appointed by the District Committee of Administration in consultation with the appropriate Regional Committee of Administration.

3. A Committee established under these Regulations shall: **Functions of Committee.**

(a) take over all the functions formerly performed by the town and village development committee concerned;

(b) organise and supervise the general sanitation and cleanliness of the village, town or area concerned and encourage the inhabitants concerned to undertake self-help and voluntary projects;

(c) co-operate and collaborate with the Local Authority within whose administrative area the committee is established in the performance of its functions and in particular ensure

that rates are promptly paid to the late collectors;

(d) provide a focal point for the discussion of local problems and make recommendations to the Local Authority within the administrative area of which the committee is established; and

(e) perform such other functions as the Member of the National Liberation Council responsible for Local Government may prescribe.

4. (1) A Committee established under these Regulations shall meet at least once in every month or as the Chairman or the District Administrative Officer or as one-third of the members of the committee may require. Meetings.

(2) Any such committee may with the approval of the Member of the National Liberation Council responsible for Local Government make rules for the conduct of its affairs.

(3) The quorum for any meeting of the committee shall be one-third of the membership of the committee including the chairman.

(4) Any of the persons mentioned in the following provisions of this regulation or their representatives may attend or may be invited to attend a meeting and take part in the deliberations of a Committee established under these Regulations so however that such persons shall not have any voting rights.

(a) the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Local Government,

(b) the Regional Administrative Officer of the Region in which the Committee is established,

(c) the District Administrative Officer in charge of the area,

(d) the District Mass Education Officer in charge of the area,

(e) the District Agricultural Extension Officer in charge of the area,

(f) the District Nutrition Officer in charge of the area,

(g) the Medical Officer of Health in charge of the area,

(h) the Secretary to the Local Authority, and

(i) any other person so authorised by the Ministry of Local Government.

5. The Chairman or any other member appointed by the Village or Town Committee shall record and keep proceedings of the Committee. A person so appointed may be paid an honorarium which shall in no case exceed three cedis per mensem. Staff.

6. (1) A Committee established under these regulations shall not administer self-help grants or have the power to raise revenue on its own account by taxation. Such funds as the inhabitants of a village or town are willing to raise for improvement in their area shall be collected by means of special rates to be imposed by the Local Authority concerned. The following provisions of this regulation shall be observed in the imposition of special rates by Local Authorities. Finance.

(2) No Local Authority shall impose any special rate where such a rate is intended to be in force generally throughout the whole of its area of authority without consulting the Chairman of the Town and Village Committees within such area. A resolution by a Local Authority to impose a special rate of whatever nature shall be submitted to the Member of the National Liberation Council responsible for Local Government for approval.

(3) A Village or Town Committee may also apply to a Local Authority for the imposition of a special rate exclusively on the inhabitants of the area of such Committee for a project for the benefit of the Village or Town concerned.

(4) Applications by a Committee to the Local Authority or the recommendation by the Local Authority to a Committee for the levy of a rate shall indicate:-

(a) the nature of the project or service which it is intended to finance fro the rate;

(b) the nature of its execution, that is, whether it would be executed by contract or directly by the Local Authority through hired labour or unpaid communal labour;
(c) the estimated revenue from the rate;
(d) the estimated cost of the project;
(e) how much self-help funds, if any, are expected from the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development;
(f) the estimated time of completion.

(5) An application by a Village or Town for the imposition of a special rate, endorsed by the Local Authority concerned shall be submitted for approval to the National Liberation Council Member responsible for Local Government.

(6) When special rates are imposed on a particular village or town, a separate account shall be opened in the Local Authority's books so that it is learned how much special rate is collected and how it is spent.

(7) Receipts for rates paid shall show separately the amount of the basic rate and the amount of any special rates.

(8) The Chairman or any other member appointed by the Village or Town Committee shall be responsible for signing documents authorising expenditure agreed upon by the Committee.

(9) Under no circumstances shall special rates collected by the Local Authority be diverted to other uses, without the prior approval of the Village or Town Committee and the Member of the National Liberation Council responsible for Local Government.

