

State bureaucraties under pressure

a study of the interaction between four extension agencies and cotton-producing farmers in the Sikasso Region, Mali

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STATE BUREAUCRACIES UNDER PRESSURE

- a study of the interaction between four extension agencies and cotton-producing farmers in the Sikasso Region, Mali.

Ph.D. dissertation by Tove Degnbol

**International Development Studies
Roskilde University, Denmark.**

May 1999.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADEMA	Association pour la Démocratie au Mali/ Parti Africain pour la Solidarité et la Justice
AEEM	Association des Élevés et des Étudiants
AOF	l'Afrique-Occidentale Française
AV	Associations Villageoises
BNDA	Banque Nationale pour le Développement Agricole
CAC	Centre d'Action Coopérative
CAMOPA	Cellule d'Appui à la Mise en Oeuvre du Plan d'Action
CFDT	Compagnie Française pour le Développement des Fibres Textiles
CIDT	Compagnie Ivoirienne pour le Développement des Fibres Textiles
CLDA	Conseil Local du Développement d'Arrondissement
CMDT	Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Fibres Textiles
CNID	Congrès National d'Initiative Démocratique
CNRST	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique
COOPAC	Coopérative Agricole et Commerciale
COPACO	la Compagnie Cotonnière
DNA	Direction Nationale de l'Agriculture
DNA-COOP	La Direction Nationale de l'Action Coopérative
DNEF	Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts
DNFFH	Direction Nationale des Forestières, Fauniques et Halieutiques
DRPS	Direction Régionale du Plan et de la Statistique
DRSPR	Département de Recherche sur le Système de Production Rural (now ESP-GRN)
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
ESP-GRN	Équipe Systèmes de Production et Gestion des Ressources Naturelles
FDRL	Fonds de Développement Régional et Local
FF	French franc
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
IER	Institut d'Economie Rurale
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUED	Institut Universitaire d'Etudes du Développement
MAEE	Ministère de l'Agriculture de l'Élevage et de l'Environnement
MATDB	Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et du Développement à la Base
MDRE	Ministère du Développement Rural et de l'Environnement
MEFP	Ministère de l'Economie des Finances et du Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ODR	Opérations de Développement Rurale
OHV	Opération Haute Vallée
OPAM	Office de Production Agricole du Mali
PAAF	Projet d'Appui à l'Animation Féminine
PAAP	Projet Aménagement Agro-Pastoral
PADREF	Projet d'Appui à la Direction Régionale des Eaux et Forêts
PGRN	Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles

PNAE	Plan National d'Action Environnementale
PNLCD	Programme National de Lutte Contre la Désertification
PNVA	Programme National de Vulgarisation Agricole
PROFED	Projet Femmes et Développement
RDP	Rassemblement pour la démocratie et le progrès
SB	Secteur de Base
SYCOV	Syndicat des Producteurs de Coton et Vivriers
TDRL	Taxe de Développement Régional et Local
T&V	'Training and Visit' extension system
UDPM	Union Démocratique du Peuple Malien
UNFM	Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali
UNJM	Union Nationale des Jeunes du Mali
UNTM	Union Nationale des Travailleurs Maliens
USD	US Dollars
US-RDA	Union Soudanaise-Rassemblement Démocratique Africain
ZAR	Zone d'Expansion Rurale
ZAER	Zone d'Animation et d'Expansion Rurale

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Figure 1. Mali. Situation of the Sikasso region.

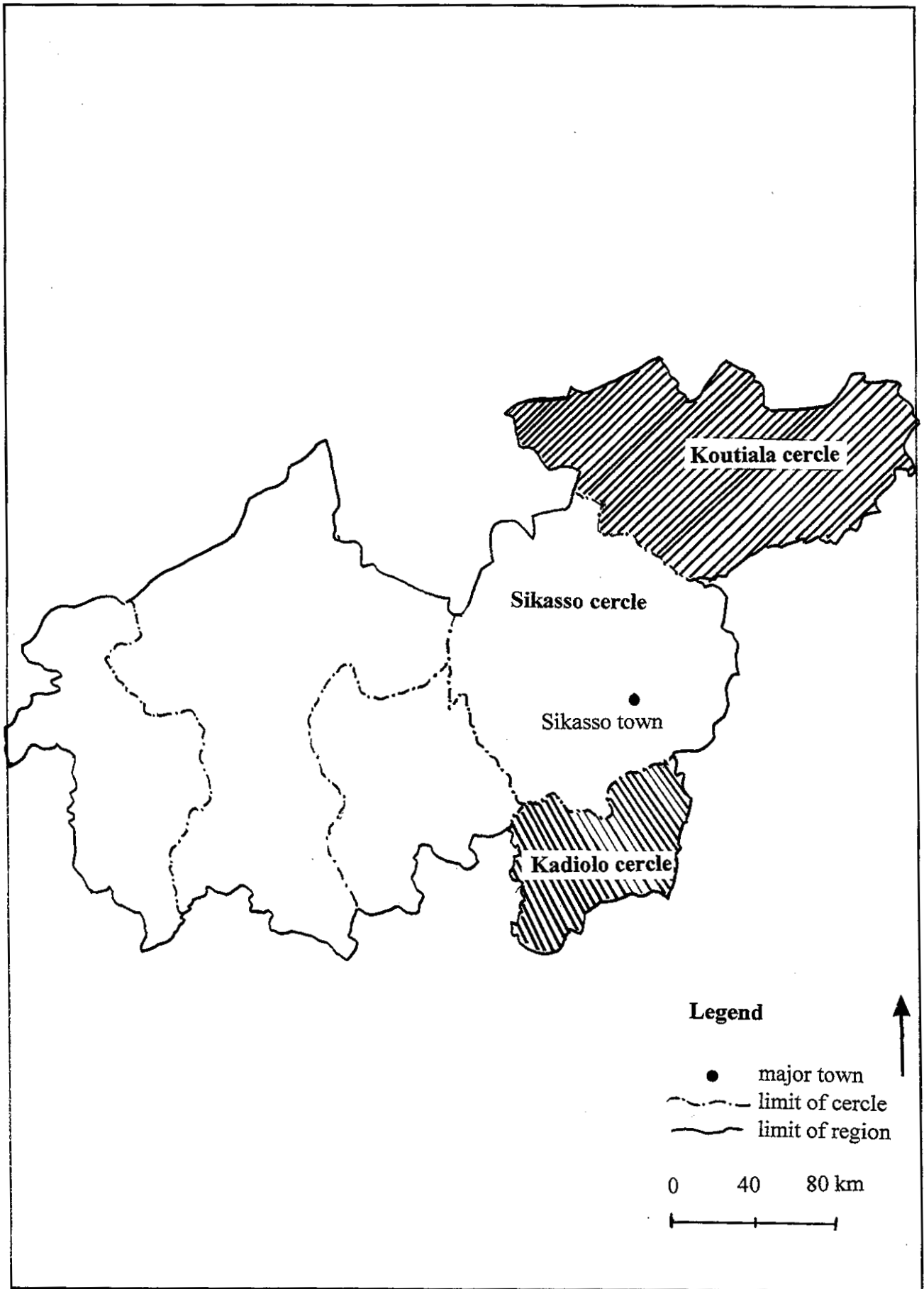


Figure 2. The Sikasso region. Situation of Koutiala and Kadiolo cercles.

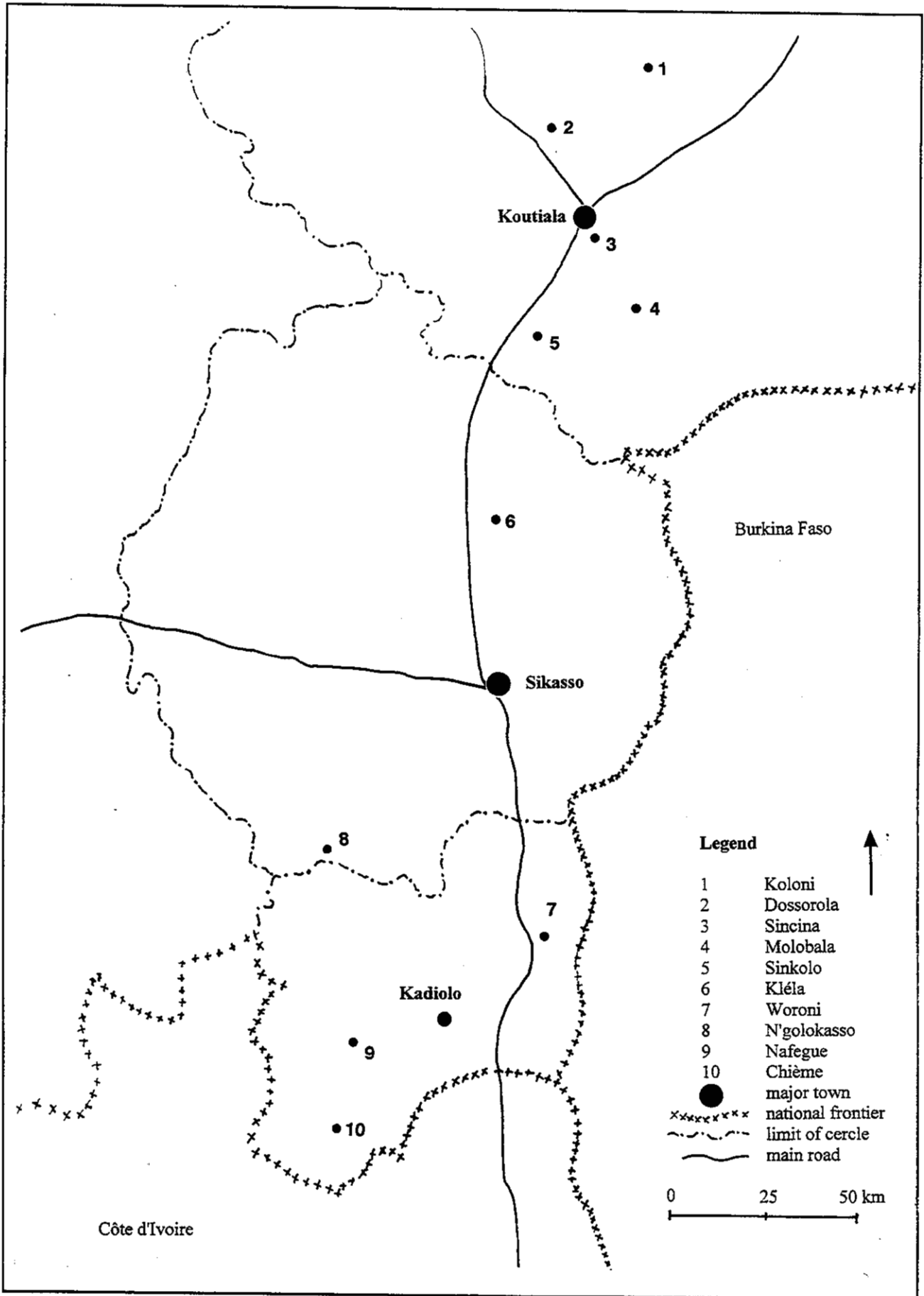


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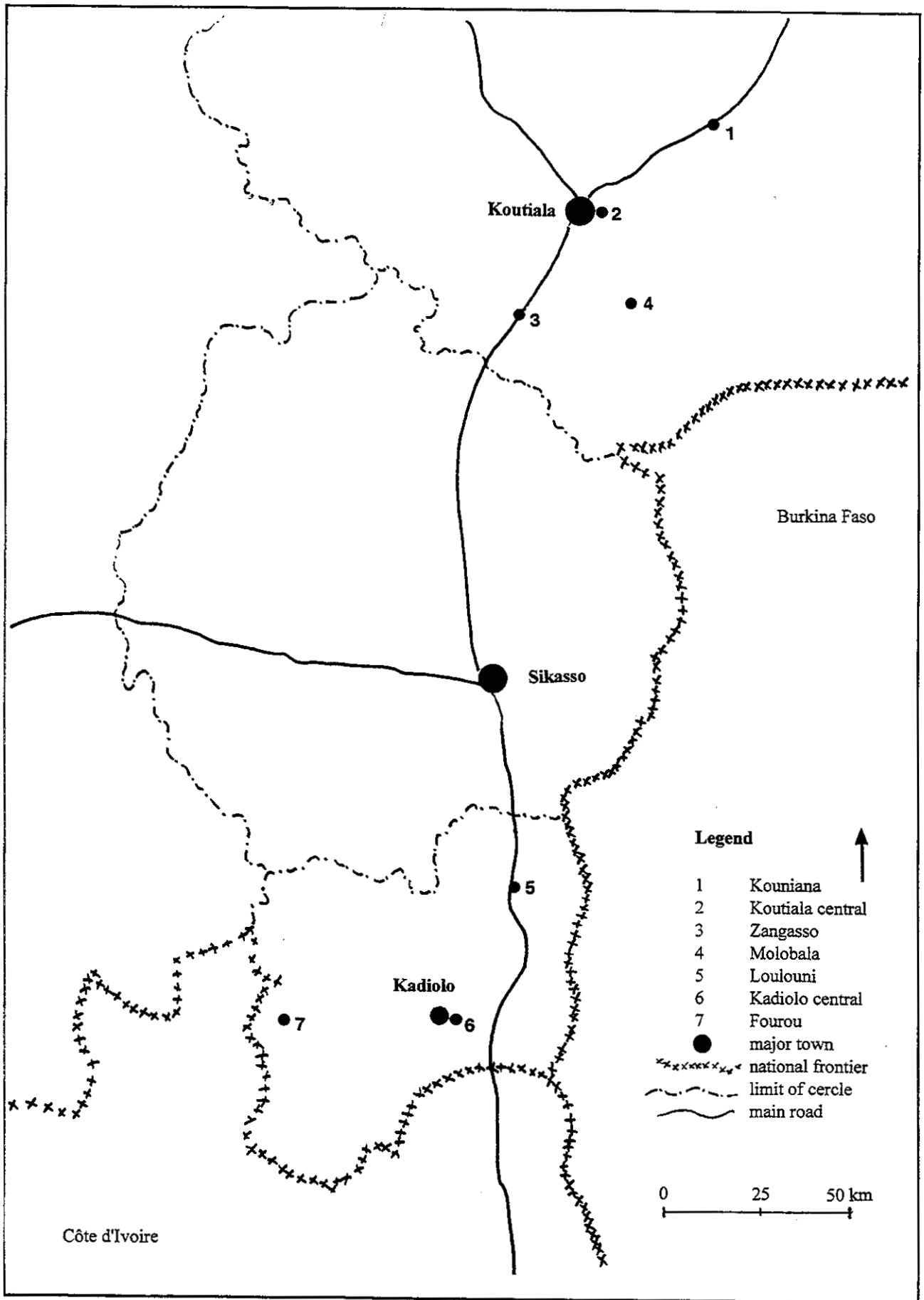


Figure 4. Situation of the seven arrondissement offices included in the interview study.

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When I decided to begin a Ph.D. study, I had an interesting but hectic life as a consultant and was longing for a change that allowed me time for some more reflexion and in-depth studies of issues defined by myself. I remember when preparing the project proposal that I wondered how to spend no less than three years studying only one subject in one country. In my initial application I therefore applied for funding for only 2 1/2 years. Several years later I have a completely different view of this question...

It has been a long and sometimes cumbersome journey that has taken me not only to and from Mali where I did my fieldwork but also along several theoretical and methodological tracks and sidetracks before it eventually left me in Tanzania. Here I have struggled to concentrate on the picture of cotton-producing farmers in the Sikasso region when very often the highly different Tanzanian realities have threatened to carry me away.

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When I went on fieldwork in Mali in 1994 I did not go alone - very far from it in fact: I was bringing my extended family consisting of two small children (10 months and two years, respectively), two aunts (sisters of my father) and occasionally a husband who worked as a long-distance commuter in Ghana. When I was staying in the villages or was in Bamako to do interviews, and Lars was in Ghana, 'les tantes', Gunver and Aase, were running the business at home. Although they never made friends with the many uninvited creepy-crawly members of our household, they seemed to get an enjoyable experience - and I got a hand without which it would not have been possible to carry out the fieldwork.

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Not only in Mali but to a very large extent also in Denmark (a *very, very* large extent!) we have drawn on the willingness to assist by the extended family: my parents, in-laws, our brothers, my sister and not least my numerous aunts have been ready to look after sick children and collect

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Usa River, Tanzania, May 1999

Tove Degnbol

INTRODUCTION

"scholars of development often vent their frustrations by identifying the culprits that keep the theories from working...instead of the peasant clinging to traditional values...or the multinational manager funnelling surplus back to headquarters..., the state bureaucrat, strangling the golden goose of entrepreneurship and lining his pockets with unproductive rents, has again become the central villain" (Evans, 1989 p. 561-562).

State bureaucracies under pressure

Since the 1980s African bureaucracies have increasingly come under attack. Public sector cuts, often involving retrenchments in the form of firing employees and decline in bureaucratic incomes, have been accompanied by demands on the bureaucracy to function more efficiently and effectively (Mukandala, 1992; Lienert, 1998).

Government extension agencies are not an exception to the general view of state bureaucracies as major culprits for economic and political development problems. Thus, extension agencies are being criticised for not doing enough, not doing it well and for not being relevant. Its agents are said to spend only a very small part of their working time actually meeting farmers and to concentrate on better-off farmers at the expense of the poor. Their failure to convince farmers to follow researchers' recommendations is believed to have had fatal consequences for agricultural production in many countries (Rivera, 1991; Hulme, 1992; Sims and Leonard, 1990; Jacob & Delville, 1994).

The prevailing view of civil servants, and notably field staff, as the source of failure is based on a perception of them as purely self-interested. As Judith Tendler puts it, it is generally believed that "civil servants are self-interested, rent-seeking and venal unless proven otherwise" (Tendler, 1997). Consistent with this view, recent reforms have mainly aimed at reducing their discretion and thereby their opportunities to misbehave (Christoplos, 1997b; Tendler, 1997). In the field of agricultural extension, the literature is concerned with how to plan and constrain the actions of field personnel. While the attention to 'farmer-first approaches' has implied that the mainstream view is now to acknowledge farmers to be creative managers, extension agents are still seen as mere implementors of plans. The promotion by the World Bank of the 'training and visit' system (T&V) in more than 30 African countries can be seen as an attempt to standardise and routinise the tasks of extension agencies in order to limit the risk of self-serving behaviour by individual agents (Christoplos & Nitsch 1996).

While government employees in the bottom of the hierarchy are increasingly pressed from superior levels of their organisations, the recent upsurge in rural organisations in many African countries has implied that they are often squeezed from opposite sides. Structural adjustment programmes and a decline in both state-sponsored service provision and control by the state of rural populations are believed to have been important factors behind the creation of new organisations (Bretton & Binged, 1994; Jacob & Delville, 1994). Through their demands for influence on production and marketing conditions, new organisations are increasingly putting pressure on extension agents, who find themselves caught in the middle, trying to respond to both

the supply agenda of their central agency and the demand agenda emerging from the new organisations (Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996; Christoplos, 1996; Christoplos, 1997a).

‘Street-level bureaucracies’ as mediators of relations between state and society

The much criticised and presently hard-pressed state bureaucrats in the bottom of the hierarchy have generally received little attention in development studies. This observation was made by David Leonard in 1977 in his seminal work on extension organisations in Kenya (Leonard, 1977), and more than 20 years later it is still true. Thus, the general denunciation of civil servants has made few researchers enquire into the pressures they are facing and particularly into the possible ways of changing conditions of their work (apart from limiting their discretion) (Tendler, 1997).

Some scholars, however, have pointed out that government agents who meet local populations face-to-face on a daily basis are extremely important as mediators of relations between state and society. Through their actions and reactions to local populations, the so-called ‘street-level bureaucrats’ (Lipsky, 1980) represent specific expressions of government policies. It is also through them that the majority of the population has access to influencing both the implementation of state policies and the more fundamental role of the state by either collaborating with them or by turning their back on them. Equally important, street-level bureaucrats contribute significantly to the image of the state held by its populations. The ways they relate to people shape perceptions of the state which again affect the way people more generally respond to the state. Thus, when people interact with e.g. extension agents, they perceive of them both as persons and as representatives of the state as a symbolic totality. If the services they provide do not accommodate the needs by the population, it negatively affects both the image of the particular government agency and the image of the state as such (Leonard, 1977; Lipsky, 1980; Gupta, 1995; Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996; Marenin, 1987). As Christoplos and Nitsch have argued: “for these reasons alone, consideration of the role of these front-line staff should be seen as more than a peripheral administrative appendix to overall rural development planning” (Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996).

The African state

The widespread negative view on civil servants reflects a general perception of the African state as the major cause of the economic and political crisis in the region. For almost two decades the African state has been under severe attack from virtually all corners of the research community, bi- and multilateral donors, NGOs and from its own populations. During the 1980s, people who otherwise had little in common such as e.g. marxist-inspired and liberal-oriented researchers, World Bank advisors, and farmers in remote areas of Mali could agree that the state was to blame for all calamities experienced. Researchers described it as patrimonial, predatory, rent-seeking and even kleptocratic (Ergas, 1987; Callaghy, 1987; Médard, 1990; Bayart, 1993; Bates, 1981). Led by the World Bank, donors prescribed radical government retrenchments in the form of privatisations, public sector cuts, reduction of staff and minimisation of public rules and regulations. Its citizens first shunned the state by withdrawing from official marketing channels, reducing the agricultural production, avoiding any contacts with its representatives and ridiculing it. Late in the 1980s they sometimes changed this strategy to open revolts in the fight for democratisation and a more fundamental change in the role of the state (Chazan, 1988; Bratton & van de Walle, 1992).