(10) The Committee shall keep account books in which all their financial transactions shall be recorded; these account books shall be audited by the Local Authority's Treasurer and Government Auditors.

7. In these Regulations, "Secretary to the Local Authority" means the Secretary to the Local Authority within the area in question.

8. The Village and Town Committee Regulation, 1963 (L.I. 262) are hereby revoked. — Revocation.

9. This Instrument shall be deemed to have come into force on 1st July, 1966. — Commencement.

A.K. DEKU
Member of the National Liberation Council responsible for Local Government

Date of Gazette notification: 17th March, 1967.

APPENDIX C:

THE MEASUREMENT OF THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE -- ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES -- INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL LINKAGE, ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND LEADERSHIP STYLE

A. VDC Effectiveness: Extent of Progress on Self-Help Development Project (SP).

VDC effectiveness is operationalized as the extent to which each of the 30 VDCs made progress on self-help projects (if they were working on one) in the 1980 to 1981 period. The extent of progress on self-help projects is measured by the level of responses to the items of the following question: How far were you able to advance in the following areas of activity concerning your self-help project, in the past one year: 1) to plan your project; 2) to acquire financial assistance; 3) to acquire raw materials, 4) to acquire technical equipment; 5) to acquire technical advice; 6) to acquire development information; 7) to mobilize communal labor, and 8) to implement your development project. The scores were categorized on the basis of a scale of progress ranging from 1 to 3, where 1=none or below average; 2=average; and 3=high.

Therefore if a VDC responded to each of the 8 items with a score of 3, the extent of progress on SP would be the average of the sum of all the 8 items as follows:

$$\frac{SP = 8(3) = 24 = 3}{8 \quad 8}$$

Therefore, the extent of progress on the self-help project for this VDC would be a high of 3.

B. Inter-Organizational Linkage (IL)

The inter-organizational linkage variable was operationalized as the frequency of contacts with the district council in the past year, and the extent to which the VDCs know the District Chief Executive of the council, or the extent of contact with that top official.

The frequency of contact (FC) with the district council was measured by the level of response to the following question: How many times have you been in contact with the district council in the past one year? The response categories were: 1=once; 2=two times; and 3=three or more times. These responses correspond to a three-point scale of a low of: 1=none or below average; 2=average; 3=high, respectively. Therefore, a VDC with a high level of frequency of contact would have a scale rating of 3.

The extent of contact (EC) with the District Chief Executive was measured by the following question: How well do you know your District Chief Executive? The response categories were: 1=little; 2=slightly; 3=well. The level of EC was determined by the same scale as above.

The overall level of inter-organizational linkage was determined by calculating the average of the sum of FC+EC. Therefore, a VDC with high scores on both variables would have an inter-organizational linkage score as follows:

$$\frac{IL = 2(3) = 6 = 3}{2 \quad 2}$$

The IL for this VDC would be high of 3.

C. Access to Resources (AR).

Access to resources was operationalized as the extent to which each of the 30 VDCs generally have access to financial resources, raw material, technical resources and development information. Each of these was measured by questions about the extent to which VDCs have access to the resources from different agencies or channels.

The extent of access to financial assistance was measured by the level of responses to the items of the following question: to what extent do vou have adequate access to financial assistance from the following agencies? 1) the district council; 2) the regional council; 3) banks and other financial institutions; 4) other government agencies; 6) community economic projects; 7) imposition of levels; and 8) private contributions. The responses were rated on a scale with scores of a low of 1=none or below average; 2) average; 3) high. The level of financial assistance (FA) was determined by calculating the average of the sum of scores on the 8 items. Therefore, if a VDC scored a 3 on all of its financial assistance items, it would have a high (or maximum) level of financial assistance as follows:

$$\frac{FA = 8(3) = 24 = 3}{8 \quad 8}$$

The extent of access to raw materials (RM) was measured by the level of responses to the items on the following question: to what extent do you have access to raw materials from the following agencies? 1) the district council; 2) the regional council; 3) banks; 4) other government agencies; 5) non-government agencies; and 6) private

contributions. RM was determined by calculating the sum of the average of the 6 scores on access to raw materials. The responses were rated on a scale with scores ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 3 as above. Therefore, if a VDC had a score of 3 on each of the 6 items, it would have an RM score as follows:

$$\frac{RM = 6(3) = 18 = 3}{6 \quad 6}$$

The level of access to raw materials for this VDC would have a high of 3.

The extent of access to technical resources (TR) was measured by the level of the responses to the items on the following question: to what extent do you have access to technical resources from the following agencies: 1) the district council; 2) the regional council; 3) other government agencies; 4) non-government agencies; 5) community contributions; and 6) private hire. The level of access to technical resources for each VDC was then determined by calculating the average of the sum of the 6 scores. The scale of measurement also ranged from a low score of 1=none or below average; 2=average; 3=high. Therefore, if a VDC obtained high scores on all of the 6 items, it would have a technical resources level as follows:

$$\frac{TR = 6(3) = 186 = 3}{6}$$

This VDC would have a high level of access to technical resources.

The extent of access to development information (DI) was measured by the responses to the items on the following question: to what

extent do you have access to development information from the following agencies and channels: 1) radio; 2) television; 3) mobile cinema; 4) excursions; 5) discussions; 6) attending meetings; 7) reading materials; 8) training; 9) extension agents; 10) visitors from the cities; and 11) newspapers. The level of access to development information was based on the average of the sum of 11 scores; using the same scale described above. Therefore, if a VDC had a score of 3 on all 11 items, its extent of access to DI would be as follows:

$$\frac{DI = 11(3) = 33 = 3}{11 \quad 11}$$

The overall extent of access to resources was determined by calculating the average of the sum of the FA, RM, TR, and DI scores for each VDC. Therefore, if a VDC has a high score for each resource variable, its AR would be as follows:

$$\frac{AR = 3(4) = 12 = 3}{4}$$

The VDC would have a generally high level of access to resources.

D. Leadership Style (LS)

The extent of adequate leadership style (LS) was operationalized as the extent to which the Chairman of the Committee performs his executive and management functions as well as his avoidance of disruptive behavior.

The level of executive leadership (LE) was measured by the level of responses to the items of the following question: Does your

chairman perform the following executive functions each time you have a meeting: 1) initiating discussions by suggesting new ideas and proposing solutions; 2) seeking information by requesting additional facts; 3) giving information by offering additional facts; 4) stating his opinion or beliefs; 5) coordinating various groups and ideas; 6) testing the feasibility of new ideas; 7) diagnosing problems; and 8) evaluating accomplishments against objectives. The response categories for this question were: 1=no; 2=sometimes; 3=yes. These were rated on the 3-point scale described above, with scores ranging from a low of 1=none or below average; 2=average; and 3=high, respectively. The extent of executive leadership was determined by calculating the average of the sum of the scores on the 8 items. If a VDC scores a 3 on each of those items its EL would be high as follows:

$$\frac{LE = 8(3) = 24 = 3}{8 \quad 8}$$

The extent of management leadership (ML) by the VDC was measured by the level of responses to the items on the following questions. Does your chairman perform the following management questions everytime you have a meeting: 1) encouraging and responsive to others; 2) setting standards for group procedure; 3) testing consensus by asking for group opinions; 4) regulating conflict by seeking to understand them; 5) ensuring public relations by maintaining rapport with all members; 6) disciplining offenders by discussing offensive behavior; 7) coordinating ideas of different cliques; and 8) evaluating achievements against objectives. The response categories and scale

points for ML are the same as for EL. Therefore, if a VDC scores a high of 3 on each of the 8 items of this question it would have a level of management leadership as follows:

$$LM = \frac{8(3)}{8} = \frac{24}{8} = 3$$

The level of non-disruptive behavior of leadership (LB) was measured by the level of responses to the items on the following question: Do the following types of behavior describe your chairman every time you have a meeting: 1) extreme formality or distant from the group; 2) withdrawing from the group or acting passive or indifferent; 3) seeking recognition or calling attention to himself; 4) competing with the group and failing to delegate responsibility; 5) manipulating others to express non-group opinions; 6) blocking or rejecting ideas without consideration; 7) aggressiveness or showing hostility towards the group; and 8) extreme playfulness, disrupting the work of the Committee. The response categories for BL were slightly different from those just outlined. The categories are as follows:

1 = yes; 2 = sometimes; and 3 = no.