While an overwhelmingly negative image of the state persists in many analyses and policy prescriptions, large parts of the research community during the recent decade have gradually revised the view of the state. Already in 1989 Tony Killick described the attacks on the state as 'a reaction too far' (Killick, 1989). Later also the World Bank has openly acknowledged that an effective state apparatus is a condition for the development of well-functioning market economies (World Bank, 1997a). A consensus now seems to appear about the need for a state to regulate markets, protect the environment, support small farm agriculture, operate legal systems and provide public goods such as health, education and social safety to alleviate poverty. Whereas the parole of the 1980s was 'the less state the better', the agenda of the 1990s have been characterised by the search for a better state (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995).

The apparent consensus, however, covers profound disagreements both about the real content of the better or 'enabling state' and about how to achieve these objectives. In the debate of the 1990s on themes such as democracy, decentralisation, good governance, civil society and public sector reforms, a major line of division can be found: one stand is represented by proponents of institutional reforms aiming at strengthening the ability of the state to increase performance, while another group advocates the need for empowerment of civil society to allow it to put pressure on the state.

The first stand includes both the various public administration strengthening initiatives to restructure work, define missions, describe jobs and train staff (Nurnberg & Lindane, 1994) and calls for institutional reforms which focus on changing the attitudes of state agents to allow them to take rural people's knowledge serious (Chambers, 1983; Chambers, 1991). After macroeconomic reforms associated with stabilisation and adjustment in the 1980s, a wave of 'second generation' reforms in the 1990s has focussed on improving efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of the public sector through civil service reforms. Although the attention paid to societal forces varies, proponents of institutional reforms share a focus on the state and state structures. Merilee Grindle has described this as a 'supply-side' understanding of how good government is achieved (Grindle, 1997a p. 6; Grindle, 1997b p. 481).

The second stand has been inclined to apply a 'demand-side' perspective and instead see a changed development coming from the emergence of a civil society which put pressure on the state. Inspired by the debate on political opposition in the former communist regimes in Eastern Europe and social movements in Latin America, many scholars have expressed great expectations to the possibilities for grass-root non-governmental organisations to force the state to change its role. While numerous interpretations of the concept and its usefulness have characterised the debate, an influential position has tended to view civil society as a key brake on state power (Bayart, 1986). In a rural context this has sometimes been translated into studies of the possibilities for farmers' movements to put pressure on the state.

It has been argued that also the 'good governance' agenda of the World Bank reflects the same understanding, as it aims at helping empower society to keep a close eye on the state, while it does little to support the legitimacy of the state and its ability to handle social conflicts (Moore, 1993). Similarly, critical voices have perceived of the many initiatives to promote democratic decentralisation as attempts to improve the influence of civil society, while disregarding that decentralisation needs to go hand in hand with strengthening of central administrative structures and more sophisticated political skills at the national level (Tendler, 1997).

Theories about state-society relations

As suggested above, the debate about the African state and possibilities for changing its role is very much characterised by stereotypes. Either it is bad: pervaded by greedy and unscrupulous individuals who steer its actions down to the smallest details and out in its most remote provinces, and, therefore, may just as well be given up, while one is instead concentrating on the civil society. Or it is maybe reformable if only one can get a firm hold of its self-serving employees.

To move beyond the clichés, it is necessary to ask about the fundamental nature of the state: what constitutes the state? what is inside it? what determines its policies? how are its relations to society? and is it relevant in all contexts to talk about *the* state?

In the extensive theoretical debate on these issues, however, many stereotypes are rediscovered. There has been a general tendency to treat the state as an undifferentiated unit whose relations to society can be portrayed in an unambiguous way. Thus, the state has been described as captured by society (Hyden, 1983), as cut off from society (Darbon, 1990) or as having mainly person-based relations to societal actors (Médard, 1990; Bayart, 1993). State constituencies are often considered to be the narrow interests of those directly allied with state bureaucrats and political leaders. Reflections about the possibilities for broader societal forces of influencing the state and its policies are few.

Inside the state, many researchers have found a swarm of individuals who are busily pursuing their personal interests and those of their relatives, ethnic or regional affiliates (Bates, 1981; Callaghy, 1988; Clapham, 1982). State policies are seen as mainly determined by the personalities of the top figures of the regime and the deals they have struck with allies inside and outside the state apparatus (Sandbrook, 1985; Jackson & Rosberg, 1982a).

A different approach has concentrated on societal structures (notably class structures) and has tried to deduce the character of the state from these, while paying less attention to the inner dynamics of the state apparatus itself (e.g. Martinussen, 1980). More recent societal-oriented approaches have focussed mainly on the community level where survival strategies of various groups and individuals are described as reactions to the policies of the state. The state, however, often remains a black box in these analyses which do not consider the possibilities of societal influence on state structures and policies but only on their implementation (e.g. Arce & Long, 1989).

While all the above-mentioned approaches tending to focus either on the state or on societal forces may contribute bits and pieces to an understanding of the nature of the state, it is found that a relatively recent approach has considerably more to offer. A number of researchers have called attention to the limits both to the possibilities of reforming the state without a pressure from society and to the possibilities of civil society to put pressure on the state without being supported by this very state. In other words: *state and society are closely connected and cannot be understood and analysed as separate entities* (Jacob & Delville, 1994; Chandhoke, 1995; Chazan, 1994).

Instead of focussing either on the state or on societal relations it is suggested to focus on relations between state and society. The concepts of the *'interactive approach'* or the *'state-in-society approach'* cover attempts to understand patterns of domination, persistence and change in terms of the mutual interaction between state and society and, more specifically, between a multitude of different structures embodied in the state and a variety of movements, networks, groups and formal as well as informal organisations constituting society (Migdal, 1994; Chazan, 1994; Bratton, 1994; Azarya, 1988; Rotchild & Foley, 1988; Harbeson, 1994; Kohli & Shue, 1994).

The interactive approach sees the *state as anchored in society but not determined by societal structures*. Thus, any understanding of the state begins by comprehending the social structures of which the state is part, but the state will never be a mere reflection of its societal base, as important state-internal dynamics considerably influence its structures and policies.

Contrary to prevailing treatments of the state as a unitary actor, the state is understood as both *an abstract entity*, dependent on a certain amount of legitimacy in the eyes of societal groups, and as *a multiplicity of structures* with varying objectives and different ways of mutual interacting and of relating to non-state actors.

Similarly, the concept of *society* must be broken down to understand how different elements pull in many different directions. Social forces which make up society embrace a wide variety of movements, networks, groups, cells and formal and informal organisations which differ substantially in size, scope, purpose, composition and resources. Of the many different forces, only those who have a political project in the sense that they are trying to engage the state, i.e. trying to change the fundamental relations between state and society, qualify for the designation of *civil society*.

According to the interactive approach, thus, the challenge to studies of state-society relations is *how to 'unpack' states and societies, to begin to capture the diversity of their interactions*.

Application of the interactive approach to the study of relations between government extension agencies and farmers

The understanding of state and society as two closely connected concepts which cannot be understood and analysed as separate entities has a parallel in a number of recent contributions to the debate about how to improve agricultural extension agencies.

After years of discussion of 'supply-side issues' of agricultural extension (what packages to extend, what organisational set-up to establish, etc.), these contributions stress that performance of the agencies cannot be improved without the existence of demand pressures from farmers forcing them to adjust and improve. Articulation of demands, on the other hand, often results from previous technical and organisational support from the extension service which has gradually strengthened the capacity of farmers to put demands on the state (Tendler, 1993; Tendler & Freedheim, 1994; Tendler, 1997; Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996, Christoplos, 1996).

The contributions do not have a state-and-society angle to the study of relations between extension agencies and farmers. Instead, they draw their inspiration from theories on the importance of close relations between service providers and clients for organisational

performance. This inspiration is reflected in a strong focus on *personal relations* between extension agents and farmers. Thus, researches introduce the issues of *work satisfaction* by government agents and mutual *trust* between agents and farmers as important factors contributing to efforts of the agencies to improve performance and to the ability of their clients to communicate a demand.

While this is considered an interesting approach, it is important to stress that personal relations between government representatives and farmers are but one expression of overall state-society relations. If a government extension agency is dealt with only as an organisation like any other organisation, the important dimension of the state as an abstract entity is lost. A government extension agency is never only an organisation. Being part of the state, it is *both* an organisation with a range of individual characteristics different from other organisations *and* an expression of the abstract state. It therefore depends not only of its own legitimacy but also on the overall legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the population.

It represents an interesting theoretical challenge to combine the two perspectives by *studying government extension agencies as both organisations and as part of the state*.

Whatever perspective is applied, however, the study of government extension agencies will have to consider a broader range of issues than just their relations to farmers. Like the state is not just a reflection of its societal base but is shaped also by state-internal dynamics, an organisation is not just a reflection of its relations to clients. A range of organisation-internal factors which affect the way an organisation relates to its clients need to be considered, too.

Similarly, farmers' demands on extension agencies are not just products of their previous interaction with these and other government agencies. What may be called 'society-internal' dynamics such as e.g. social organisation at village level, class and ethnic relations may contribute to shape particular expressions of the demand.

Objectives of the dissertation

The understanding of the African state and of its government agencies can be summarised as follows: the state is both an abstract entity and a multiplicity of structures pulled in different directions by constant interaction with a multitude of social groups, organisations and networks. Relations between the state and societal forces are complex interactions which have implications on the characteristics of each party but do not fully explain these characteristics. A government agency is both an organisation with particular characteristics of its own and a specific expression of the abstract state.

While interaction between state and society is a highly complex phenomenon, operationalisation of the interaction between government agencies and farmers can take the point of departure in the definition of *performance by government agencies as their ability to accommodate clients' demands*. For any organisation the performance is the result of both a range of organisation-internal factors and of the character of demand pressures. The *performance of a government agency* is the result of both a range of organisation-internal factors, of the character of specific demand pressures that it faces, *and* of a range of factors relating to its status as being part of the state.

Based on this understanding of the African state and of its government agencies, it is the **theoretical objective** of the present dissertation to establish a conceptual framework to explain the differences in interaction between government agencies and their clients as a result of different pressures being exerted upon the agencies. The pressures are seen to be conditioned both by their characteristics as being part of the abstract state, by their specific organisational characteristics and by the character of the social forces with which they interact.

Three sets of research questions are guiding the theoretical analysis:

- *how to understand overall state-society relations*
- *how to analyse factors conditioning the performance of government agencies and*
- *how to analyse societal forces interacting with and influencing government agencies.*

It is the **empirical objective** to illustrate and further explore the theoretical framework by identifying explanations for the different experience of interaction between farmers in the Sikasso region and four extension agencies all referring to the same government ministry.

The empirical objective is dealt with by studying the pressures put on street-level bureaucracies in each of the four agencies and by assessing how these pressures affect the performance of the agencies (i.e. their ability to accommodate farmers' demands).

Subsequently this analysis is put in perspective by an analysis of the character of the social forces in the Sikasso region which interact with and influence the four agencies.

While these very broad objectives are guiding discussions and analyses in the theoretical section, a set of more precise research questions to the empirical investigations are found in the conclusion to the theoretical section.

Focus on extension agencies

Extension agencies constitute an excellent opportunity to study encounters between the state and rural populations. As the presence of government staff in rural areas is often limited, extension staff account for a considerable share of directly visible state representatives. This has become even more pronounced during the years of structural adjustment that have often seen a significant reduction in the number of government staff. Due to the promotion by the World Bank of the T&V extension system, extension agencies have often been treated as an exception to general public sector cuts. This has implied that in many African countries extension agents are now the only government representatives left in rural areas (Hulme, 1991; Christoplos, lecture given at IDS, Roskilde, November 1996).

Furthermore, in most countries (including Mali) extension agencies have existed for a sufficiently long period to make it possible to assess their present interaction with farmers in a historical perspective.

And finally, given their involvement in the management of natural resources providing the living for the majority of the African populations, extension agencies are important to study in their own right (Leonard, 1977).

Mali

The above references to 'the African state' cover a considerable variance of specific challenges facing the highly different states in Africa. Diversities regard their existing capacities, the degree of centralisation of government structures, the existence of democratic traditions, the socioeconomic fabric of societies and not least their access to economic resources.

Measured against virtually all possible standards, the Malian state (together with other states in Sahelian countries) represents an extreme situation. Being landlocked, resource poor, dependent on international aid and export of a few primary products, Mali had a GNP per capita of a mere 260 USD in 1997 (World Bank, 1999). Literacy levels and health standards of its 11.5 mio. inhabitants are among the lowest in the world, placing the country only four positions from the bottom in the Human Development Index (UNDP, 1998; EIU, 1998). As a former French colony, the state after independence inherited an administrative apparatus characterised by a high degree of centralisation and hierarchy. While the private sector is negligible, public sector performance is poor, and in many rural areas government services are virtually nonexistent. No less than 23 years of military rule from 1968 to 1991 have left a large part of the population with an image of the state as a repressive and threatening institution which rarely provides them any services or support in return for the taxes they are forced (sometimes physically) to pay.

Despite this bleak background, however, important changes are currently taking place in relations between state and society in Mali. After a public upheaval in 1991 made an end to the military regime, the new democratically-elected regime has initiated a wide range of democratisation and decentralisation initiatives. Among these an administrative reform to establish new rural communes run by elected rural councils has been ongoing since 1995. Freedom of speech and freedom of organisation have made it possible to openly question state authorities, and a wide variety of political parties, independent new papers, radio stations and new social organisations have seen the light of day.

The Sikasso region

In the Sikasso region in the southern part of the country, confrontations between state representatives and farmers have been more articulate than elsewhere in the country. Immediately after the change of regime in March 1991, farmers' reckoned with the most hated representatives of the state, the highly repressive forestry service, by physical attacks on its members, including in some cases the application of 'necklaces' of burning tyres. A few months later, farmers formed an independent movement and presented the leading agricultural extension agency, CMDT (Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Fibres Textiles), with demands for influence on production and marketing policies. Today SYCOV (Syndicat des Producteurs de Coton et Vivriers), the farmers' movement, has subcommittees in most of the region, and it has managed to obtain representation in the board of CMDT and in all its subsections.

Apart from direct confrontations between state representatives and farmers, changed relations are also reflected in a general refusal by the population to pay taxes. Thus, for several years after 1991 tax incomes in the region went down to 30-40% of government claims. Furthermore, it has become difficult for extension staff to call meetings, as villagers no longer obey the orders of government representatives but refuse to waste their time on meetings without a clear purpose.

Much of the everyday contacts between government representatives and farmers may seem little affected by the sometimes dramatic events immediately after the change of regime, but important changes are taking place in the perception of the state held by the population. The experience of being able to raise demands to the state and to fight back against repression by its representatives has provided at least part of the population with a confidence in their ability to influence the state.

While this is the experience of some people, others express fear for the changes and nostalgia for the old days when state representatives ruled and people followed. Others again do not want to have anything to do with the state and declare to be able to do entirely without its services.

Extension agencies in the Sikasso region

Different people relate differently to state agencies, but the ways agencies have historically interacted with the population also vary considerably.

With the most abundant rainfall pattern in Mali and fertile soils, the Sikasso region accounts for a considerable share of total agricultural production in the country. Its economic importance, notably related to its substantial production of cotton, has historically been reflected in much more attention from government extension services than that received by less prosperous regions.

Four extension agencies are involved in activities related to management of natural resources, hence may potentially contribute to state-sponsored assistance to improved natural resource management. However, their highly varying performance - and the extremely poor performance by some of them - constitute serious constraints to such a contribution.

They all refer to the same ministry, the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment (MDRE), but have different mandates, resources, organisational characteristics and very different ways of relating to local populations. While three of the agencies (namely the forestry service, the livestock service and the cooperative service) are clearly defined as government agencies (i.e. departments) in MDRE, CMDT has a particular status as both a public agent of the ministry and a private sector actor with economic interests in cotton production, processing and marketing. The extent to which CMDT shares the characteristics of other government agencies is further discussed in the empirical analysis, and its mixed status is taken into consideration in all comparisons of the agencies.

Since the 1950s *CMDT* has pursued a strategy of integrated rural development and has taken up a wide range of development tasks. In addition to organisation of all aspects of production and marketing of cotton, the agency is also responsible for extension activities in relation to cereal production. It is involved in the organisation of farmers at village level, it runs literacy and account courses, and it has previously had an important role in provision of credits and of rural infrastructure such as roads and water supply.

The forestry service was a very active - and extremely repressive - agency until the political changes in 1991. In the past it concentrated almost entirely on enforcement of forestry laws. During the first years after the change of regime its activities came to a virtual standstill, but in recent years it has gradually resumed its tasks, now with emphasis put on extension activities.

The livestock service, until 1992 part of CMDT, has traditionally concentrated on supporting the maintenance of draught oxen for cotton production. In recent years there has been a shift of emphasis towards animal production and water supply, while large parts of the activities related to animal health have been privatised. In the past the livestock service covered a substantial share of even remote villages in the region. Since it was dissociated from CMDT, however, it has experienced a significant reduction of resources and consequently of activities.

The mandate of *the cooperative service*, CAC, greatly overlaps with the activities undertaken by CMDT. Given its general lack of resources, activities in the Sikasso region are few and scattered and mainly involve a limited number of gardening and sheep-fattening projects.

CMDT and the forestry service (until 1991) represent the two extremes with regard to their way of interacting with local populations. Already in the early 1970s, CMDT adopted a strategy of close collaboration with farmers with a view to gradually off-load many of its tasks on village-level farmers' associations. The forestry service, on the other hand, has sought to insulate itself from public reactions and has dealt with farmers in a top-down and often highly arbitrary way. Practices used by the livestock service and the cooperative service are somewhere in-between the two extremes. Livestock agents have more discretion than most other government staff and have sometimes been able to use it to provide highly appreciated services to farmers. The cooperative service is so crippled by lack of funds that farmers do not bother to have any relations to it at all.

The period covered

The fieldwork was initiated in August 1993, and the last visit to Sikasso was in February 1996. The description of the interaction based on primary data, therefore, relates to a period of about three years in the turbulent time after the change of regime. To understand the historical background for the findings, the presentation of the context both regarding Mali and the Sikasso region goes back to the early years of colonialism, while emphasis is put on the years since the change of regime in 1991. Also, the analysis of the characteristics of each of the four extension agencies is put in a historical perspective by references to their situation during the 1970s and 1980s.

Whereas it has been attempted to extend the period covered back in time, the empirical analysis stops by mid-1996. After this time a major institutional reform of the MDRE has been initiated resulting in the integration of agencies belonging to the ministry into an integrated extension service. As implementation of the reform started after the last fieldwork had been carried out, it is only briefly mentioned, and no analysis of its implications has been attempted.

Another major change having taken place after the fieldwork was finalised is the implementation of a large administrative reform replacing former arrondissements by new communes headed by elected councils. The process of establishing new communes was initiated in mid-1995 and finalised by late 1996, and only in May 1999 elections to the new rural councils have been held. While it is possible that more recent data on the impact of this reform would have changed the analysis of social forces in the Sikasso region, it has been decided to let also this analysis stop by the period covered by primary data from the fieldwork.

Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation has two main parts: a theoretical framework and an empirical analysis.

The theoretical section opens by a review of central theoretical contributions to the understanding of African state- society relations in *chapter 1*. Four main typologies are used to structure presentations and discussions which provide the background for a more thorough investigation of the interactive approach in *chapter 2*.

Chapter 2 is structured according to the same four typologies presented in *chapter 1* and contains a critical investigation of the contribution by the interactive approach to the understanding of African state-society relations. The chapter concludes that the framework provides a constructive theoretical point of departure for analysis of interaction between state and society. To provide guidelines for a specific empirical investigation, however, it has to be filled in by theories at a lower level of abstraction.

Dealing with the disaggregated concept of the state, *chapter 3* introduces organisation theory to operationalise the sketchy framework of the ‘anthropology of the state’. A framework for analysis of the performance of government agencies is established. It considers both a range of contextual issues outside the control of the individual organisation (‘the action environment’, ‘the institutional context of the public sector’ and ‘the task network’) and a range of organisation-specific issues.

As a perspective of the analysis of agency performance, *chapter 4* discusses the disaggregated concept of society with a view to establish a framework for analysing social forces interacting with and influencing government agencies.

Guided by the hypotheses presented in the conclusion to the theoretical section, *the empirical analysis* opens by an analysis in *chapter 5* of the ‘action environment’ of Malian government extension agencies, i.e. the degree of political stability and legitimacy of the government, the rate and structure of economic growth, and the human resource profile of the country.

The next step in the analysis of the shared environment of the agencies is an assessment in *chapter 6* of ‘the institutional context of the public sector’. This includes an assessment of the budgetary support which significantly influences the capacity of the public sector through its impact on salary levels and funding for other recurrent costs and capital investments. Other aspects regard the overall institutional set-up of the public sector, its management practices and existing structures of formal and informal influence.