The level of non-disruptive behavior was determined by calculating the average of the scores for all 8 items. The score was rated on a scale with points from a low of 1 = none or below average; 2) average; and 3) high. Therefore, if a VDC obtained a score of 3 on all of the 8 items the non-disruptive behavior level of its chairman would be high as follows:

$$LB = \frac{8(3)}{8} = \frac{24}{8} = 3$$

8

The overall leadership style (LS) level was measured by calculating the average of the scores on EL, ML, BL as follows:

$$LS = \frac{LE + LM + LB}{3}$$

In the case of a VDC with "perfect" scores throughout, the level of LS would be:

$$LS = \frac{3 + 3 + 3 = 9 = 3}{3 \qquad 3}$$

APPENDIX D

POSTSCRIPT

Evolution of VDCs: 31st December and the Introduction of People's Village Defense Committees.

As part of the formal local government structure in Ghana, the VDCs in our study were officially dissolved along with others following a military change of government in Ghana, on December 31st, 1981. This government, described as a revolutionary government is known as the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC).

By March, 1982, the PNDC had initiated a new political process which indeed has the potential to revolutionalize social, economic and political relations between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in Ghana. The government called for the formation of Peoples' Defense Committees at all levels of organization in the society. So far three forms of defense committees have become popular, they are the Workers' Defense Committees (which are the best organized at the moment), the Community Defense Committees (in urban residential areas) and the Village Defense Committees in rural areas. Generally the Peoples' Defense Committees are described as an outlet for the ordinary citizens of the country to exercise their rights as partners in the decision-making process.

Originally members of management, and in the rural areas the traditional authority and wealthy inhabitants, were banned from membership of the committees. This directive has, however, been relaxed to accommodate progressive elements of these classes.

In one of the early directives on the formation of Peoples' Defense Committees they were described as "organizing centers for the revolution and an important channel through which the ordinary citizen will feel a sense of real practical and popular participation" (Ghanaian Times. February 6, 1982: 4). In the same directive the Village Defense Committees were urged to replace the old VDCs as soon as possible, to provide a forum for democracy for the under-privileged. It is assumed that the old VDCs have become infiltrated by the ruling elites of the rural environment.

Over the 1982 period the concept of Peoples' Defense Committees evolved from one of a watchdog role, policing the status quo, to a concept which now envisions defense committees as the architects of a new social economic and political structure. The basis of this new order is dialectics and a transfer of power to the lower classes of society. Eventually the defense committees are expected to strip away unnecessary codes of confidentiality or inaccessbility which the ruling classes generally use to isolate themselves from the underprivileged. In its place the defense committee hopes to achieve codes of accountability at levels of the society.

Admittedly at the village level this process bears a close resemblance to the pre-independent political role of Asafo Companies in rural Ghana. Careful examination of the limitations that were experienced by these companies should therefore be useful for improving the position of Village Defense Committees. An understanding of the internal political relationships of the rural environment is particularly relevant here.

It appears that Village Defense Committees are drawing their membership from Youth Associations and occasionally from womens' groups. So far women have not become very active in the executive of Peoples' Defense Committees. Also, tensions have been reported between the new committees and the chiefs and old VDCs.

In reality, the Village Defense Committees would contribute to the general well-being of the underprivileged if they are able to do what the old VDCs generally failed to achieve, namely to identify the institutional constraints relating to land tenure, credit, arbitration, representation and participation in the district council, access to markets among others, that hamper progress for members of this class. They must be able to bring all groups involved in these institutions together to negotiate better deals for the people they are expected to represent.

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