Chapter 7 and *chapter 8* provide the background for analyses in *chapter 9*, *10* and *11* of the interaction between extension agencies and farmers in Sikasso. *Chapter 7* gives a general description of the agro-ecological and socioeconomic setting in the Sikasso region, while *chapter 8* deals with ongoing social and political changes in the region.

While the shared environment of the agencies is analysed in *chapter 5* and *6*, *chapter 9* contains a thorough analysis of organisational-specific factors which condition the performance of each of the four agencies. Based on the conceptual framework established in *chapter 3*, the analysis

considers six main issues, viz. authority, rewards, organisational identification, peer pressure, work satisfaction by staff, and demand pressure. The chapter opens by a brief portrait of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment describing the 'task network' of the four agencies under study, i.e. relations of collaboration and coordination among the agencies.

Chapter 10 presents farmers' assessment of services provided by the agencies. Based on a village survey in ten villages in the Sikasso region, the chapter assesses the degree of demand satisfaction by different groups of farmers. The analysis considers frequency and distribution of contacts between agencies and farmers, reliability of services, farmers' assessment of the usefulness of services, and their description of personal relations between extension agents and their clients.

Providing a wider perspective on the analysis of agency performance, the final *chapter 11* deals with some of the societal forces interacting with and influencing the agencies working in the region. Based on the conceptual framework established in chapter 4, an analysis of the farmers' movement SYCOV is carried out to see if it corresponds to the definition of a 'civil association'. The existence of a particular set of 'civil norms' is discussed in light of answers obtained in the village survey. Finally, an analysis of possible class-based identities is carried out.

The two conclusions to the theoretical section and to the empirical section give systematic accounts of conclusions to each of the chapters. While drawing on these, *the final conclusion* is not structured as a chapter-by-chapter presentation of findings. Instead, conclusions concerning main points of the theoretical framework for analysis of state-society relations are presented and illustrated by reference to empirical findings. Five main points of the framework are highlighted: 1) the concept of interaction, 2) the engagement-disengagement framework, 3) the perception of the state as both a multiplicity of structures and a symbolic totality, 4) the framework for analysis of performance by government agencies, and 5) the understanding of societal forces as characterised by a wide variety of movements, networks, groups, cells and formal and informal organisations of which those trying to engage the state have a particular political potential.

SECTION I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

SECTION I : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Some would maybe argue that an empirical analysis of the highly different performance of four extension agencies does not require much more than the selection of an appropriate organisation theory to explain why performance of hierarchical, centralised and insulated organisations such as the forestry service is inferior to that of more flexible and client-oriented organisations such as CMDT. Others would claim that all it takes to understand the interplay between government bureaucracies and rural communities in Sikasso is a comprehension of the potential of the farmers' movement to put pressure on the state.

It is, however, the ambition of the present dissertation to move beyond the view of government agencies only as organisations serving a well-defined group of clients. Government organisations are both organisations with particular characteristics *and* expressions of the abstract state. Similarly, their clients (farmers) are social forces with highly different conditions and strategies for interacting with the state. It is, therefore, the objective to anchor the study of interaction between extension agencies and farmers in a discussion of the more fundamental nature of African state-society relations and to unpack the notions of both 'state' and 'society' in order to understand their mutual interaction.

When perceiving of the state as *both* a multitude of different structures *and* an abstract entity dependent on a certain amount of legitimacy in the eyes of societal groups, it is not satisfactory to understand the four extension agencies simply as four different organisations with each their characteristics. The challenging aspect about their varying performance is that they are all part of the same state, i.e. part of a larger symbolic totality. While in some respects they may seem to be fairly independent units, they are also highly dependent on each other and on other parts of the state, both with regard to a range of structural features and with regard to perception of them held by the population. Similarly, an approach that concentrates on analysing the farmers' movement as an expression of 'farmers', i.e. all farmers', strategy vis-à-vis the state would miss an important dimension. If the farmers' movement is not analysed as an expression of a particular kind of societal forces that can be understood only in relation to the state and in relation to the specific social fabric in the region where it emerged, there is a serious risk of misjudging the potential of the movement.

It is the objective of the theoretical section to provide a conceptual framework for analysing the differences in interaction between government agencies and their clients as a result of different pressures being exerted upon the agencies.

Based on the hypothesis that these pressures are conditioned both by their characteristics as part of the abstract state, by their specific organisational characteristics *and* by the character of the social forces with which they interact, the theoretical section deals with three sets of issues, namely

- *how to understand overall state-society relations*
- *how to analyse factors conditioning the performance of government agencies and*
- *how to analyse societal forces that interact with and influence government agencies.*

A few comments are necessary about the understanding of 'theory' and 'theoretical framework' that is guiding analysis and discussions in the following. With Nicos Muzelis (who builds upon the work by Louis Althusser), a main distinction can be made between

1) theory as a tool to enquire about social phenomena (theory as a 'conceptual framework') and
2) theory as an end-product that establishes universal connections or laws between particular social phenomena ('substantive theory') (Muezelis, 1995 p. 1-11, p. 42).

While the second type of theory, substantive theory, can be proved empirically right or wrong, the first type, the conceptual framework, can only be assessed by its methodological linkages and the utility of the tools it offers to an empirical investigation of the social world.

In the present dissertation it is the understanding of theory as 'conceptual framework' that is being applied. The objective of the theoretical section is to generate a series of theoretically informed research questions that can structure the empirical investigation of interaction between extension agencies and farmers in Sikasso. This implies that discussions by no means pretend to be exhaustive in the sense that they cover all relevant issues related to particular phenomena. Instead, they should be seen as contributions to the establishment of a framework that points out *some* questions to *some* phenomena that may or may not turn out to be useful in an empirical analysis.

The interactive approach presented in chapter 2 is a clear example of a framework that does not try to establish universal connections or laws between variables and phenomena under study but provides only a set of guidelines for further theoretical and empirical enquiry. Contrary to this, many of the theories about state-society relations reviewed in chapter 1 have a 'substantive theory character', as they contain general statements about e.g. implications of clientilistic relations in the African state, profit maximisation as a universal motive, or the African state as unable to capture the peasantry. Similarly, contributions to organisation theory discussed in chapter 3 and to theories about social forces discussed in chapter 4 often have a substantive theory character, but are used to inspire the establishment of more open conceptual frameworks.

Within the 'conceptual framework' understanding of theory, a distinction can be made between macro-level and middle-level theories that reflect different levels of abstraction. An abstract theoretical framework that operates with notions of 'state' and 'society' may be useful as a point of departure for further theorising about the different parts that constitute state and society, but it is of limited direct operational use for a specific empirical analysis. Middle-level theories that indicate a more limited empirical context for the relevance of the frameworks established contain more directly applicable tools for an empirical analysis. The attempt in chapter 3 to operationalise the 'anthropology of the state' by use of organisation theory reflects a movement from abstract macro-level theory to more specific middle-level theories that define a more limited realm of relevance. Organisation theory, thus, can be considered a refinement of the very sketchy framework of the anthropology of the state presented by researchers applying the interactive approach.

It should be noted that it has been decided to concentrate on the study of state-society relations, i.e. Mali-internal relations, whereas external factors are dealt with neither theoretically nor in the empirical analysis. This does not reflect the view that external relations are not important and do not influence the interplay between state agencies and farmers. The economic dependency of Mali

on the international cotton market and on economic trends in Côte d'Ivoire are but two expressions of the relevance of considering also external factors. The decision, therefore, has been made only with a view to focus on those relations that from the beginning of the study have been my main interest.

The section opens by a review of central theoretical contributions to the understanding of African state- society relations in *chapter 1*. Four main typologies are used to structure presentations and discussions that provide the background for a more thorough investigation of the interactive approach in chapter 2.

Chapter 2 is structured according to the same four typologies that are presented in chapter 1 and contains a critical investigation of the contribution by the interactive approach to the understanding of African state-society relations. The chapter concludes that the framework provides a constructive theoretical point of departure for analysis of interaction between state and society but that it has to be filled in by theories at a lower level of abstraction in order to provide guidelines for a specific empirical investigation.

Chapter 3 that deals with the disaggregated concept of the state introduces organisation theory to operationalise the sketchy framework of the 'anthropology of the state'. A framework is established for an analysis of the performance of government agencies that considers both a range of contextual issues outside the control of the individual organisation ('the action environment', 'the institutional context of the public sector' and 'the task network') and a range of organisation-specific issues.

As a perspective of the analysis of performance by government agencies, *chapter 4* discusses the disaggregated concept of society with a view to establish a framework for analysing social forces that interact with and influence government agencies.

CHAPTER 1. APPROACHES TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF AFRICAN STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

Introduction

During the recent 40 years, an intense debate on African state-society relations has resulted in a wide range of highly different theories. To a certain extent the sequencing of new theories has reflected international economic and political trends. Thus, optimistic assessments of the potential for state-managed development in the first two decades after political independence were replaced by severe theoretical attacks on the African state during the economic crisis in the 1980s. Later negative consequences of structural adjustment policies provoked more positive reconsiderations of the role of the state. And recently processes of popular protest and political reforms have inspired a renewed theoretical interest in the area between the state and society, notably expressed in the growing interest in the concept of 'civil society'.

Much of the theoretical debate, however, cuts across this historical sequencing and rather relates to different interpretations of the same empirical phenomena. In the present chapter a number of contributions to the debate are reviewed in order to assess weaknesses and insights. The relatively thorough review is considered necessary to move beyond the simplicity that characterises the general debate. This appears to derive from a tendency of many contributions to concentrate either on analyses of the state or on analyses of society, whereas attempts to understand interrelations are few. By discussing these deficiencies, the review provides the background for investigating the interactive approach in chapter 2. The interactive approach builds upon contributions to state-oriented and society-oriented theories, but it is still a new and not very elaborate framework, and, therefore, it can be difficult to understand its implicit or explicit opposition to other contributions and its qualitatively different approach without a review of previous contributions.

Various attempts have been made to group the many different approaches in order to establish an overview over central controversies. In the following four typologies that are found particularly relevant to sketch the main lines of the debate will be presented and discussed. The typologies, either suggested in the literature or used by me to summarise important disagreements and areas of consensus, are presented under the following headings:

1. State vs. societal-oriented approaches
2. Approaches based on a state-society dichotomy vs. approaches questioning the dichotomy
3. Focus on state autonomy vs. focus on state/society capture
4. Actor-oriented vs. structure-oriented approaches

They are found useful because they deal with four very fundamental questions for any theorising about state-society relations, namely

- whether the influence of one of the categories on the other party is particularly important
- whether it is relevant at all to distinguish between the analytical concepts of state and society
- whether the two categories are best perceived of as highly autonomous or closely linked
- and whether an actor-oriented or a structure-oriented perspective is most suitable for the analysis of their mutual interaction.

It should be noted that the fourth typology, actor-oriented vs. structure-oriented approaches, differs from the three others, as it does not relate specifically to the issue of relations between state and society. It represents a crosscutting perspective that applies to all social science theories regardless of their level of abstraction. The reason for including it here is that positions in this controversy have obvious implications for understanding state-society relations.

While the above-mentioned questions are considered appropriate starting points for an enquiry into the nature of state-society relations, it is not the intention to attempt a combination of the typologies into a coherent model for classification of theories. Multidimensional models tend to lose many theoretical nuances in their effort to make theories fit a matrix¹, and it is judged more fruitful to use the four typologies only as entrance points in their own right to a theoretical enquiry.

This implies that there is no systematic attempt to relate the contributions dealt with to all the typologies. While this would have been possible in the case of the structure-agency typology, it does not make sense e.g. to squeeze all the theories dealt with into the rather narrow autonomy-capture typology. Instead, the various contributions are presented only where they are found illustrative of theoretical dividing lines.

Given the purpose of the present chapter of providing background for the discussion of the interactive approach in the next chapter, only a brief presentation of prominent exponents of the various theories will be made here. It should be stressed, therefore, that the chapter by no means seeks to do justice to all the insight contained in the various contributions.

Although it has been attempted to concentrate on theories developed in relation to the African context, a few contributions that draw on lessons from Asia and Latin America have been found useful as illustrations of the main lines of debate. Theories that concentrate on Francophone West Africa are particularly well-represented as it has been considered important to explain my reservations against most of these theories that otherwise could have been seen as relevant to a study of state-society relations in Mali.

1.1. State-oriented vs. society-oriented theories

The most commonly presented typology of theories about African state-society relations is the distinction between, on the one hand, theories that focus on the impact of societal forces on the state and, on the other hand, theories that focus on the impact of the state on societal processes (e.g. Grindle and Thomas, 1989; Healey and Robinson, 1992; Rothchild and Chazan, 1988; Martinussen, 1992). Although descriptions of the two approaches vary, it is a common feature that society-oriented approaches are seen as theories analysing the state as a *product* of societal struggles, while state-oriented (or statist) approaches regard the state as an independent *actor*.

¹ For an example of a multidimensional model of theories about the state, see Martinussen, 1992 p. 9-12, where theories are classified according to three parameters: 1) their understanding of the state as either an actor in its own right or an arena for interaction and conflict between contending social forces 2) their character as either state-oriented or society-oriented and 3) their understanding of the state as either a manifestation of structures or a product of class struggles.

1.1.1. Society-oriented theories

Society-oriented theories dominated the debate in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite significant differences the many marxist- and structuralist-inspired theories shared a view of policy changes as a result of power relations and competition among individuals, groups and classes in society rather than the result of interactions and perceptions of policy elites². The highly influential dependency theories grew out of the Latin American structuralist tradition and gained widespread popularity also among researchers focussing on Africa³. It added an international perspective to state-society analyses as it saw the African state not only as a product of national social forces but to a large extent as a superstructure determined by its 'extra-societal base'⁴. An important part of the debate dealt with the implications for accumulation processes and the role of the state of external relations and the absence of 'clearly articulated classes' (notably a national bourgeoisie and a working class)⁵.

1.1.2. State-oriented theories

The severe economic crisis in the 1980s and dissatisfaction with apparent deficiencies of societal-oriented theories made many researchers turn to more *state-oriented approaches*. Instead of seeking economic and structural explanations to the crisis, it was now a common conclusion that most of the calamities experienced during that decade were attributable to the state or more specifically to state bureaucrats and state leaders. Sharing a view of the state as the driving force behind processes of social and economic change, a wide range of highly different versions of the approach has been presented. It has been suggested that a main distinction can be made between the *organic approach* and the *configurational approach* (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 40-41). Whereas the organic approach views the state as directly influencing social and economic processes, the configurational approach sees the impact of the state as more indirect by its provision of the main framework in which social groups form and political action is made possible. The African debate and in particular the debate about the state in Francophone West Africa has been dominated by the organic statist approach⁶, whereas the configurational approach has been applied mainly in relation to the East Asian and Latin American economies and has had only indirect implications for the understanding of African state-society relations. As a special version of the organic approach also the so-called 'New Political Economy' will be discussed below.

² For examples of the application of a structuralist perspective on the study of state-society relations in Mali, see Meillassoux, 1970; Amselle, 1985; Bagayogo, 1987; Amselle & Gregoire, 1987.

³ For a prominent example, see Samir Amin, 1979.

⁴ See e.g. Martinussen, 1980.

⁵ 'The Kenya debate' was a heated discussion among researchers in the late 1970s about whether capitalistic development is possible in the 'periphery' of the world capitalist system. An important aspect of the debate was the discussion about an internal capitalist class as a necessary or a sufficient condition for capitalist growth (for a review of the debate, see Leys, 1996a p. 143-154).

⁶ For a few of a large number of examples of the application of the organic approach to analyses of Francophone West African countries, see e.g. Giri, 1993; Otayek, 1989.

'The organic approach'

It is a general feature of researchers writing along the lines of the organic approach that they tend to emphasize the total inability of the African state to undertake policies that reflect the long-term interests of society in general. They either emphasize the *absence* of relations between state and society or they stress the *person-based* character of these relations. In the latter case, politics is seen as a game played by individuals and groups who are pursuing their various self-interests by invading the state either *from outside* (through clientilistic networks) or *from above* (the invasion of the bureaucracy by political leaders).

The following key characteristics of the African state are generally highlighted as particularly important:

- power is highly centralised and the coercive apparatus plays a central role in attempts to control ethnic, regional, religious and other particularisms.
- patron-client relations form the basis of power at all levels of the state apparatus. Big men provide their followers with access to state resources which makes institutionalisation of power difficult and leads to arbitrariness and a tendency to authoritarianism (Médard, 1991a p. 339; Callaghy, 1987 p. 90; Sandbrook, 1985 p. 93-94).
- the state is a major avenue of upward mobility as access to the state means access to economic resources (Callaghy, 1987 p. 89).

Differences between the contributions are reflected in the labelling of the state as either predatory, patrimonial/neo-patrimonial or characterised by personal rule⁷. Among researchers that point to the absence of state-society relations the notion of *predatory state* has sometimes been used to describe a purely bureaucratic structure completely cut off from society⁸. Researchers that emphasize the *patrimonial* character of the African state represent a different position as they stress the close person-based relations between bureaucrats and wider social interests⁹. Médard has suggested that the particular combination of traditional and modern (especially bureaucratic) characteristics of the African state is better captured by the term '*neo-patrimonialism*' (Médard, 1991a p. 331-333, p.335). Finally, researchers who stress the dependency of the bureaucracy on political leaders rather than on societal groups suggest that the term *personal rule* is used instead

⁷ Even pathological terms such as e.g. cleptocratic (e.g. Bayart, 1993 p. 88) or pathological patrimonialism (e.g. Ergas, 1987 p. 9) have been used.

⁸ See e.g. Darbon, 1990; Darbon, 1991. According to Dominique Darbon, only a small bureaucratic elite benefits from the existence of a state as they exploit public positions to their personal advantage - they live as 'predators' on the rest of society. The state, therefore, is best understood as nothing but a simple bureaucratic structure of exploitation. Médard uses the term 'predatory state' to describe a state which is nourished by society but does not return the services necessary to justify its existence (Médard, 1990 p. 28). His analysis, however, differs considerably from the one proposed by Darbon as it will appear below.

⁹ The concept of patrimonialism is derived from the definition by Max Weber of a particular form of traditional domination where an individual ruler is subject to obedience from both clan members and a wider network of clients. It is a highly personalised form of rule based partly on tradition and partly on arbitrary case to case decisions. It is a central feature of patrimonialism that a clear distinction between private and public rights and properties does not exist. According to Zaki Ergas, African states despite differences in ideologies, economic development and leadership style all have a 'patrimonial core' in common (Ergas, 1987 p.5). Other contributions to the theories about the patrimonial characteristics of the African state include e.g. Callaghy, 1986; Callaghy, 1987; Callaghy, 1988; Clapham, 1982.

to portray the highly personalised form of rule found in Africa¹⁰ (Sandbrook, 1985; Jackson & Rosberg, 1982a).

'The New Political Economy'

The so-called neoclassical counter revolution or *New Political Economy* that in the 1980s became very influential in the debate about the role of the African state represents a particular variation of the organic approach¹¹. Although this theoretical framework does not explicitly offer a theory about the state as it is primarily occupied with economic processes, considerations about the role of the state constitute a core element of the theories.

It differs from the above-mentioned contributions by its emphasis on profit-maximisation as the prime motive of economically-calculating individuals and interest groups, whereas the particular African characteristics of clan and ethnic based networks stressed by authors such as Médard, Callaghy and Sandbrook are of limited importance to the analysis. However, it shares with these authors an understanding of the state as invaded from outside, hence state-society relations are seen as primarily mediated through individuals and interest groups penetrating the state with a view to appropriate its resources. According to the New Political Economy, a complete capture of the state by narrow interests prevents it from maintaining interests of the 'general public'. To achieve their objectives various interest groups use a wide range of means to extract benefits (rents) from the state. Likewise, political leaders and bureaucrats (elected and unelected public officials) are seen as purely self-interested: their major concern is to remain in power where they derive rents from providing favourable access to public goods to the various interests groups (the theories are critically discussed in e.g. Toye, 1992; Grindle & Thomas, 1989; Killick 1989; Manor, 1991; Sindzingre, 1996).

'The configurational approach'

The *configurational approach* differs from the organic approach by a more positive view of the state, as it considers a strong and active developmental state¹² a precondition for economic development¹³. A major work within this line of thought is the book "Bringing the state back in" (Evans et al., 1985), written as a reaction both to society-oriented theories and to the then

¹⁰ Clientilistic ties are seen as personal networks that forces bureaucrats to act according to the will of the personal ruler, whereas societal groups are influencing the behaviour of the state mainly through ethnic and familial loyalties to the 'prince', 'autocrat', 'prophet' or 'tyrant' (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982a).

¹¹ Originally developed in analyses of industrialised countries, public choice theories gained importance in an African context after Robert Bates in the early 1980s applied them to a study on agricultural marketing interventions (Bates, 1981). According to Bates, rent-seeking activities are especially detrimental to the African state and the solution recommended was to roll back the state: to abolish marketing boards, devalue currencies and cut down public activities to the extent possible. The influence of the analysis has been reflected in the way adjustment promoters (the World Bank and IMF) at least in the initial phases (1980 to 1988) have approached reform processes in the majority of African countries (Engberg-Pedersen et al., 1996).

¹² The notion of 'the developmental state' was introduced by Chalmers Johnson in a study on Japan to describe a state characterised by stable rule by a political bureaucratic elite that enjoys a substantial autonomy. The concept has been further developed by authors such as Alice Amsden, Gordon White, Robert Wade and Peter Evans (for a further discussion of the concept, see e.g. Lauridsen, 1992; Leftwich, 1994; Rapley, 1994).

¹³ It should be note that Richard Sandbrook, mentioned above as representing an organic approach to the study of state-society relations, in a more recent book shares with the configurational approach the view of effective state intervention as a prerequisite for sustained capital accumulation (Sandbrook, 1993).

prevailing view of the state as an obstacle to economic development. The authors wanted to introduce a more actor-oriented perspective on the role of the state, and they wanted to demonstrate that effective state intervention is a prerequisite for sustained capital accumulation (Skocpol, 1985 p.4-5 and p. 20).

Whereas society-oriented approaches tend to see states as political expressions of class interests and conflicts, the configurational approach turns the analysis upside-down and sees the formation of interest groups as depending in significant measures on the structures and activities of the state: state structures and activities condition or configurate what may seem to be purely socioeconomic phenomena (Skocpol, 1985 p. 25-27). To the extent that state structures are affected by non-state factors, the authors deny the relevance of general theories about relations between the social formation and the state and instead call for specific analyses of historical and geopolitical factors that have shaped structures of a particular state¹⁴ (Skocpol, 1985 p. 28).

When trying to understand the role of a specific state, the configurational approach focuses on two core concepts: *state capacity* and *state autonomy*. State autonomy refers to the formulation and pursuance of goals by the state which are not simply reflective of the demands of interests of social groups, classes, or society. Conditions for state autonomy may either be divisions within dominant interest groups or special loyalties (e.g. ethnic loyalties) that bind together those who control the state apparatus and separate them from powerful external constituencies (Rueschemeyer & Evans, 1985 p.65). State capacity is the ability of the state to implement the goals (Skocpol, 1985 p. 9). The key to the state's capacity is the existence of an effective bureaucratic machinery, while other conditions include plentiful financial resources and sheer sovereign integrity of a given territory (Rueschemeyer & Evans, 1985 p.51; Skocpol, 1985 p. 16).

Also later contributions to theories based on the configurational approach have mainly been oriented towards analyses of Asian and Latin American countries, but the influence of the approach on the African debate has not been insignificant. Thus, the problems of African development processes have often been explained by the lack of the very same factors that have contributed to the success of many Asian economies: a high degree of state autonomy and a coherent and efficient bureaucratic state organisation¹⁵.

It should be noted that more recent contributions by authors writing along the lines of the configurational approach have tended to soften up the issue of state autonomy. Some now use the concept of 'governed interdependence' to describe the need for close links between the state

¹⁴ For an example of such analyses of specific conditions for the formation of states, see Nordhaug, 1996 where the autonomy of the Taiwanese state is related to the Guomindang control of the state apparatus and the insulation of Guomindang from other ethnic groups, while the capacity of the state is partly explained by the inflow of foreign military aid as a consequence of the geopolitical position of Taiwan.

¹⁵ In a further development of the framework Evans makes a direct comparison of African deficiencies to Asian strengths focussing on autonomy and capacity of the various states. He suggests that state characteristics can be seen as varying along a continuum from predatory to developmental states. In one end of the spectrum Zaire exemplifies a predatory state that totally lacks autonomy as well as bureaucratic capacity, whereas South Korea in the other end of the spectrum has a considerable degree of autonomy and a highly efficient bureaucratic organisation (Evans, 1989).

bureaucracy and business elites¹⁶ (Weiss & Hobson, 1995 p. 138). Evans has gone one step further and stresses the need for close connections not only between the state and business elites but also between the state and a broader range of groups and classes¹⁷ (Evans, 1995 p.234-235, p.247-250).

Discussion

A main problem of *society-oriented theories* is their lack of analysis of what goes on inside the state apparatus, i.e. the inner workings of power politics. The attempts to refer all state characteristics to societal dynamics and to generalise about state features and functions shared by all states within a mode of production or a position in the world capitalist system fail to explain the significant differences between states belonging to the same theoretically constructed category. Furthermore, the preoccupation with modes of production and classes as the relevant concepts in analysis of societal characteristics downplays the political importance of other social cleavages such as e.g. ethnic and regionally-based conflicts.

The organic approach, including the *New Political Economy*, suffers from the inverse problem: it tends to neglect socioeconomic factors and instead refer all explanations for present conditions in Africa to the state, state policy and reactions to state actions. It represents a highly top-down perspective that concentrates on what goes on in and around the presidential palace, while societal actors are only considered relevant to the analysis in so far as they make part of the destructive forces that penetrate the state apparatus for their own benefit¹⁸. Hence, societal actors are not seen as capable of influencing state structures and policy processes in ways that could possibly strengthen the capacity of the state. The view that all social actors are guided by narrow motives of either profit-maximisation or political and economic influence to clan or ethnic-based networks results in an extremely instrumental understanding of politics. Hence, politics is seen as a zero-sum game played for the personal benefit of those involved where the most successful manage to create structures of domination that allow them to reap personal gains at the expense of the losers, i.e. the majority of the population.

The approach shares with the society-oriented theories the problem of not being able to explain the many differences between African states. While society-oriented theories ignore the

¹⁶ The dichotomy of states versus markets that dominated earlier analyses have increasingly been replaced by the emphasis of the potential synergy between states and markets (Weiss & Hobson, 1995 p. 138). Whereas previous contributions stressed the need for the state to provide disciplined support for the market, Linda Weiss uses the concept of 'governed interdependence' to describe not only the need for links between the state and the business community but also the need for a strong business community. As she expresses it: "Bringing the state back in does not entail kicking society back out" (Weiss & Hobson, 1995 p. 138; Weiss, 1995: Weiss in a lecture given on 1 June 1995 during a Nordic researcher training course held in Humlebaek, Denmark).

¹⁷ Already in 1989 Evans concluded that 'embedded autonomy', meaning the existence of institutional links between the state and the private sector, is necessary for the state to implement its policies (Evans, 1989 p. 575-576, p. 582). In a more recent contribution he stresses that the state needs to develop a dense network of ties that bind it to societal allies consisting not just of elite groups. As he puts it: "Even the most bureaucratically coherent state cannot effect transformation without a network of ties to social groups and classes with which it shares a project. Connectedness is as important as coherence and cohesion" (Evans, 1995 p. 248-249).

¹⁸ At my direct question to Médard whether he could subscribe to the view of his theories as focussing on capital city and palace politics, he readily admitted that in his opinion this is where the important part of politics takes place. He did not see any point in carrying out village-level studies since people in remote rural areas have a very limited influence on politics (Médard, lecture given on 24 October 1995 during a Nordic researcher training course held in Jyllinge, Denmark).

differences resulting from the specific character of state internal power struggles and alliances, the organic approach concentrates on exactly this and disregard fundamental differences in historical and socioeconomic conditions.

The configurational approach seems to have considerably more to offer in an analysis of state-internal dynamics as it replaces the focus on personal ties by a more structural analysis of state organisations and their interactions with other social organisations. The concepts of state autonomy and state capacity allow an analysis of state power that goes beyond the fatalistic view of the state by the organic approach as inevitably condemned to poor performance.

In its earlier version, however, the configurational approach shares with the organic approach the limitation of not being able to analyse the importance of societal actions for the features and functions of the state. When disregarding interactions between the state and societal agents (other than business elites), this version applies a top-down perspective and has a limited analytical potential for understanding the role of social forces. Recent revisions, notably by Evans, have remedied this problem. His description of state-society relations as mutually constituting each other, sometimes by reinforcing each other and sometimes by weakening each other, bear much resemblance to the interactive approach that is presented in the next chapter.

1. 2. Approaches based on a state-society dichotomy vs. approaches questioning the dichotomy

Whereas the theories presented above are all based on the assumption that it is fruitful and possible to operate with an analytical distinction between the concepts of state and society, a number of otherwise highly different approaches share the characteristic that they either implicitly or explicitly question the state-society dichotomy. Many schools of thoughts and individual authors can be counted in this group, including the political systems approach of the 1950s and 1960s¹⁹ and the theory of 'étatisation' and 'désétatisation' by Jean-François Médard²⁰ that are both stressing the fluidity of the limits between state and society. The following presentation, however, concentrates on two approaches which both represent valuable contributions to the issues subsequently discussed in relation to the interactive approach.

¹⁹ *The political systems approach* argued the abandoning of the concept of the state on the grounds that it was too imprecise and excluded important aspects of the political process. Instead the concept of political system was found more suitable to examine the complex interaction between society and government institutions. With the ambition to develop a grand theory applicable to all political systems, David Easton presented a model describing the mutual influence by society and the political system (Easton, 1965 p.6-8 and p. 25-33). While denying the usefulness of the concept of state, the theory operates on the premise that it is possible to analytically separate political life from its social environment (Easton, 1965 p. 18 and p. 21-25). This has made critics of the approach point out that it does nothing but replace the problems of state limits by the problem of how to define the limits of the political system (Mitchell, 1991 p. 79-81).

²⁰ Médard who has been presented above as an important contributor to state-oriented theories in fact operates with a very fluid distinction between state and society, based on an understanding of the state as a process of institutionalisation of power - 'étatisation' - rather than a given set of institutions. The process of étatisation is described as a process of reducing the number of political units and a corresponding extension of their dimensions in the sense that relations between institutions are becoming increasingly rule-bound (Médard, 1991b p. 357; Lund, 1995 p. 33). State-society relations, in other words, can be seen as an ongoing process of increasing or decreasing the sphere of the state. The process can move both ways: power can become increasingly institutionalised (étatisation), or the central power can lose control over social and economic processes (désétatisation) (Médard, 1991b p. 363-364). This view comes very close to the definition by Foucault of the state as a mode of exercise of power. Power relations are increasingly governmentalised in the sense that they are elaborated, rationalised and centralised in the form of or under the auspices of state institutions (for a discussion of this view, see Ferguson, 1990 p. 272-274).

The strategic relation approach

The *first* group of theories can be labelled *the strategic relation approach*. Researchers in this group have attacked the idea of distinguishing between what they consider two deeply intertwined parts of a whole. The concept of the state should not be abandoned, but attempts to identify its borders are inevitably bound to be futile as the state-society divide exists *inside* all realms of practice.

Thus, Bob Jessop and Timothy Mitchell, contributing to general debates about the abstract concept of the state, criticise both statist and societal approaches for implying that state and society exist as independent entities which are fully constituted, internally coherent, mutually exclusive and that one always unilaterally determines the other (Jessop, 1990 p. 287; Mitchell, 1991 p. 88). This is a false dichotomy, they argue, as states never achieve full closure or complete separation from society and their precise boundaries are usually in doubt²¹ (Jessop, 1990 p. 342, 346, 351, 361; Mitchell, 1991 p.90).

In their view, theories that operate with an analytical distinction between the concepts of state and society are unable to capture the overlap between state and society in the form of corporatism, policy networks, joint involvement of state and private institutions in the financial sector, in schooling, health care, scientific research, etc. (Jessop, 1990 p. 288; Mitchell, 1991 p. 90).

Peter Geschiere who has applied the approach to the study of the African state furthermore reacts against the idea of some authors that it is possible for any societal agents to move outside the 'sphere of the state' or to make use of an 'exit option' in relation to the state. It is wrong, he argues, to believe that informal networks are located outside the state. The success of a person in the so-called informal sector depends to a large extent on his or her relations to the state. The same goes for e.g. the possibilities of smuggling: only people with strong relations to government officials can expect to be successful (Geschiere, 1990 p. 157-158).

Discursive construction of the state

The *second approach* questions the relevance of the state-society dichotomy from a completely different angle. Focussing on the *discursive construction* of the state, Akhil Gupta argues that in a third world context boundaries are blurred by the lack of distinction between the role of government agents as public servants and as private citizens and by the style of operation applied by government agents. Contradictory behaviour of multiple layers and diverse locales and centres of the state confuse the image of the state held by the population and make the categories of 'state' and 'civil society' inadequate. He discusses corruption as an example of such a mixture of roles and practices of government agents which strongly affects the *perception* of the state by the population (Gupta, 1995 p. 384, p.391).

²¹ Jessop insists with Gramsci on a perception of the state in its inclusive sense as political society *and* civil society. He defines the state as: "a distinct ensemble of institutions and organizations whose socially accepted function is to define and enforce collectively binding decisions on the members of a society in the name of their common interests or general will" (Jessop, 1990 p. 341). Mitchell, on the other hand, suggests that the state is analysed as a structural effect in the sense of a "powerful, metaphysical effect of practice that make such structures appear to exist" (Mitchell, 1991 p. 94)

According to Gupta, the perception of the state by the individual citizen results from a combination of on the one hand his or her personal encounters with local-level bureaucracies (the most important ingredient) and on the other hand a more general image of the state derived mainly from written and electronic mass media (Gupta, 1995 p. 392). At the local level people have a practical knowledge of the state as fragmentary: they know that multiple levels of state authority exist, and through their encounters with such different institutions as village development workers, the police, and the electricity board the existence of a 'translocal' institution such as the state comes to be imagined (Gupta, 1995 p. 383-384).

Discussion

The strategic relation approach stresses the obvious truth that state-society relations are fluid and that clear borders are impossible to establish. The view of the state-society divide as a divide existing *inside* all realms of practice, however, confuses the possibilities of identifying the interrelations between the analytical notions of state and society. Thus, the overlaps between the two 'spheres', in the form of e.g. corporatism and joint financing of health and education, are better understood through an analysis of why and how state and society come together in particular situations than through the a priori assumption that state and society are always intertwined. Most important, the explicit denial of the theoretical possibility of the absence of relations between state and society constitutes an important analytical lacuna. If all actions by societal agents to withdraw from the state in the form of avoidance of government agents, withdrawal from state-controlled markets, etc. are interpreted as highly dependent on the state, the scope of societal protests and influence on the state becomes extremely limited. This eventually makes the approach resemble the top-down perspective by the organic approach that tends to exclude the possibility of any constructive societal influence on the state.

As regards the suggestion by Gupta to view the state as a discursive construction, the approach seems to have much to offer to an analysis of *why* societal and state agents behave as they do. The perception of the state by societal agents as well as by state agents clearly influences their mutual interaction, and it seems plausible to suggest that this perception results from a combination of personally experienced encounters and more abstract images of the state transmitted e.g. through the media.

However, at least two objections to Gupta's analysis can be made. First, unlike the suggestion by Gupta, the approach does not necessarily seem to exclude an analytical distinction between the notions of state and society. When analysing encounters and perceptions by the various actors, it would still seem useful to operate with state and society as analytical categories in order to identify their interrelations. Thus, the suggestion that the state concept has to be abandoned as a necessary consequence of the existence of state-internal differences (multiple layers and diverse locales and centres of the state) cannot be accepted. And second, by giving systems of thought and discourse the same theoretical status as any other kind of social practice²², a discursive

²² In the words of James Ferguson to whom Gupta refers: "Systems of discourse and systems of thoughts are thus bound up in a complex relationship with the stream of planned and unplanned events that constitute the social world. The challenge is to treat these systems of thought and discourse like any other kind of structured social practice, neither dismissing them as ephemeral nor seeking in their products the master plans for those elaborate, half-invisible mechanisms of structural production and reproduction in which they are engaged as component parts" (Ferguson, 1990 p. 276-277).

analysis contains an inbuilt risk of underplaying the importance of other 'visible' forms of social practice. By moving the focus of the analysis from social practices and structures to perceptions, one ends up studying a complexity of conflicting discourses about which various statements can be made, but where no statement can claim to be more true than others²³. This is not analytically satisfactory, and it must be considered a condition for the relevance of a discourse analysis that it is combined with analyses of social practice and social structures.

1. 3. Focus on state autonomy vs. focus on state/society capture

A third classification of theories dealing with African state-society relations has been proposed by John Harbeson (Harbeson, 1994). He distinguishes between, on the one hand, theories that postulates an unfortunate degree of *state autonomy* from society and economy and, on the other hand, theories that focus on the *capture* of the state by society or the capture of society by the state.

Focus on state autonomy

The theory by Göran Hyden about the implications for development processes of 'the un-captured peasantry' represents a prominent example of an *autonomy-oriented approach*. According to Hyden, the fact that the colonial state was imposed on African societies implies a lack of correspondence between societal structures and a state "as a balloon suspended in midair" (Hyden, 1983 p.19). The dominance of a particular peasant mode of production characterised by a logic completely different from that of the capitalist mode of production significantly limits the ability of the state to influence society and vice versa²⁴ (Hyden, 1990 p. 248).

Darbon expresses a view of the African state fairly similar to that of Hyden, stressing the importance of the imposition of the state 'from outside' for the present lack of relations between state and society. He replaces Hyden's picture of a balloon state by the picture of the state as a simple bureaucratic structure of exploitation that totally lacks relations to society (Darbon, 1990 p. 43-45)²⁵.

²³ In a critical discussion of post-structuralism Mouzelis has convincingly argued against its rejection of notions of representation and empirical reference. While accepting that an absolutely objective or 'correct' interpretation is an impossibility, he describes it as absurd to declare it impossible to compare two interpretations in order to assess which of them 'represents' a certain text more accurately. A relativism so extreme hinders rather than helps empirical research, he says, and concludes: 'there is a reality out there' (Mouzelis, 1995 p. 48-53). Also Colin Leys has discussed this issue and has firmly declared that "it represents an intellectual retreat not to study practice" (Leys in a lecture given at the University of Roskilde on 1 November 1996). By this he means that the abandonment of 'reality' as a field of research rules out that normative assessments about right and wrong can be made, hence excludes any political implications of research (Leys, 1996b p. 54-56). For a very powerful critique of post-modern development research for being based on 'voyeurism' instead of attitudes, see also Corbridge, 1994. For a criticism of Ferguson's approach for obscuring the issue of responsibility, see de Vries, 1997.

²⁴ It is worth noticing that Hyden's conclusion is exactly the opposite of that reached by the earlier versions of the configurational approach stressing a high degree of state autonomy as a precondition for economic development.

²⁵ It can be argued that also contributions by e.g. Christopher Clapham and Richard Sandbrook belong to autonomy-oriented approaches as they both explain the functioning of the African state with reference to prevailing forms of accumulation, in particular the dominance of peasant forms of production (Clapham, 1982 p. 31; Sandbrook, 1985 p. 63-82). This would solve the problem of scholars who have found it difficult to classify them as either state-or society-oriented and therefore have had to construct an interim category of societal-oriented researchers who accord 'analytical priority to the state' (see Martinussen, 1992 p. 28-29).

Focus on capture

The opposite view, that the *state is captured by society*, is represented by Joel Migdal's theory about the weakness of the African state being a result of the existence of numerous competing power centres. Although the African state has demonstrated a remarkable capability to *penetrate* society, Migdal characterises it as weak because its other abilities - to extract resources, appropriate and use resources in determined ways and most importantly to regulate social relations - are very poor²⁶. According to Migdal, the reason for the difficulties of the state is its lack of integrated power, forcing it to rely on an extensive web of local strongmen who act as intermediaries to local populations. This ensures the necessary consolidation of state power, but at the same time it undermines the very same attempts as the price of support is usually a minimal interference in strongmen's exercise of their own rules (Migdal, 1988 p. 4-9, p.247-248, p. 263-264).

Migdal presented the theory in a book published in 1988. Later he has partially revised the theory and developed a more extensive framework in which the outcome of the struggles between components of the African state and societal forces is not inevitably that of the capture by society of the state. In the revised version this outcome is considered only one option among many, and even in situations where the state must be seen as co-opted by particular social forces, he leaves open the possibility that the engagement between state and society may have mutually empowering aspects. In the revised version also the possibility of the capture of society by the state is mentioned²⁷ (Migdal, 1994 p. 24-26).

It can be argued that also the earlier presented theories about the African state as patrimonial or néo-patrimonial can be counted among the theories that focus on the *capture* of the state by society. Despite the view of the state as directly influencing social and economic processes, the description of the invasion of the state by clientilistic networks bears much resemblance to Migdal's (earlier) theory about a weak state depending on a web of local strongmen.

The view that *society is captured by the state* can be found also in the contributions to the New Political Economy (notably Bates, 1981) where difficulties of rural development are explained by the control of the economy by members of the state apparatus who are purely self-interested. Instead of supporting farmers by increasing producer prices, political leaders and bureaucrats give priority to economic activities that allow them to derive personal benefits.

²⁶ Migdal expresses the dilemma of the African state as follows: "States have become a formidable presence in their societies, but many have experienced faltering efforts to get their populations to do what state policy makers want them to do" (Migdal, 1988 p.9).

²⁷ China during the Cultural Revolution is mentioned as an example of capture by the state of society. Migdal presents in the new version four ideal types of outcomes of state-society interaction: 1) total transformation of society by the state (e.g. China in the 1960s). 2) state incorporation of existing social forces. 3) society's incorporation of the state (what he earlier described as the typical situation in Africa). 4) a total failure of the attempts by the state to penetrate society. Migdal stresses that only rarely have real cases approached the two extreme ideal-types: total transformation or total disengagement (Migdal, 1994 p. 24-26).

Discussion

The revised version of Migdal's theory seems to be a very constructive response to the objections that can be raised against both theories that focus on an unfortunate degree of *state autonomy* and theories that focus on the *capture* of either the state or society.

Whereas the former approach excludes the possibility of mutual influence by state and society on the other party, the latter considers state-society relations a zero-sum game where 'the winner takes it all'. Both approaches have been severely criticized for failing to describe the African reality (e.g. Berry, 1993 p.44-45²⁸). Furthermore, they are analytically unsatisfactory as they are unable to explain how social changes occur. If the interaction between state and society is considered either absent or characterised by 'one-way traffic', it becomes difficult to explain how the state can achieve a new role over time and why different countries develop differently. This in fact seems to be the problem of both Hyden and Migdal (in his 1988 work) when they resort to 'external factors' as major explanations for changes in relations between state and society. Hence, Hyden refers to the need to break down the economy of affection through the integration into a world market economy as a condition for a changed role of the state (Hyden, 1993 p.202), whereas Migdal mentions war, revolution and mass migration among the catastrophic shocks that provide necessary but not sufficient conditions for the emergence of strong states (Migdal, 1988 p. 271)

1. 4. Actor-oriented vs. structure-oriented approaches

The structure-agency debate offers a fourth set of perspectives on state-society theories. While in the 1970s the issue of structural limits to the room of manoeuvre for individual actors constituted a central line of demarcation between marxist approaches and classical pluralist theories, the issue has been less debated after the retreat of marxist-inspired theories in the mid-1980s.

Recently, however, a number of researchers have again confronted the issue. According to David Booth, the earlier predominance of marxist approaches has provoked at least two very different reactions (Booth, 1994p. 12-15): one is the '*post-Marxist critiques*' that maintain a structural approach but reject part of the classical theoretical framework such as e.g. the tendency to essentialism, determinism, unilinear view and the overriding attention to class and class struggle. The other is the *actor-oriented approaches* that reject the relevance of analysing macro-level structures understood as 'explanans' of social change and instead concentrate on local-level analysis of encounters between individuals and groups²⁹. Although few of the theories explicitly deal with relations between state and society, the various positions have obvious implications for the understanding of these relations.

²⁸ Sara Berry criticizes Bates' analysis for overlooking limits on government ability to control economic changes, whereas the problems of Hyden's approach are summarised as follows: "The implication that peasants are uncaptured because they want to be underestimates African farmers' eagerness to improve their access to market opportunities, and overestimates their ability to control their economic circumstances" (Berry, 1993 p. 44).

²⁹ As a third reaction is mentioned *post-structural approaches*, including the discourse analysis developed by Foucault stressing the diversity of outcomes of social processes and arguing against theories that seek structural explanations for social practice and power relations.

Agency-orientation

In the one end of the structure-agency spectrum, Norman Long despite a declared attempt to bridge the structure-agency debate represents an agency-oriented approach. He defines structures as “the product of the ongoing interlocking, interplay, distantiation and mutual transformation of different actors’ projects” (Long & van der Ploeg, 1994 p. 81). It is believed that all individuals pursue their personal interest and that the only limiting factors to their various projects are their confrontations with the projects of other actors. Other factors such as socioeconomic differences for the capacity of the various agents to pursue their projects are considered of limited importance³⁰.

The analytical focus on the interface, i.e. the face-to-face encounter, between the various actors is applied also to the study of relations between government representatives and local populations (Arce & Long, 1989 p. 214). Hence, these relations are studied in the form of the direct encounter between individual government agents and farmers. According to Long, farmers “modify, transform, adopt or counteract the projects of state agents” (Long & van der Ploeg, 1994 p. 74). Given the confinement of the analysis to the micro level, however, little scope is left by the approach for an analysis of the possible influence of farmers on state structures and state policies. Basically, farmers are seen as agents operating only at the local level and operating mainly on an individual basis³¹. Likewise, government agents are understood as individuals having a considerable leeway to define their own way of interacting with farmers rather than as members of a particular government agency that sets a number of limits to their behaviour. This implies that organised responses by farmers to government initiatives and structural changes in government organisations that result from farmers’ initiatives are of little interest to the analysis³².

Also the approach by Jean-François Bayart can be said to apply an actor-oriented approach. Contrary to Long, Bayart has dealt extensively with relations between state and society. His theory about the African state as defined by ‘the politics of the belly’ (Bayart, 1993) has further consolidated his position as one of the most influential authors in the debate on the state in Francophone Africa.

³⁰ The understanding by Long is reflected in a study of relations between government extension workers and farmers in Jalisco, Mexico by Arce and Long. They conclude that despite evidence of increasing social differentiation in the area, all farmers, whether rich or poor, share the same perceptions of government as an institution working against them. Strategies by farmers vis-à-vis government agents, therefore, are not seen as very much influenced by their socioeconomic situation but conditioned rather by their personal experience of whether or not government agents have been able to establish relations of trust (Arce & Long, 1989 p. 231-232).

³¹ Although Long stresses that individuals are not the only relevant actors but that collectivities such as political parties, state agencies and church organisations should also be considered actors, there is an overly focus on the encounter between single individuals in the empirical examples used to explain the approach (Long & van der Ploeg, 1994 p. 68; Arce & Long, 1989 p. 232-243). It should be noted that in a more recent contribution Long elaborates on the issue of ‘collective actors’ and explicitly rejects that an actor analysis is primarily interested in face-to-face confrontations or interactions or only in local situations (Long, 1997 p. 6-10).

³² While applying an actor-oriented approach, seemingly similar to the one applied by Long, Magdalena Villareal is much more open to the possibility of local populations influencing also government authorities at the national level. She stresses, however, that this demands a level of organisation which is usually not present in rural areas (Villareal in a lecture given during a Nordic researcher training course held in Siikaranta, Finland May 27th-31st, 1997).

Bayart explicitly subscribes to the methodologically individualistic approach³³ (Bayart, 1993 p. xx). He takes the point of departure in the strategies applied by the various individual actors and abstains from attempts to analyse their behaviour in terms of their affiliation to other social categories than 'interest coalitions' formed to increase their share of mainly state resources. His description of the way individuals get access to the state bears much resemblance to those presented by the New Political Economy. Thus, clientilistic relations or 'ethnicity' are seen as agents of accumulations both of wealth and political power, and Bayart playfully defines ethnicity with Bates as "winning coalitions with a wide enough margin to guarantee profits in the struggle for the division of spoils but also sufficiently restructured to maximise the per capita return of these profits"³⁴ (Bayart, 1993 p. 56).

Bayart shares with the New Political Economy Bayart the view of the state as a prize to be won by rent-seeking individuals and coalitions. The state has a pivotal role in capital accumulation processes as the most important source of wealth (mainly funded by international aid agencies), and all strategies of state and societal agents relate to the state with the aim of maximising the share of its resources³⁵ (Bayart, 1993 p. 87).

It makes an importance difference, however, that Bayart does not solely base the analysis of individual motives, intentions and interests on the hypothesis of a universal mode of behaviour (the interest in utility maximisation). Instead, he presents an extensive analysis of the historical and cultural particularities of the formation of identities and strategies that sometimes lead to a utility maximisation strategy and sometimes generate different reactions.

Structure-orientation

In the other end of the structure-agency spectrum, Stuart Corbridge represents the view that capacities of social agents to pursue their projects are severely limited by structural inequalities. Whereas Long and Bayart are concerned with the study of *diversity* resulting from the variation in the strategies applied by social agents, *inequality, exploitation and contradictions* are core concepts in the analysis proposed by Corbridge (Corbridge, 1994 p. 102). Although his contribution represents a considerable revision of marxist theory³⁶, Corbridge shares with marxism a commitment to causal analysis, a concept of determination and the view that the

³³ The writings of Bayart could have been discussed also in relations to the other typologies presented above. Thus, his approach shares with the organic state-oriented approach the view of the state as the most important social actor that directly influence all social and economic processes. With the strategic relational approach it shares a perception of the state-society divide as a division *inside* the many different realms of practice (Bayart, 1993 p. 163). Thus, Bayart has developed the concept of '*straddling*' in analyses of how African politics are driven by the combined and conflicting efforts of individual agents who are optimising their resources by simultaneous activities in the public and private sphere (Bayart, 1993 p. 98-99, 69). Finally, it shares with the theory of Migdal (presented in his book of 1988 and later revised) the view that the state is captured by the extensive webs of patron-client relations that significantly limit its ability to implement its policies.

³⁴ According to Bayart, the contemporary force of ethnic consciousness rather than deriving from the colonial past, comes from its reappropriation by local people, circumscribing the allocation of state resources (Bayart, 1993 p. 51).

³⁵ "We can now take it for granted that it is their relationship to the State which largely enables actors to get rich and dominate the social scene. If this is true on a local level, in the villages, it is even more true on the regional and national scene" (Bayart, 1993 p. 87).

³⁶ According to Corbridge, a post-marxist approach replaces the labour theory of value by analyses of unequal distribution of property, while the focus on classes is replaced by an increased sensitivity to the multiple sites of oppression and unfairness in terms of gender, age, location, etc. (Corbridge, 1994 p. 102).

economy is structured by a systematically unequal distribution of assets and powers (Corbridge, 1994 p. 113). Furthermore, he shares with the marxist-inspired dependency theories of the 1970s the lack of an explicit discussion about the role of the state. The main point on state-society relations to be read from his analysis is that national and not least global structures are important determinants for local-level conditions. Thus, the room of manoeuvre of agents operating at the local level is considered severely limited by 'extra-local' structures (Corbridge, 1994 p. 111).

While Long and Corbridge represent two very explicit positions in the structure-agency controversy, it is possible to group the majority of the contributions to the state-society debate discussed above as either primarily structure-oriented or primarily agency-oriented. Thus, the configurational approach is a prominent example of a structure-oriented perspective³⁷, while also the contributions by Hyden, Clapham and Sandbrook belong to this group.

The actor-oriented perspective is applied among others by Médard, Jackson and Rosberg and by the various contributions to the New Political Economy.

Discussion

Despite their considerable differences, the above-mentioned versions of agency- and structure-oriented approaches share the problem of downplaying the influence of local populations on state structures and policies. Corbridge's version of the structure-oriented approach tends to stress the extra-local determination of local conditions so much that little scope is left for local populations to react to and influence external factors, including the interventions by the state. Long's confinement of the analysis to the local level, on the other hand, risk resulting in a portrait of local populations as victims of state initiatives which at best they can hope to modify and adjust according to their preferences but which they are unable to fundamentally influence.

With Bayart, Long shares the problem of over-stressing the capacity of individual actors to influence their own living conditions and thereby fails to see important patterns of structurally generated inequality³⁸. By studying individuals rather than groups, there is a serious risk of overlooking the similarities of their strategies and of the constraints they are facing. The declared interest in *diversity* rather than *inequality* tends to lead to interesting but analytically not very powerful studies of the particular at the expense of a more general understanding of social dynamics of persistence and change.

³⁷ In a recent article Jens Peter Frølund Thomsen discusses the theoretical framework of Thelda Skocpol and colleagues and compares it to that of Eric Nordlinger. He criticizes Skocpol's approach for an overly focus on structural explanations to the actions by political agents (the focus on organisational and institutional conditions *inside* the state), while at the same time he points out that the approach suffers from a disregard of societal structures (a discussion of implementation problems for state policies is absent)(Thomsen, 1996 p. 100 and 103). Nordlinger, on the other hand, is criticised for defining the state as a set of individual actors with preferences that can be deducted neither from societal structures nor from internal state structures (Thomsen, 1996 p. 105-107).

³⁸ As argued by Jean-Pierre Jacob & Philippe Delville: "On s'aperçoit que le degré d'adaptation au système d'aide pluraliste est plus ou moins grand selon la familiarité des paysans avec ce système et leur formation. Les paysans les moins formés, ceux qui ont eu peu de contacts avec les intervenants ou les groupes les plus pauvres..., peuvent être parfaitement désorientés par les informations nombreuses et parfois contradictoires qu'ils reçoivent, tandis que d'autres groupes peuvent réagir avec aisance et tirer profit de l'absence de concertation entre intervenants..." (Jacob & Delville, 1994 p. 259).

The core of the problem seems to be an oversimplified understanding of structures as products of the interplay between various (individual) actors' projects³⁹. Anthony Giddens has suggested that structures are seen as patterns of *repeated* interactions (and non-interactions), i.e. as having *a degree of stability* depending upon the extent to which interactions become a matter of habit or routine. While structures are created by human actions, they also constrain the choice that humans make about their activities (Giddens, 1984). In the writings of Long and Bayart, structures are described as fluid and changeable outcomes of the various interactions.

Regarding consequences of the agency-oriented perspective for the analysis of the state, the major problem seems to be that of dissolving the concept of the state as a unity. If the state is seen mainly as the aggregation of the projects of individual actors, hence individual state agents are considered the most important units of analysis, an important dimension of state structures and state policies are cut off the analysis. As discussed in relation to Gupta's contribution, societal actors tend to relate not just to an individual state agent encountered face-to-face but also to the agency he or she represents and often also to a more abstract image of the state as such. Likewise, internal state dynamics will be insufficiently understood through a view of its agents as flies in a bottle seemingly busy pursuing their own individual projects without relating to constraints set by e.g. the routines for interaction between various agencies and between the hierarchal levels.

While the structure-oriented view contains the obvious risk of overlooking the role of agency in the analysis of state-society relations, it is believed, nevertheless, that a study based on structurally defined units of analysis has considerably more to offer than studies focussing on agents (whether individuals or groups) defined only by their strategies, i.e. agents defined only as empirical agents. The challenge to a such approach is to avoid the predetermination of the outcome of the strategies applied by such categories as government field staff, government regional management, the rural population, poor farmers, the population in disfavoured regions, the young, people belonging to larger households, etc. For each of the categories the strategies and their outcome have to be analysed with a view to understand its logics *and* assess the relevance of the category constructed⁴⁰.

Conclusion

The chapter has reviewed an extensive range of contributions to the debate about African state-society relations. Among their very valuable insights is the insistence by society-oriented theories that societal forces play a considerable role as determinants of state structures and policies. The attention by state-oriented approaches to state-internal dynamics is a constructive complementary perspective to this. Furthermore, the point by Migdal that state-society relations are not necessarily characterised either by capture or by autonomy introduces some much needed light and shade into the debate. And finally, the observation by Gupta that the state in the perception by the population is not an entity but a multifaceted structure is found to provide a very constructive perspective.

³⁹ For further discussions of Long's approach, see Madsen, 1994; Webster, 1997.

⁴⁰ This goes directly against the advice given by Villareal who warns against the definition of categories (units of analysis) before a study is initiated. According to her, the point of departure should be taken in the life histories of individual actors and only when a sufficient amount of data has been collected, the categories can be constructed based on the strategies described (Villareal in a lecture given during a Nordic researcher training course held in Siikaranta, Finland May 27th-31st, 1997).

Despite these and several other insights, however, the review leaves a general dissatisfaction with the prevailing either-or approaches to understanding state-society relations. Many of the theories discussed have a 'substantive theory' character in the sense that they are postulating general context-independent relations between the variables studied.

Least fruitful is considered the choice by many authors to perceive of the relations as generally dominated either by the state or by societal forces. Instead of seeing relations as an interplay that may have many different outcomes, the a priori expectation that one of the parties dominates the other, considerably limits the analytical perspective. The organic approach that has strongly influenced the writings about Francophone West Africa is found particularly problematic. By concentrating on the state and state actors, this approach provides an excellent entrance point to the study of corruption and informal relations within the state apparatus, but it tends to ignore the influence of societal forces on state structures and policies. Changes in the role of the state, therefore, must be expected to be generated by state-internal factors. As state bureaucracies, however, are seen as representing only narrow clan and ethnic-based interests, the approach hardly leaves any scope for major changes of state-society relations.

A similar problem is found in theories that focus on an unfortunate degree of *state autonomy* or on the *capture* of either the state or society. The view of state-society relations as a zero-sum game makes it very difficult to explain how social changes occur. Furthermore, these theories are found to share with the state-or society-oriented approaches the tendency to portray the state as an entity that relates to society in an unequivocal way.

The contribution by the strategic relation approach is not found to solve the problem of a simplified picture of state-society relations. The suggestion by these theories not to distinguish between the analytical concepts of 'state' and 'society' avoids the problems encountered by the state- or society-oriented approaches but confuses the possibilities of identifying interrelations.

Finally, extreme versions of structure- and agency-oriented approaches are found to share the problem of downplaying the influence of local populations on state structures and policies. While there are limitations to both perspectives, it is considered useful to approach the analysis of both state and societal forces from a structure-oriented perspective, implying that units of analysis are structurally defined rather than being actors defined only by their strategies.

Taking the point of departure in dissatisfaction with these deficiencies, chapter 2 will present and discuss the interactive approach that differs from the majority of the contributions reviewed here by its 'conceptual framework character'.

CHAPTER 2. THE INTERACTIVE APPROACH

Introduction

After having reviewed and discussed a number of contributions to the state-society debate, a recent approach to the study of state-society relations in an African context will be thoroughly discussed in the following⁴¹. Instead of applying a traditional approach of focussing either on the state or on societal relations, it focuses on the area *between* state and society. Concepts like the '*interactive approach*' or the '*state-in-society approach*' cover attempts to understand patterns of domination, persistence and change in terms of a mutual interaction between state and society and, more specifically, between a multitude of different structures embodied in the state and a variety of movements, networks, groups and formal as well as informal organisations constituting society. As stated in one of the major works within this theoretical framework, the objective is to understand:

“how transactions between social groups and state institutions are carried out and how these, in turn, alter the nature of public institutions as well as of social formations”⁴² (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 41).

In particular this new approach offers two very fruitful perspectives on a state-society analysis: firstly, an emphasis put on *interaction* as opposed to a dominating role ascribed a priori to either state or society and, secondly, its insistence on studying the *multiplicity* of state and societal structures as opposed to commonly used simplifications where either state or society or both are treated as organically undifferentiated units⁴³.

2.1 Definition of the state

The definition of the state proposed by many authors draws on the definitions by Skocpol and Weber, as they open by the statement “the state is an organisation within the society” (e.g. Bratton, 1994a p.234; Migdal, 1988 p.19, Azarya, 1988 p. 10) or the state is “the organised aggregate of relatively permanent institutions of governance” (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 39). This is further qualified by the suggestions that the state is only one form of organisation among many and that state elites do not automatically enjoy a monopoly of political power (Migdal, 1988 p.28-

⁴¹ Although differences in several respects exist between the authors, a common approach to the study of state-society relations is expressed in: Azarya, 1988; Azarya, 1994; Azarya & Chazan, 1987; Bratton, 1989; Bratton, 1994a; Bratton, 1994b; Bratton & Rothchild, 1992; Chazan, 1988a; Chazan, 1988b; Chazan, 1992a; Chazan 1992b; Chazan, 1993; Chazan, 1994; Chazan et al., 1992; Harbeson, 1994a; Harbeson, 1994b; Kohli & Shue, 1994; Marenin, 1987; Marenin, 1988; Migdal, 1988; Migdal, 1994; Rothchild, 1987; Rothchild & Foley, 1988; Rothchild & Lawson, 1994

⁴² The quote is a rephrasing of the formulations used in one of the first contributions to the framework: “There is a need constantly to look back and forth between the top reaches of the state and local society. One must see how the organisation of society, even in remote areas, may dictate the character and capabilities of politics at the centre, as well as how the state (often in unintended ways) changes society” (Migdal, 1988: prologue p. XVII).

⁴³ The approach has a lot in common with the view of Berry that there is “neither an effective state control of the countryside nor a captured peasantry, but rather multiple linkages between farmers and states which affect patterns of resource allocation and agricultural performance partly by encouraging mobility and diversification of networks and income sources” (Berry, 1993 p. 66). Also Jonathan Fox has approached the issue of state-society relations from a similar angle. He formulates the challenge of understanding rural democratisation as follows: “How do we ‘unpack’ states and rural societies, to begin capture the diversity of their interactions?” (Fox, 1990 p. 11).

29; Migdal, 1994 p.9; Bratton, 1994a p.234). What makes the state different from all other powerful decision-making structures in society, however, is its claim to represent the public good and its entitlement to exercise powers and authority needed to implement that claim, for example a monopoly of legitimate coercion, international sovereignty and the powers to tax and conscript (Marenin, 1988 p.217; Azarya, 1988 p.10). Elaborating on the definitions, Naomi Chazan et al. suggest a useful distinction between the notions of state, regime and government: while *the state* is a set of associations and agencies claiming control over defined territories and their populations, *the regime* refers to the rules, principles, norms, and modes of interaction between social groups and state organs (the form of rule), and the term *government* relates to the specific occupants of public office who are in a position to make binding decisions at a given time (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 39).

The emphasis put on *interaction* as opposed to a dominating role ascribed a priori to either state or society and on the *multiplicity* of state and societal structures as opposed to commonly used simplifications of both makes the interactive approach fall outside the four typologies of theories about state-society relations presented in chapter 1. As it will appear from discussions in the following, it builds upon the insights of many of the contributions reviewed in chapter 1 but tries to combine them in a qualitatively different way.

2.2. Both state- and society-oriented

The approach differs from state-oriented theories of the 1980s by its insistence on the anchorage of the state in society. The authors reject the tendency of these theories to refer all explanations for present conditions in Africa to the state, state policy and reactions to state actions. Instead they stress the importance of understanding state power as generated from outside the state itself⁴⁴. State-oriented approaches are criticized for applying a top-down perspective where societal actors are seen as subject to state initiatives but not as actors capable of influencing state structures and policy processes in return⁴⁵. Furthermore, the tendency of some state-oriented theories to treat the state as an organic unitary actor is considered oversimplified.

On the other hand, the interactive approach differs substantially from society-oriented theories prevailing in the 1960s and 1970s, as the authors seek to build on the insights of statist theories on the importance of state-internal dynamics. Moreover, the interest in all kinds of “movements, networks, groups and formal and informal organisations” represents a considerably broader scope of analysis than the predominantly class-oriented interest of earlier studies. Hence, the authors do not share the view of marxist-inspired scholars that interests and objectives of particular economic actors rather than those of political actors are the main sources of social change. As compared to more recent society-oriented research that focuses on community-level studies, the

⁴⁴ According to Migdal: “There can be no understanding of state capabilities in the Third World without first comprehending the social structures of which states are only one part” (Migdal, 1988 p. 33-34).

⁴⁵ As expressed by Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue: “.. a fair amount of the real drama of social change continues to be located in social realms reacting with, but in important ways residing also ‘beyond’ the state.” (Kohli & Shue, 1994 p.308).

approach differs by the attempts to relate micro-level processes to macro-level processes and activities emanating from the state⁴⁶.

2.3. Analytical distinction between the concepts of state and society

Furthermore, the interactive approach differs from the contributions to the debate about African state-society relations which criticize the theoretical relevance of a state-society dichotomy. Authors applying the interactive approach acknowledge the fluidity of state-society notions⁴⁷, but use them as analytical concepts to identify exactly the interrelations asked for by the critics of the dichotomy. Kohli and Shue put it as follows:

“we begin also by asserting the analytical separation of state and society, even as we urge special attention to the linkages between them and to their often ‘recursive’ relationship” (Kohli & Shue, 1994 p.295).

And Chazan further explains:

“State and society are conceptualised...as two intersecting and potentially independent variables with political processes as the dependent variable. Thus, the state entity does have an existence of its own, and its actions may have a profound bearing on social organisation and economic enterprise. Social groups, similarly, maintain an institutional and resource base which permits them to act independently as well as conjointly with structures in the public domain. These political, social and economic fields may intertwine in a multiplicity of ways” (Chazan, 1988 p.123).

2.4. Interaction instead of capture or autonomy

Contrary to views expressed by theories that focus either on state autonomy or on capture of state or society, the interactive approach suggests that state and society may ‘come together’ to further the common interests of various societal and state-based groups. This reflects the understanding that state-society relations are not necessarily a zero-sum game but that both negative and positive-sum outcomes may occur⁴⁸ (Bratton, 1989 p.428-429).

Inspired by Albert Hirschman’s concepts of *exit* and *voice*, the interactive approach stresses that both state and society can ‘choose’ one of two basic options in their mutual interaction: either to influence the other party or to avoid it (Azarya, 1988 p. 12-13). Hirschman originally developed

⁴⁶ As examples of such community level studies, Migdal mentions studies on peasant communities, patron-client ties, urban neighbourhoods, etc. (Migdal, 1988 prologue p. XVI).

⁴⁷ As an illustration of the difficulty of telling whether a specific institution belongs to the state or society, Migdal mentions the incorporation by the British colonial power of traditional chiefs as paid officials (Migdal, 1994 p.26-27). Azarya draws attention to the fact that individuals play multiple roles and that relations are constantly changing as state and society are interlinked in a dynamic network of action and reaction (Azarya, 1988 p.15).

⁴⁸ Migdal’s (previous) view that the African state is weak because of the strength of the many competing power centres in society represents a major deviation from this understanding (Migdal, 1988).

the concepts in relation to studies of organisations in market situations⁴⁹, but has also dealt with the importance of exit from the state in the form of attempted secession, emigration and outflow of capital (Hirschman, 1978). Whereas Hirschman concentrates on exit options that imply a physical withdrawal from the country as a whole, authors applying the interactive approach have been interested in the phenomena of exit from the state by citizens that remain in the country. The broader concepts of *engagement* and *disengagement* have been introduced to characterise the possible strategies by the two parties⁵⁰:

- *state-sponsored engagement* refers to efforts by the state to regulate social behaviour (e.g. efforts to plan economic production, distribution and exchange, pacification of the national territory).

- *state-sponsored disengagement* refers to various forms of withdrawal by the state (e.g. reforms to liberalise and privatise economic activities, physical escape of the state from its territory, acceptance by public officials of bribes and their involvement in various forms of illegal activities⁵¹)

- *society-sponsored engagement* refers to collective action by citizens to influence the state or to gain control of state power (e.g. voting, demonstrations, strikes, civil war and regional separatism which attempt to capture the centre of the state).

- *society-sponsored disengagement* refers to actions by ordinary citizen to withdraw from the realm of state authority (e.g. apathy, fatalism, indifference, informal trade, noncompliance with laws, cynicism, satire, ridicule of the state, refugee flight, regional separatism with the objective of detachment from the state).

All authors stress the fact that the concepts represent a considerable simplification. Thus, Victor Azarya notices that it can be very difficult to differentiate between the phenomena in a specific context and mentions informal sector activities as an example (Azarya 1988 p. 11). Chazan draws attention to the simultaneous adoption of a multitude of strategies by the same groups: e.g. the rural population may at the same time augment connections with agencies which will improve their well being and shun contacts with other parts of the state which may limit their scope of autonomy (Chazan 1988 p. 137). Finally, Bratton points to the fluctuation of relations over time: state-society relations ebb and flow with changing socioeconomic circumstances (Bratton 1989 p. 415, p. 430).

However, the concepts are useful to portray both overall state-society relations and relations between particular groups. Thus, Bratton has used the framework to portray historical relations between state elites and peasant producers which he considers the two most politically relevant

⁴⁹ For an individual member of an organisation or somebody that does business with an organisation, voice refers to overt complaints, while the person is continuing as a member or customer, whereas exit refers to the withdrawal from the organisation (Hirschman, 1978 p. 90).

⁵⁰ The concepts of engagement and disengagement are extensively discussed in Azarya & Chazan, 1987; Azarya, 1988; Bratton, 1989; Chazan, 1988; Azarya, 1994; Migdal, 1994; and Bratton, 1994a. There is a slight disagreement on terminology as Azarya prefers the notion of *incorporation* to that of engagement (Azarya 1994 p. 83), whereas Michael Bratton argues that this word carries unfortunate overtones of 'incorporatism' (Bratton 1989 p. 424). The authors, however, attach the same meaning to the concepts, and the list of examples of the various strategies of state and society is collected from several different contributions.

⁵¹ Acceptance by public officials of bribes and their involvement in various forms of illegal activities contribute to the reduction of state authority rather than to its extension and are thereby forms of state-disengagement (Bratton, 1994a, p.247).

categories of social actors in Africa. Immediately after independence policy elites and peasants expressed a common political agenda and their strategies could be characterised as mutual engagement. As the state tried to expand its reach across the countryside (e.g. through marketing cooperatives and heavy administrative regulation of agricultural markets), peasant producers became disillusioned and withdrew their support to the state (a strategy of disengagement). The outbreak of the fiscal crisis in the 1980s resulted in the mutual disengagement by both state and society, when the crisis led to cutbacks in public services and regulatory activities, increased corruption and absenteeism. The recent emergence of farmers' associations in a number of countries can be seen as an attempt to engage the state which under specific circumstances may lead to a situation of mutual engagement (Bratton, 1994a p.240-251).

As regards the specific mediation between state and society, all authors base their theories on the assumption that a regime cannot exist over time without internal support. Even if the coercive apparatus is extensive, regime viability will still depend on its internal support and on the kind of methods it uses to sustain its social base (Chazan et al, 1992 p. 170). In the African context where the diversity of class, ethnic and regional interests is considerable, there is a particular need for the government to regularise the pattern of interaction among the contending elements in order to reduce threats to the leadership of the destructive effects of the struggles. Virtually all regimes have met this challenge by trying to make arrangements for the representation of key interests. This has usually implied the co-option of leading class and ethnic representatives into the ruling elite for instance by a widespread use of 'ethnic arithmetic' in appointments to the government and top-level positions in the state apparatus (Rothchild & Foley, 1988 p. 233-248).

Despite considerable variations between modes of inclusion of key interests⁵² ('coalition construction'⁵³), it is a common feature for the majority of regimes (with pluralist regimes as a possible exception) that they have all involved ways to limit participation. In particular, the peasantry and emerging class-based interest groups have tended to be excluded. Hence, ongoing socioeconomic changes represent a growing threat to virtually all regimes as these are cleavages that can rarely be accommodated by existing systems of mediation. When such non-represented groups grow stronger and their discontent rises, social conflicts may be expressed as overt protests against the regime as it has been witnessed in a large number of African countries since the early 1990s (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 177; Rothchild & Foley, 1988 p.255-261).

2.5. Both structure- and agency-oriented

The interactive approach also cuts across the last typology that distinguishes between an actor- and a structure-oriented perspective. Hence, the various contributions apply a wide range of

⁵² Based on an initial work by Donald Rothchild and Michael Foley (1988), Chazan et al. suggest a distinction between at least seven different types of regimes which have each applied a different strategy for incorporation of key interests. They vary from deliberate attempts to establish mechanisms to manage conflicts (administrative hegemonic and pluralist regimes) over monopolistic principles for inclusion (party-mobilising and party-centralist regimes) and participatory exchanges based on weak structures (populist regimes and neo-traditional regimes) to the absence of clear organising principles for political interchange (personal-coercive regimes)(Chazan et al., 1992 p. 139-151, p.170-176).

⁵³ The concept of *conflict coalitions* used by Otwin Marenin differs from the concept of coalition used by Chazan et al., 1992 and Rothchild & Foley, 1988. Following his more actor-oriented approach, Marenin uses the notion of conflict coalitions to describe all alliances of groups and individuals who have come together to further their interests by attempts to penetrate and control the state (Marenin, 1987 p.74; Marenin, 1988 p.220).

different approaches of which some stress the actor-perspective while others attempt to anchor the actions of the various agents in socioeconomic structures. Marenin represents the most explicit application of an actor-oriented perspective as he rejects the idea of understanding the state by reference to the nature of the social formation, and instead focus on human agency as the location of dynamics of change and reproduction (Marenin, 1988 p. 228):

“The state is created by human agency, changed by agency, and destroyed and recreated by agency” (Marenin, 1987 p. 69).

Other contributions express a more implicit agency-orientation when they describe actions and reactions by groups and organisations, including the interaction between the state and societal agents, without explaining what motivates the various actions. A complex pattern of actions and reactions seems to be driven by dynamics that do not refer to the structural positions of the various actors (e.g. Azarya, 1988). Still other contributions place themselves somewhere in-between an agency- and a structure-oriented approach when reference is made to some broadly described socioeconomic phenomena such as the eruption of social and economic crises, initiation of structural adjustment policies and the emergence of new social classes, whereas a more specific anchorage of political actions in economic structures is not attempted (e.g. Chazan, 1994).

Bratton differs from such approaches by trying to relate political actions to socioeconomic conditions. He suggests that the choice of strategy is mainly conditioned upon the actors' access to *power* which refers to a combination of *political autonomy* and *political capacity*. Political autonomy is defined as the latitude of social actors to take political initiatives unconstrained by the claims of others. Political capacity is the ability to implement political decisions⁵⁴ (Bratton, 1994a p.235-239). Economic factors are important dimensions of both autonomy and capacity, and although Bratton carefully avoids a direct anchorage of political actions in specific economic structures or classes, his socioeconomic rooting of political concepts is clear. Thus, peasants' political autonomy is seen as mainly depending on access to land and control over labour. Capacity is generally conditioned upon the existence of resources such as human, financial, material, coercive and symbolic resources required for implementation, and in the case of peasant political capacity to engage the state, conditions include a strong set of shared economic interests, a tradition for collective action, the availability of models of economic interest association and a favourable economic environment (Bratton, 1994a p.235, p.248).

Conclusion

As it has already been established, the interactive approach is considered a fruitful attempt to overcome many deficiencies found in theories about state and society that do not sufficiently take account of the mutual interaction between the two parties. State and society are deeply interrelated, but not in any simple and predictable way. The actions of state agents have implications for society and the actions of societal forces have implications for state structures

⁵⁴ Political autonomy and political capacity are considered analytically distinctive properties of social organisations: autonomy may exist without capacity (which is the usual case of e.g. farmers' organisations), while capacity may exist without autonomy. The two dimensions are not equally important to power but autonomy takes precedence over capacity. An organisation that has autonomy but limited capacity has at least the negative power of withdrawal (disengagement), whereas an organisation that has a certain capacity but no autonomy will find it difficult to pursue their own political agenda (Bratton, 1994a p. 236).

and policies. How the state relates to society and how society relates to the state, however, can be read neither from the personality of top politicians and bureaucrats, inter-elite fights, class analyses, economic analyses, the associational scene nor from other similar factors. This has to be established in each particular case based on studies of the main actors, their various strategies and the structures that condition their strategies.

In the empirical study of the interplay between extension agencies and farmers in the Sikasso region the interactive approach points to the need to study both parties. Farmers cannot be seen as reacting only to initiatives taken by government agencies, but societal dynamics in the farming community (the mutual interaction of farmers) are also important conditioning factors for their strategies. Similarly, government agencies respond to farmers' strategies to a certain extent but their way of relating to farmers is also very much dependent on state-internal factors such as the institutional set-up of the state, the interaction between the various state agencies, etc.

By pointing out some main tendencies in the way society and state can relate to each other, the engagement-disengagement framework provides a useful methodological tool to an empirical study. It contributes to an understanding of how actions by one party may generate particular reactions by the other party. What is most important, it introduces a main distinction between the qualitatively different situations of mutual engagement and mutual disengagement for the possibilities of both the state and societal forces to pursue their political agenda. In the study of the Sikasso region the framework is used to inspire the analysis of highly different strategies pursued by each of the four extension agencies (chapter 9) as well as the analysis of the way the various societal forces interact with state representatives (chapter 11).

The engagement-disengagement framework is very rough, though, and may invite many critical comments for simplifying highly complicated processes. Peter Gibbon has criticised it for exaggerating the similarities of the phenomena characterised as either engagement or disengagement. He argues that 'disengagement trends' such as informalisation, smuggling and black marketing have little in common as they involve different people with different strategies who relate to different state institutions. Moreover, he questions the conscious preference by a large group of people of particular strategies. Many forms of engagement and disengagement, he argues, reflect a structure of opportunities given by political and geographical conditions rather than conscious choices. And finally, Gibbon finds the tendency to treat disengagement as absolute and unconditional highly problematic (Gibbon, 1992 p. 10-11).

One has to agree with Gibbon that the use of the engagement-disengagement framework as a simple model with only four options is not very desirable. It is important, therefore, to stress with Chazan that the same people may simultaneously adopt a multitude of strategies involving both engagement and disengagement of different state agencies. And to notice, as Bratton has pointed out, that strategies are constantly changing. Rather than as a model offering a simplified representation of a complex reality, the framework should be used to generate questions that can guide an empirical analysis. In a study of African farmers, a highly heterogenous group subject to many different conditions, this implies that neither as a group nor as individuals they can be fitted into a model. Instead, the framework should be used to analyse their many different sometimes overlapping and sometimes contradictory interests and strategies. Unlike the tendency by many scholars to focus only on one dominating strategy, i.e. the various disengagement strategies adopted by African farmers (e.g. Bates, 1981; Hyden, 1983; Éla, 1990), such an analysis

will reveal that disengagement strategies represent only part of farmers' interactions with the state. In many cases African farmers have cooperated with the state or parts of the state because they have realised that they could benefit from its assistance. And throughout the history farmers have reckoned that there are limits to what individualised acts of everyday resistance can achieve and have constructed formal organisations to make direct demands on the state⁵⁵.

Gibbon's criticism of the tendency to see (particularly disengagement) strategies as purposive and intentional popular reversals of dominating trends touches on a very central problem. There is a risk that the engagement-disengagement framework and the interactive approach in general invite purely political interpretations of all social phenomena. The general lack of reflection about the influence of structural conditions on social actors tends to result in a view of political forces as completely autonomous from socioeconomic conditions. As described above, this particularly applies to some interpretations of the framework (e.g. Marenin, 1987; Marenin, 1988; Azarya, 1988), where the explanatory power of the concepts is significantly limited by referring the choice of engagement or disengagement options only to a complex pattern of actions and reactions by state and societal agents. When criticising the framework, Gibbon particularly relates to the writings of Azarya.

The attempts by Bratton to relate political actions to socioeconomic conditions, however, represent a constructive response to the criticism. Bratton's concepts of political autonomy and political capacity suggest some of the links between structure and agency disregarded by other contributions. Still, Bratton's reflections are very general and thereby difficult to apply to specific studies of the strategies of either state or non-state organisations. It remains a considerable challenge to operationalise the analysis by drawing on attempts by others to anchor the analysis of both state capacities and the emergence of societal forces ready to engage the state in assessments of the role of structural conditions.

This leads to the second objection to the framework, namely that its openness to many different interpretations makes it a sketchy and all-encompassing 'model' prone to lose explanatory power as no factors are pointed out as more important than others: it is open to both structure- and agency-oriented analyses and to theories emphasizing both political, organisational and socioeconomic factors⁵⁶. The framework, thereby, represents only an initial starting point for analyses that can move in very different directions. It is worth noting that most of the authors

⁵⁵ In a critique of Ferguson's analysis of the state as an 'anti-politics machine' (Ferguson, 1990), Pieter de Vries notices that it represents a major problem to reduce the options of peasant organisations to two possible alternatives: that of engaging in political action against the state by forming organisations ready to confront it, and that of submitting to it. The peasant organisations which he himself has studied in the Atlantic zone of Costa Rica are always ready to negotiate with some state agencies while attacking others (de Vries, 1997 p. 93). Fox makes a similar point when he notes that focussing either on peasant rebellion and revolution or on everyday forms of resistance excludes a great deal of rural political activity (Fox, 1990 p. 3).

⁵⁶ The opposite criticism - that important dimensions are excluded - has been raised by some of the authors themselves as they admit that *international factors* are blind spots in a state-in-society approach (Kohli & Shue, 1994 p.294). Although an attempt to integrate such issues in the approach has not yet been made, it is believed to be theoretically possible to include a range of international perspectives in the analysis of how particular state institutions interact with a range of (national and international) societal actors (Kohli & Shue, 1994 p.324). Contrary to the view of authors themselves, Ferguson claims that the state-in-society approach does in fact deal with the international level by a description of international agencies "as the policemen of states - regulating their functioning and rolling back their excesses through 'structural adjustment'" (Ferguson, 1998 p. 52). I find it difficult to see how he has reached this interpretation of the framework.

would subscribe to the view of the interactive approach as a conceptual framework that provides a series of theoretically informed questions to empirical research but does not pretend to be yet another 'grand theory' about state-society relations (e.g. Migdal, 1994 p.8). Considering the limitations of many of the 'substantive theory contributions' reviewed in chapter 1 that tend to be very firm on the possibilities of generalising about the characteristics of state-society relations in Africa, the approach is considered a constructive point of departure for further investigations.

While the interactive approach is considered a qualitatively different and more constructive approach to the study of state-society relations because it focusses on interaction instead of either the state or society, the challenge, thus, is twofold: *first, to fill in the framework and second, to integrate considerations about the influence of structural conditions on state and societal actors.*

Concerning the operationalisation of the framework, the authors go some of the way themselves by their suggestion to *disaggregate the concepts of both state and society*. Instead of seeing the state only as a totality that confronts society or societal groups in an unequivocal way, it is seen also as a multitude of different structures with varying objectives and different ways of mutual interacting and of relating to non-state actors (Marenin, 1987 p.61; Migdal, 1994 p.17). Similarly, societal forces are seen as encompassing a wide variety of movements, networks, groups, cells and formal and informal organisations that differ substantially in size, scope, purpose, composition and resources (Chazan, 1994 p. 256; Migdal, 1994 p.20). In chapter 3 and chapter 4 the implications of this understanding will be further discussed with a view to get some more specific theoretical guidelines for the analysis of the interaction between government agencies and societal forces in the Sikasso region.

In both of the chapters the issue of the relationship between actors' strategies and conditioning structures is integrated into the discussions. In chapter 3 on 'the anthropology of the state' the theoretical unpacking of the concept of the state is sought operationalised by use of organisation theory with a clear contextual focus. And in chapter 4 the discussion of contributions to the theories about societal forces includes theories that anchor political analyses in studies of class and economic structures.

CHAPTER 3. DISAGGREGATION OF THE STATE

Introduction

It is the purpose of the present chapter to further discuss suggestions by the interactive approach to disaggregate the concept of the state. Thereafter an attempt is made to operationalise the 'anthropology of the state' by drawing on a range of contributions to organisation theory. While organisation theory is used to refine the disaggregation of the state, the notion of organisational performance defined as the ability of an organisation to respond to demand by its clients is used as an entrance point to operationalise the more abstract concept of interaction. The chapter, thus, establishes a framework for analysing performance of the four extension agencies under study.

Drawing on a model proposed by Merilee Grindle and Mary Hilderbrand, a structure for the analysis of the agencies is presented. It includes *a contextual analysis of the shared environment* by government agencies in the form of the economic, political and human resource situation of the country, the institutional characteristics of the public sector and the interplay among the various agencies which are part of the state. In addition to this, it points to a number of *organisation-specific factors* such as structures, processes and management style of a particular organisation and its human resources.

The analysis of organisation-specific factors is broadened by combining contributions to revised agency theory with more recent contributions focussing on issues such as work satisfaction and demand pressure. Six organisation-specific elements are highlighted as particularly important to organisational performance, namely 1) *authority*, 2) *rewards*, 3) *organisational identification*, 4) *peer pressure*, 5) *work satisfaction*, and 6) *demand pressure*. These elements provide the structure for the analysis in chapter 9 of each of the four agencies under study.

Finally, the chapter ends by a discussion of advantages and problems of a particular organisational model, 'the mechanical model', that provides the basic organisational features of the four agencies under study.

Only few examples are found in the literature of attempts to apply organisation theory to studies of extension organisations in developing countries. Therefore, much of the discussion in this chapter refers to theories developed in other contexts, but wherever possible general points are sought illustrated by examples related to agricultural extension.

Before opening the chapter, a few comments on the combination of state theories and organisation theory are necessary. As explained in the introduction to the theoretical section, attempts to operationalise the 'anthropology of the state' by use of organisation theory reflect a movement from abstract macro-level theory to more specific middle-level theories defining a more limited realm of relevance. The combination is not commonly seen, hence none of the researchers contributing to the interactive approach have worked with organisation theory, and none of those contributing to organisation theories discussed in the following apply a state-and-society perspective. The danger of combining the two may be that the shift in level of abstraction becomes a shift also from a conceptual framework kind of theory to substantive theories. Operating closer to empirical realities, organisation theory tends to point out a limited number of factors which are 'always' decisive to organisational performance (e.g. work satisfaction or

authority or demand pressure). This is reflected in the fact that organisation theory tends to be more prescriptive than state theories. Much of the field is occupied by the issue of organisational change: how to improve the performance of organisations, e.g. by changing structures, management strategies or attitudes of the staff. The challenge, therefore, is to pick from organisation theory the points which seem useful to establish a more open conceptual framework that does not predict empirical findings and prescribe solutions but generates a series of research questions to an empirical investigation.

3.1. The anthropology of the state

A combination of the suggestions by Migdal and Marenin to an analytical dismantling of the state ('anthropology of the state') points to at least three types of distinctions:

- between the various state agencies.
- between the various levels of the state hierarchy.
- between individual state agents.

State agencies tend to assume identities and interests of their own. In the interaction with other agencies and with societal groups a certain team spirit is developed which can be enforced by shared socialisation (e.g. common educational background) and fierce competition with other agencies for resources and power (Marenin, 1987 p.73; Migdal, 1988 p.209-211).

Pressures on the various *levels of the state hierarchy* differ markedly. At each level state-internal pressures come from superiors, underlings and peers, while state-external pressures are significantly different for the top executive leadership and for field level staff supposed to execute state directives directly in the face of possibly strong social resistance⁵⁷ (Migdal, 1988 p. 206-259; Migdal, 1994 p.16-17) .

Individual state agents may respond as much (or more) to the distinctive pressures they face as they do to the rest of the state organisation (Migdal, 1994 p.9). In particular, the 'trenches' of the state in the form of front-line officials (tax collectors, police officers, extension agents etc.) are often subject to pressures to throw in their lot with local people against the impersonal requirements of the state and their agency (Marenin, 1987 p.70-73; Migdal, 1994 p.9).

In addition to this *structure-oriented anthropology of the state*, Marenin suggests the need for an understanding of the state as also a *conceptual construct* composed of many different parts:

"The primary social reality of the state - its coerciveness, its consensual nature, its moral legitimacy - is the state as a person, as police officer, as postman, as bureaucrat, as schoolteacher. Yet people also perceive standing behind such agents a legitimate power and have an image, however simple, of what that power represents. The state, thus,

⁵⁷ Migdal operates with four main levels of the state hierarchy (Migdal, 1994 p.16):

- 1) the trenches: government field staff with direct contacts to clients, targets and beneficiaries of state policies.
- 2) the dispersed field offices: regional and local bodies.
- 3) the agencies central offices: offices in the capital city which are technically responsible to the top political leadership.
- 4) the commanding heights: the top executive leadership.

presents itself and is experienced simultaneously as agent and as symbolic totality". (Marenin, 1987 p.70)

The suggestion by Marenin comes very close to Gupta's view of the state, referred to earlier, as a discursive construct resulting from a combination of people's encounters with local-level bureaucracies (e.g. village development workers, the police and the electricity board) and their more general image of the state derived mainly from the media (Gupta, 1995 p. 383-384).

The state is both abstract and specific: it is *a symbolic totality* and it is *specific organisations and individuals* who meet societal agents in face-to-face encounters.

The implication of this understanding of the state is that street-level bureaucracies (Lipsky, 1980 p.3) play a particular role as mediators between state and society. Through the day-to-day relationship with government representatives people develop a perception of their relationship with the state⁵⁸.

The personalised relation, however, never stands alone. The specific encounter between the extension officer and the farmer is both a person-to-person relation and a reflection of a relation between state and society. As Hyden has expressed it: "The extension officer is a person and at the same time a representative of something larger" (Hyden, lecture given on 23 October 1995 during a Nordic researcher training course held in Jyllinge, Denmark).

Furthermore, farmers may have a perception of the state irrespective of their dealings with individual government agents⁵⁹. Abstract relations mediated through price and tax structures or derived from the handling by the government of regional conflicts or international issues may influence the image of the state held by the population.

The particularity of the discursive construct of the state relates to its special character as an organisation which differs from all other powerful decision-making structures in society by its claim to represent the public good and its entitlement to exercise the powers and authority needed to implement that claim (for example a monopoly of legitimate coercion, international sovereignty and the powers to tax and conscript) (Marenin, 1988 p.217; Azarya, 1988 p.10).

It is both an entity depending on a certain amount of legitimacy in the eyes of societal groups *and* a complex structure constituted by many different parts. People may, therefore, relate to it both as a symbolic totality and as an agent in the form of a particular organisation (or even a particular individual) or they may combine many sets of perceptions to an overall image of the state.

⁵⁸ In the literature on extension services scholars have called attention to the importance of extension service personnel to the perception by farmers of their relationship with the state (Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996 p. 40). In his autobiography, Nelson Mandela touches on the same issue: "The most important person in any prisoner's life is not the minister of justice, not the commissioner of prisons, not even the head of prison, but the warder in one's section. If you are cold and want an extra blanket, you might petition the minister of justice, but you will get no response. If you go to the commissioner of prisons, he will say, 'if I give you an extra blanket, I must give one to everyone'. But if you approach the warder in your corridor, and you are on good terms with him, he will simply go to the stockroom and fetch a blanket" (Mandela, 1995 p. 497).

⁵⁹ Norman Long raises this issue in a discussion about how people's perceptions of the actions and agency of others shape their own behaviour (Long, 1997 p. 4, p. 10).

The advantage of disaggregating the notion of the state is obviously that it constitutes a tool to identify its different parts and thereby to understand the complexity of the interplay between state and societal agents. It counters the criticism of Skocpol-inspired theories that they tend to draw a clear-cut boundary between state and society and in consequence hereof tend to endow the state with an image of unity as a policy-making actor standing apart from society (see, e.g. Mitchell, 1991 p.86-88). The interactive approach demonstrates that it is possible to operate with an analytical (as opposed to empirical) distinction between state and society and at the same time avoid the view of the state only as a unitary agent.

The danger related to the disaggregation, however, is the risk of overemphasizing the question of state-internal differences at the expense of the concept of state-entity. This is particularly true for an approach which emphasizes the need for a disaggregation down to the individual level. In empirical analyses one is often faced with a tremendous temptation to present individuals as explanations in themselves. Glaring differences in behaviour among individual extension agents and farmers may lead to quick conclusions about the importance of personality and individual strategies. If, however, one wants an analytical framework which goes beyond the anecdotal and is able to capture patterns of behaviour, individual state agents cannot be considered the most important units of analysis (Leonard, 1977 p. 16; & Fivelsdal, 1996 p. 172). A similar danger is related to an approach containing an overly focus on differences among the various state agencies⁶⁰.

Thus, the major risk of theories which attempt an unpacking of the state into its various (either structural or conceptual) components is the risk that they are not able to deal with the particularity of the state as *both* a multitude of different structures *and* an abstract entity dependent on a certain amount of legitimacy in the eyes of societal groups. If the latter dimension is cut off from the state concept, it has a number of very serious consequences for empirical analysis: if a disaggregated concept of the state stands alone, the study of local-level processes of interaction between state agencies and groups of societal actors will comprise only those processes which directly relate to the particular state agencies in question. This will leave out all actions and reactions that can be referred to the experience by societal actors of interacting with other state agencies. The analysis will also not be able to capture the perception by societal actors of the agency as part of a larger symbolic totality or legitimate power but will tend to assume that they see it as a more or less autonomous actor.

Similarly, the study of internal processes among the various agencies and the different hierarchal levels within the state misses an important dimension if all these structures are not seen as *both* pursuing their individual goals *and* relating to some kind of common overall objectives. Accordingly, it must be considered a major challenge to the interactive approach to operate with *a multifaceted state concept which includes both the state as a complexity of structures and the state as a unity*.

A second challenge to the approach is to move beyond the still fairly sketchy framework suggested by Migdal and Marenin. By pointing out the various internal cleavages in the state, i.e.

⁶⁰ Crawford Young mentions the political systems theories and certain versions of organisation theory as examples of theories which through an overly focus on subsystems or government branches have contributed to the decline of the state concept (Young, 1994 p. 22-23).

by suggesting the *units of analysis*⁶¹, they indicate an entrance point to the analysis. When wanting to understand the interaction between specific state agencies and farmers, however, it is not enough to know that the state is a complex and multifaceted structure where different elements are pulled in different directions. A specific analysis necessitates some more specific guidelines for the study of relations among the various elements and between state-internal actors and external actors. Such guidelines are provided by organisation theory which deals with how different parts of an organisation such as the state relate to each other and to external actors.

3.2. The relevance of organisation theory

Organisation theory is an extensive field characterised by multiple perspectives and inspiration from all kinds of fields ranging from political science, engineering and biology over culture studies and social anthropology to architecture and linguistics (Hatch, 1997 p. 3-8). While attempts have sometimes been made to define organisation theory more narrowly, e.g. as theories dealing with the structures - or the sociology - of organisations, only⁶², the notion of organisation theory in the following will be used in its broadest sense to describe *all theories dealing with the question of how to understand the actions and interactions of organisation-internal groups and the interactions between these groups and external agents*. Drawing on broad field of organisation theory, it is attempted to approach the issue of how to understand the performance of government organisations in developing countries in general and extension agencies in particular.

The relevance of organisation theory in analysis of organisations in developing countries is a much debated issue, and the application of organisation theory to analysis of government organisations in developing countries is even more controversial. Although in many specific organisation analyses only limited attention is paid to the *environment of organisations* (Brinkerhoff, 1994 p. 144-149⁶³), there has been a widespread theoretical agreement about its importance at least since the 1960s⁶⁴ (Hatch, 1997 p. 76-97). Roughly speaking, the more the

⁶¹ In specific analyses of a number of countries, mainly in the Middle East region, Migdal has demonstrated *how* the various units might relate to each other, but he has not suggested a more specific framework for the analysis (Migdal, 1988 p. 206-259).

⁶² When organisation theory is defined more narrowly as theories dealing with the structures - or the sociology - of organisations, only, the notion of 'organisational development' is used to designate the literature which focus on attitudes and motivation of individuals and groups, while 'organisational design' refers to management science (Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987 p. 3-4, p. 19-20 p. 24-47). Mary Jo Hatch identifies three major theoretical perspectives in organisation theory as the machine perspective, the organic perspective and the cultural perspective, respectively (Hatch, 1997 p. 51-56). And others have suggested a distinction between theories focussing on structure, processes and culture (Bakka & Fivelsdal, 1996 p. 21-24).

⁶³ In the analysis of a random sample of 80 World Bank projects (carried out in the period 1983-1990), Derick Brinkerhoff found that the vast majority of staff appraisal reports on the projects paid minor or no attention to assessing the degree of stakeholder or public support to the projects, while about half of the reports made no reference to the social context of the projects (Brinkerhoff, 1994 p. 145).

⁶⁴ Already in the late 1950s the emergence of contingency theory introduced to organisation analyses the concept of environment. Prior to this a closed systems approach prevailed which treated organisations as if their internal operations were the sole concern of management (Hatch, 1997 p. 76-78; Scott, 1992 p.88-100; Bakka & Fivelsdal, 1996 p. 64-74). Further development of what has been called 'the open systems approach' has followed various different paths, including the suggestion by W. Richard Scott of a main distinction between the open rational systems models and the open natural systems models (Scott, 1992 p. 29-34, p. 51-56, p. 104-122). Although widely accepted as a useful typology of approaches, Scott's description of the open natural systems perspective has been criticised for being based upon a set of assumptions about harmony and organisational survival as major common goals for an organisation. The picture of an organisation as an entity which relates to its environment can be said to contain

environment is believed to matter, the less relevant it will be to import theories developed in a completely different setting to studies of African organisations. Analysis of African state-society relations by researchers applying the organic approach (discussed in chapter 1.1) points to a completely different functioning of agencies in developing countries and in industrialised countries due to the importance of patron-client relations and the economy of affection in the former⁶⁵.

In addition to the importance of the general environment, the growing interest in *organisation culture* since the 1970s (Hatch, 1997 p. 206-236) has made many researchers warn against the application of organisation theory, particularly management theories, developed in a western context to developing countries. It is argued that while at the structural level organisations are becoming increasingly similar, the behaviour of people within organisations shows considerable country-specific variation (e.g. Child, 1981; Hofstede, 1980).

Against these reservations other researchers have argued that *the distinctive features of 'African behaviour' derive from an essentially universal mode of response to the particularities of the African environment* (Leonard, 1977 p. 231). In consequence thereof, they pay less attention to Africa-specific cultural factors and concentrate more on understanding the characteristics of the environment. They hold that the striking similarities between public organisations in industrial and developing countries makes it appropriate to gain inspiration from organisation theory when trying to understand the characteristics of bureaucracies of the latter (e.g. Uphoff, 1994a p. 5; Vengroeff et al. 1991 p. 108; Blunt, 1990 p. 302; Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992 p. 375; Leonard, 1977 p. 17; Leonard, 1987 p. 905-906, Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987 p. 1-7; Tendler, 1997 p. 1-8; Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996 p. 40-43).

While these researchers draw on many different parts of organisation theory⁶⁶, a group of researchers have concentrated particularly on *cases of good organisational performance*. Based on the assumption that all people are likely to perform well under certain conditions, David Leonard and Robert Wade discuss among incentives to encourage good performance a particular set of management style, a system of rewards based on merits, the encouragement of organisational identification and the existence of peer pressure encouraging group performance (Leonard, 1977; Wade, 1995).

Contributions by authors such as Judith Tendler, Ian Christoplos, Merilee Grindle and Mary Hilderbrand follow the same line of reasoning but concentrate on factors such work satisfaction and demand pressure. When arguing for the applicability of theories about workers' motivation to developing countries, Tendler notes that the mainstream development field has not been

an inbuilt closed systems perspective even if the intention has been to define it as open. Majken Schultz uses the label of the 'loosely coupled' perspective to describe an alternative view of organisations as characterised by conflicting interests and loose linkages both inside the organisation and between the organisation and other organisations (Schultz, 1986 p. 19-34).

⁶⁵ Based on a study of a wide range of elements of the environment influencing administrative and policy behaviour in developing countries, Mark Turner and David Hulme conclude that "we should be extremely cautious in applying models of management structure and action imported from the West" (Turner & Hulme, 1997).

⁶⁶ Two influential approaches are represented by the various attempts to use either *strategic management theories* or *contingency theories* to analyse and improve public and private organisations in developing countries (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992 p. 372-375; Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987 p. 4, p. 232-236).

reluctant to import ideas and practises from industrial countries and the private sector with regard to macroeconomic policies, development strategies and management strategies. She finds, however, that the development field has picked up only half of the lesson when it ignores the extensive literature on workers' commitment as a key to increasing productivity and the need to increase the discretion of workers instead of reducing it (Tendler, 1997 p. 3-8; Tendler in a lecture given in Espoo, Finland, May 1997⁶⁷).

All the above-mentioned authors view organisations in developing countries as sharing with organisations in industrial countries the characteristics of being complex and heterogeneous structures consisting of many different parts which are often pulling in several different directions. Internal conflicts at various levels, and many types of contacts between internal and external agents make it difficult to view organisations only as entities. The specific characteristics of the structures, conflicts and pressures may vary considerably from one organisation to another and from one point in time to another for the same organisation. It is too simplified, therefore, to describe a set of common characteristics to all organisations in a group of countries (developing countries) and oppose them to those of another group of countries (industrialised countries). It is also a simplification to characterise a whole country as a good or a bad performer, as some agencies may be doing well, while others are doing less well. By assuming that people everywhere may express 'unself-interested' behaviour if allowed to do so, the challenge is to understand how the particular environment may sometimes limit the possibilities for letting it thrive (Tendler, 1997 p. 3; Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1783; Grindle, 1997b p. 483).

In the following, insights of the above-mentioned authors are presented and discussed in two sections dealing with *the impact of the environment on organisational performance* and *organisation-specific factors influencing performance*, respectively.

While none of the authors present a clear definition of *organisational performance*, the definition used here is *the ability of an organisation to accommodate client demands*. In other words: clients' assessment of the degree of their satisfaction is the measure of organisational performance. This definition has been chosen because it assigns an active role to both parties in the interaction: the organisation tries to accommodate a demand, and clients raise a demand and subsequently assess the level of their satisfaction. The definition differs, thus, from measures of organisational performance which consider only the actions of the organisation and disregard the role of clients such as, e.g. measurement of output in quantitative terms, or economic and financial measures such as efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

In practice it can be difficult to establish the degree of satisfaction of demands because, as Lipsky has warned, any questions to clients concerning their satisfaction with services provided are likely to be answered negatively, as needs tend to be indefinite and therefore never properly satisfied (Lipsky, 1980 p. 34-35). In a specific study, therefore, the issue of satisfaction has to be approached by asking a series of more specific questions related both to the quantitative and

⁶⁷ Tendler's lecture was given during the Nordic researcher training course on 'The political economy of local change: emerging relations between civil society and local governments in the south'. Espoo, Finland, May 27th-31st 1997. Tendler explains the lack of attention to the other half of the lesson by the almost religious belief in self-interest as an explanation of human behaviour and an overly focus by the development literature on bad performance in developing countries (Tendler, 1997 p. 2-5). Grindle touches on the same problem when she points out that "focus on the pathologies of development can blind researchers to situations which do not conform to expectations about inefficiency, ineffectiveness, unresponsiveness, rent-seeking, and predation" (Grindle, 1997b p. 483).

qualitative aspects of services provided. Based on the literature on agricultural extension and interviews with farmers in the Sikasso region, it is proposed that questions to clients to assess quantitative dimensions of extension services regard the *frequency* of contact between agencies and their clients and the *reliability* of the services, i.e. whether the services are available when they are needed. Qualitative dimensions of extension services regard the *usefulness* of the assistance provided and *the character of personal relations* between extension agents and clients (e.g. is advice given in the form of orders by agents feeling superior to farmers or based on a dialogue with farmers).

3.3. The impact of the environment on organisational performance

Grindle and Hilderbrand have proposed a framework for the analysis of the influence of various environmental factors on the performance of public sector organisations in developing countries. They argue that in developing countries it is more likely that organisations will be products of their environments than masters of their own fates and add that these environments are rarely benign. Therefore, poorly performing officials and organisations may only be symptoms of dysfunctions rooted more deeply in political, social and economic contexts. The framework is meant to guide the assessment of how and to what extent various environmental factors influence organisational performance by identifying five dimensions, and correspondingly, five levels of analysis which affect the ability to perform appropriate tasks effectively, efficiently and sustainably (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 445-448; Grindle, 1997a p. 11; Grindle, 1997b p. 483).

The five dimensions include:

- 1) the *action environment* (the rate and structure of economic growth, the degree of political stability and legitimacy and the human resource profile of a country⁶⁸)
- 2) the *institutional context of the public sector* (e.g. rules and regulations concerning recruitment procedures, budgetary support and management practices⁶⁹)
- 3) the *task network* (interaction among different organisations involved in accomplishing related tasks, between central administration and lower administrative levels and between designers and implementers of plans)
- 4) the *organisation* (structures, processes, management styles, the strength and orientation of organisation culture) and
- 5) *human resources* (managerial, professional and technical talent and the appropriateness of training to existing needs).

⁶⁸ The action environment includes *economic factors* such as growth, labour market, international economic relationships and conditions, private sector and development assistance, *political factors* such as leadership support, mobilisation of civil society, stability, legitimacy and political institutions and *social factors* such as overall human resource development, social conflict, class structures and organisation of civil society (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 446).

⁶⁹ The institutional context of the public sector includes factors such as public service rules and regulations, budgetary support, role of the state, management practices and formal and informal power relationships (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 446).

Based on research carried out in six different countries⁷⁰, Grindle and Hilderbrand conclude that constraints either in the action environment or in the institutional context of the public sector may be so detrimental to public sector performance that little can be done unless these problems are first addressed. Thus, an action environment characterised by economic stagnation, low levels of human resource development and extensive social conflict may cause a situation where the potential for effective public sector performance is virtually nonexistent, no matter what interventions are being made at other levels⁷¹. Similarly, a situation of low budgetary support, continual public sector cutbacks, inadequate recruitment procedures and few rewards for good performance may be so constraining that remedies introduced at the inter-organisational, organisational or human resource level may not produce any improvements⁷² (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 448-453).

These findings confirm what other studies have documented in terms of the impact of economic and political crisis and structural adjustment policies on public sector capacity, and despite the lack of attention to such factors in many specific analyses, they may seem obvious⁷³. The really interesting finding is, however, that in situations where the action environment and the institutional context of the public sector, although far from ideal, are *not completely dysfunctional* to development, organisation culture and the provision of people with meaningful jobs can compensate for constraints rooted in more general problems. While the implications of this will be discussed in further details below, it is important to notice that Grindle and Hilderbrand do not use this conclusion to return to a closed perspective where organisation-internal factors are highlighted at the expense of environmental factors. On the contrary, they stress the importance of external factors for the creation of a sense of organisational mission and meaningful work. Thus, they mention that the participation of clients in service-oriented organisations can help reinforce a sense of mission and commitment to it, and pressure and feedback from clients can help organisations to provide timely and effective service and thereby increase the feeling of job satisfaction (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 457-461).

The contribution by Grindle and Hilderbrand draws on many different theoretical traditions⁷⁴ and offers a framework with an extensive range of prioritised factors applicable to an empirical analysis. Its contextual focus makes it particularly useful to an analysis that takes the theoretical point of departure in the interactive approach as it considers both societal and state-internal

⁷⁰ Bolivia, the Central African Republic, Ghana, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. The country studies included a total of 29 organisational case studies.

⁷¹ The Central African Republic is mentioned as an example of a country where the action environment is particularly dysfunctional to development.

⁷² Tanzania is mentioned as an example of a country where the public sector institutional context is a serious constraint to improvement of public sector performance.

⁷³ Grindle herself has contributed to the discussion about the relationship between general economic and political conditions and the capacity of the state in developing countries to perform its core roles. Based on thorough analyses of Kenya and Mexico, she concludes that the combined impact of economic and political crisis in the 1980s undermined institutional, administrative and political capacities of the state, whereas it often increased their technical capacity in macroeconomic analysis and management (Grindle, 1996).

⁷⁴ It draws i.a. on elements of resource dependency theory, network theories, theories about organisation culture, and theories about workers' motivation.

factors, while countering the tendency of authors applying the interactive approach to lack reflection on the influence of structural conditions on social actors⁷⁵.

Considering the view of the state, however, as both an entity depending on a certain amount of legitimacy in the eyes of societal groups and a complex structure constituted by many different parts, there is a risk that the model neglects the discursive dimension of the state as a symbolic totality. Inspiration to deal with this dimension can be gained from institutional theory which approaches the study of linkages between an organisation and its environment from a perspective not very different from the one applied by Grindle and Hilderbrand⁷⁶. Institutional theory, however, singles out *legitimacy* as the core variable decisive to organisational performance (Hatch, 1997 p. 83-87). Thus, Uphoff points at *normative linkages* between an organisation and groups throughout the public as the most critical relationship because they provide its generalised legitimacy. According to Uphoff, possessing more legitimacy means that an organisation will be more fully, reliably and cheaply complied with by the general public. Hence, legitimacy enhances performance. Legitimacy also reflects its past and present performance as the usefulness of its services and products are important to the assessment of the organisation by the public. In situations where legitimacy does not exist, an organisation is complied with only for purely utilitarian reasons but not because of any normative obligations. This is an extremely fragile situation that threatens the existence of the organisation (Uphoff, 1994b p.207-211).

For government organisations the lack of legitimacy is particularly detrimental to their continued existence. Government organisations speak in the name of the state and can claim that their actions are ipso facto legitimate because they have a public charter and can invoke public authority to enforce decisions. The state, however, may lack legitimacy, either for a minority (ethnic groups, political factions) or for the majority of the population, and the individual state organisation itself may not be considered of any use by the public. A government organisation, thus, cannot take legitimacy for granted. In a heterogeneous society it is difficult to satisfy all societal norms and expectations as they are unlikely to be mutually consistent, but a certain degree of consensus is likely to provide an organisation with the cognitive and ethical basis necessary to operate. In extreme situations where any degree of consensus is lacking and the state possesses no legitimacy at all, organisations will exist as empty structures virtually unable to operate⁷⁷ (Uphoff, 1994b p. 208-209).

While Grindle and Hilderbrand provide an appropriate framework for a structural analysis of factors affecting the performance of particular government organisations, the contribution by Uphoff adds the discursive dimension by pointing out that a government organisation cannot be

⁷⁵ The focus on structures, i.e. sites of action, rather than on processes and actors has made actor-oriented researchers criticise the framework for being too static to provide an understanding of organisational changes, e.g. in the form of capacity-building initiatives. Thus, James Trostle et al. have suggested an alternative framework which focusses on actors, actions and events (Trostle et al., 1997 p. 63-71). Drawing on the above discussions about structure and agency, it is found that the framework by Grindle and Hilderbrand has considerably more to offer.

⁷⁶ Norman Uphoff distinguishes between four main types of linkages between an organisation and its environment: 1) *enabling linkages* (relationships through which the organisation obtains financial, personnel resources, information and authority), 2) *functional linkages* (reciprocal exchange relationships with key groups), 3) *diffuse linkages* (general relations with the public) and 4) *normative linkages* (emotional and intellectual connections between the organisation and groups that value the institution for its direct and indirect benefits).

⁷⁷ In Uphoff's terminology; organisations - structures of roles - will persist, while institutions are being dissolved. He mentions the disintegrated state of Somalia as an example of such a situation.

understood only as an organisation relating to a range of structurally-defined external and internal factors. Being part of the state, the performance of such organisations is very much affected by the legitimacy enjoyed not just by the organisation itself but by the state as such.

3.4. Organisation-specific factors influencing performance

Two of the elements in the model proposed by Grindle and Hilderbrand regard organisation-specific factors rather than the shared environment of many different organisations: *the organisation* (structures, processes, management styles, the strength and orientation of organisation culture) and *human resources* are issues which have been dealt with by many authors and from many different perspectives.

Traditionally the issue of work performance by employees, which Grindle and Hilderbrand relate mainly to work satisfaction, has been approached from a very different angle. Instead of discussing the work satisfaction perceived by workers at lower levels of the hierarchy, much of the literature has concentrated on how to control the self-serving behaviour of subordinate workers to insure that the interests of owners, external stakeholders or management are protected. The so-called *agency problem* is defined as the risk that agents (workers) will shirk unless their actions contribute directly to their own economic self-interest. *Agency theory* deals with the control strategies that can be applied by principals to reduce the problem. Most of the literature concentrates on three core elements of such strategies: *contracts* which specify expectations to performance and promise *rewards*, and *information* that allows principals to know whether agents are fulfilling the contracts agreed upon. If the output is difficult to measure, information can be provided by designing simple routine jobs allowing principals to observe the behaviour of agents and reward them based upon behaviour (the mechanical model, to be discussed below), or it can be provided by using advanced information systems to monitor more complex jobs (Hatch, 1997 p. 334-336).

With the growing interest in the importance of organisation cultures (Hatch, 1997 p. 202-220), it has been suggested that also cultural values, norms and expectations can be used as control systems. It is argued that socialisation of employees to a particular set of norms and values will result in an internalisation of control by members and ensure a high level of commitment even when they have to sacrifice some or all of their self-interests (Hatch, 1997 p. 337-241; Bakka & Fivelsdal, 1996 p. 136-145). Mintzberg, thus, describes organisation culture ('the system of ideology') as the glue that binds an organisation together and counteracts dividing forces. He gives various examples of specific means to support the system of ideology, including socialisation and indoctrination (Mintzberg, 1983 p. 156-158; Mintzberg, 1989 p. 272).

Newer contributions to the theories about how to tackle the agency problem combine the traditional focus on control and rewards with theories about the importance of organisational identification. Wade argues that agency theory needs to be supplemented by the concept of social capital in order to understand those features of the functioning of organisations which are not reducible to individual contracts (Wade, 1992 p. 53-54). And Leonard defines the problem as that of combining stimulation of motivation through incentives with an atmosphere of mutual trust

(Leonard, 1977 p. 118)⁷⁸. The revised agency theory focusses on four elements of special importance to organisational performance: 1) *authority*, 2) *rewards*, 3) *organisational identification* and 4) *peer pressure* (Simon, 1991 p. 30-43; Wade, 1995 p. 4- 5; Leonard, 1977 p. 23-24; Mintzberg, 1983 p. 141-162⁷⁹).

It is found that the insights of the revised agency theory and those of more recent contributions that focus on *work satisfaction* and *demand pressure* complement each other (Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1773-1774, 1781; Tendler, lecture given in Espoo, Finland, May 1997; Christoplos, 1996 p. 208-209; Grindle, 1997b p. 484-487; Lipsky, 1980 p. 210-211). They differ by their view of workers' discretion as either impeding or encouraging good performance. Instead of a priori assuming that reduced discretion is desirable, Tendler and Freedheim suggest to "start with unself-interested behaviour as the given, and then ask what allows it to thrive" (Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1783). Christoplos goes one step further and formulates the core issue as a question about 'how front-line agents (street-level bureaucrats) can develop trust' (Christoplos, lecture given at IDS, Roskilde, November 1996)⁸⁰. Several authors do not deny, however, that authority and rewards may be of importance to organisational performance but stress that this will happen only if the incentives are not general but designed to be performance- and results-oriented. Meritocratic recruitment and the granting of job security as a reward for good performance are mentioned as examples (Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1779-80; Grindle, 1997b p. 490-491).

When combining insights of the revised agency theory and those of more recent contributions, six elements appear to be of special importance to organisational performance:

- 1) *authority*
- 2) *rewards*
- 3) *organisational identification*
- 4) *peer pressure*
- 5) *work satisfaction*
- 6) *demand pressure*

⁷⁸ The contributions by Leonard and Wade are particularly relevant to the present study of extension organisations in Mali, as they discuss the issues in relation to public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs. Comparing the characteristics of channel irrigation patrollers in India and South Korea, Wade describes channel irrigation organisations as exposed to severe agency problems (Wade, 1995 p. 16). In his seminal work on an agricultural extension organisation in Kenya, Leonard has described the difficulties of monitoring tasks carried out by front-line extension staff (Leonard, 1977 p.67-74).

⁷⁹ Mintzberg adds to these factors the *power of professionals* and the *dimensions of internal political divisions* as two important sources of disintegration in organisations that will reduce performance (Mintzberg, 1983 p. 163-217). Leonard has a thorough discussion about personal motivation of the individual employee as an additional factor. This will be dealt with in relation to the discussion about work satisfaction below (Leonard, 1977 p.107-108).

⁸⁰ The difference between this and Leonard's approach may seem negligible when he asks "How can we provide the worker with satisfaction which he will credit to his employer and which create on his mind social obligations that he can repay through increased productivity?" (Leonard, 1977 p. 116). In contrast to Tendler and Christoplos, however, Leonard takes his point of departure in the assumption about a self-interested worker who needs to be persuaded by incentives in the form of work satisfaction to perform. He suggests various ways the worker can avoid to credit work satisfaction to the employer and thereby avoid to increase performance. The recommendations resulting from the two approaches reveal their differences: while Leonard is looking for a particular organisational design that will allow work satisfaction to be translated into increased performance (called 'the intelligent mechanical model', see the discussion below), Tendler and Christoplos rely on the combination of increased motivation by workers who are granted more discretion and the monitoring of their work by external agents such as clients, local elites and others.

These elements are further explained and discussed in the following.

1) Authority

Henry Mintzberg defines authority as formal power or legitimate power and describes it as a source of coalition building in an organisation. In his view, control of behaviour by the management is not only desirable for the performance but a basic condition for avoiding the disintegration of an organisation. He discusses a range of different modes of using authority, including direct orders, the issuing of guidelines, review of decisions and resource allocation. Applying a contingency theory approach, however, he abstains from any generalisations about the relationship between the various modes and the performance of an organisation (Mintzberg, 1983 p. 140-144).

Wade and Leonard attempt such a generalisation when both discuss the considerable differences in performance obtained through, on the one hand, authoritarianism (or low-trust management) and, on the other hand, high-trust management. Authoritarianism implies that authority operates through control and application of sanctions. Low trust from supervisors only obliges employees to perform duties assigned to them in accordance with minimum standards. This tends to result in lack of responsibility and initiative by workers, and if the risk of detection is low, shirking is likely to be a serious problem (Wade, 1995 p. 28-29, Leonard, 1977 p. 87-88). Contrary to this, high-trust management and an ongoing close dialogue between supervisors and workers are likely to encourage good performance (Wade, 1995 p. 31; Leonard, 1977 p. 89-94, p. 118).

The findings by Leonard and Wade are confirmed by Grindle and Hilderbrand. In the study referred to above, they found that the majority of poorly performing organisations had managers whose style was characterised by top-down decision making, favouritism and lack of consultation. Among the better performing organisations, on the other hand, the majority was characterised by an open and non-hierarchical style of interaction between management and staff which encouraged participation, teamwork, flexibility and problem solving (Grindle, 1997b p. 486-487, p. 489-490).

2) Rewards

In traditional agency theory and still in the new institutional economics, rewards are seen as playing a crucial role to work performance. It is an extremely narrow perspective if it stands alone⁸¹, but most scholars agree that when discussing organisational performance, rewards cannot be disregarded altogether.

The most common rewards mentioned in the literature are salary and promotions which, when related to merit on the job, may constitute significant incentives to performance (Leonard, 1977 p. 118-123; Wade, 1995 p. 20-26; Simon, 1991 p. 33-34). The importance, however, is highly dependent on the context in which incentives are used. In industrialised countries it has become common to consider general working conditions, including salary, background factors which may

⁸¹ Wade notes that from the perspective of the new institutional economics, the wonder about street level bureaucrats is that they work at all (Wade, 1992 p. 51). A similar point is made by Grindle who describes the principal-agent model as far better at explaining why bureaucrats shirk than why some of them do not shirk (Grindle, 1997b p. 482).

cause general satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job. Such conditions, however, are not seen as determinants of the motivation for work. Factors motivating the performance rather refer to such characteristics as esteem, responsibility and the feeling of meaningfulness (Bakka & Fivelsdal, 1996 p. 158-173). Leonard argues that this may be different in developing countries where the need to satisfy basic material and security needs is usually more urgent. It is reasonable to assume that esteem and work satisfaction are important factors of motivation also in developing countries, but the issue of pay and advancement are likely to overshadow such factors (Leonard, 1977 p. 110-111).

The discussion by Grindle and Hilderbrand about five dimensions of public sector performance points to a useful solution to the question about material incentives (notably salary) versus immaterial factors of motivation. They agree with Leonard that salaries must be provided at a level which at least allows public employees to know that they will make enough money to live on. If salaries are below this level or are not regularly paid, this will seriously hamper their work performance and other factors will be unable to compensate for this. They do not agree, however, that material incentives in developing countries will always be more important than factors such as work satisfaction. Salaries even at a relatively low level may be considered satisfactory, considering the general context, and other factors of motivation will be decisive (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 452-453; Grindle, 1997b p. 486)⁸².

3) Organisational identification

When addressing the issue of organisational identification, scholars leave the specific terminology used for discussions of structures and interests and switch to rather misty descriptions of 'a mission-focussed mystique' (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 457), 'a sense of calling' (Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1773) and 'pride in work' (Simon, 1991 p. 34). Grindle has tried to approach the phenomenon by describing the perception by employees that they themselves and their organisation are unique. They tend to believe that they have been selected for their position because of their high level of competence and unique skills. Also included in the organisational mystique is a strong sense of service and a feeling among employees of belonging to an organisation which is contributing something 'good' to the country (Grindle, 1997b p. 489).

The intangibility of the phenomenon makes it difficult to explain exactly what encourages organisational identification, but a number of authors have pointed to conditions such as: widespread use of team work, limited wage differences between the top and the bottom of the hierarchy, issuing of prizes for good performance, use of radio and TV to inform about the importance of the organisation, recruitment and training of employees based on meritocratic selection, establishment of sports teams to compete against other organisations, and repeated statements by the management about the importance of the work carried out (Mintzberg, 1983 p. 156-158; Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 457-459; Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1773, p. 1778; Wade, 1995 p. 26, p. 32; Blunt, 1990 p. 310).

⁸² Leonard explicitly and Grindle and Hilderbrand implicitly relate to the theory about a hierarchy of human needs developed by Abraham Maslow. Ordering five basic needs in a hierarchy which reflects their importance ('prepotency'), Maslow begins by physiological needs such as food and sleep, which are followed by security needs, love needs, esteem needs and in the top of the hierarchy the need for self-actualisation. The basic idea of the hierarchy is that a satisfied need is not a motivator. Thus, when needs for food and security are satisfied, only the attempts to satisfy love needs, esteem needs and the need for self actualisation can generate motivation (Bakka & Fivelsdal, 1996 p. 161-163).

While management interest is obviously to evoke a general set of norms, it is commonplace in organisations that a person's organisational identification will shift with his or her position (Simon, 1991 p. 37-38). Studies have shown that employees in supervisory positions or possessing a certain amount of authority and responsibility, and employees with greater length of service will report higher levels of organisational trust than other employees (Carnevale & Wechsler, 1992 p. 475-480). This has made some of the critics of theories about culture as a controlling force point out that such theories tend to overlook the many internal contradictions and conflicts in organisations. By portraying an organisation as a homogeneous entity where all employees are pulling together for a common purpose, one misses the important point that not only one culture exists, but most organisations are characterised by the coexistence of many different subcultures. While the upper levels of an organisation are likely to be influenced - controlled - by an organisation culture induced by management, the strategy will be less efficient as an attempt to control workers at lower levels who have different interests and possibly different values and norms (Hatch, 1997 p. 225-229, p. 342).

The point about organisations as complex constructs with many different parts pulling in various directions is highly valid. The argument for the importance of an overall organisation culture is, however, that it may be possible to bridge the many internal differences by the generation of a feeling that an overall purpose - a common mission - is more important than the specific interests of groups and individuals. This issue will be dealt with in further details below in relation to the discussion about the importance of work satisfaction.

4) Peer pressure

Whereas arguments for the importance of organisation culture may seem to contradict the view of organisations as characterised by conflicts, theories about peer pressure are clearly based on such a view. Thus, Mintzberg sees peer pressure as resulting from conflicts among groups at different levels or links between members of the organisation and 'external influencers'. In his writings, peer pressure is considered part of the 'system of politics' which is a source of organisational disintegration, hence a destructive force that may threaten the survival of the organisation (Mintzberg, 1983 p. 180-181).

Leonard more or less follows the same line of argument when he notes that conflicts between management and subordinates resulting from authoritarianism, alienation, large physical distance and differences in life-styles may cause workers to limit their productivity by agreeing on the definition of 'a fair days' work'. He mentions a range of conditions which makes groups better able to control their output: cohesive groups who share common living and working conditions, small groups, and groups where the complexity of monitoring tasks is not too big are all more likely to engage in output restriction than large and heterogeneous groups. He acknowledges, however, that under certain conditions these characteristics may encourage groups to adopt the opposite strategy, i.e. to encourage staff to raise their levels of production. Thus, a strong friendship in a group may spill over into positive sentiments towards the work and lead to better performance. Also groups who are involved in decision-making processes governing their work and experience a certain discretion may encourage each other to increase productivity. Finally, providers of public services who live in close contact with their clients (such as some agricultural extension workers) may identify with their clients and try to improve performance in order to serve the communities (Leonard, 1977 p. 43-80).

Wade is much more explicit about peer pressure as a positive source of improving performance and discusses a range of means which can be used to support it. First of all, group cohesiveness can be encouraged by recruiting people who have shared experiences such as, e.g. having grown up in the same geographical area. As fast rotation seriously limits peer pressure, stable boundaries of a group can be ensured by avoiding rotation of staff out of the group. Individual rewards can be made dependant upon group rewards, and, as Leonard also suggests, the organisation can encourage close contact to clients (Wade, 1995 p. 5, p. 19, 24-36)

Whether peer pressure results in improved or reduced performance seems to depend upon a number of factors of which the general work satisfaction is one, while the degree of conflict with the management and the character of relations with clients are other (Leonard, 1977 p. 73-80; Wade, 1995 p. 32-36; Lipsky, 1980 p. 47).

Summing up the difference between the traditional agency theory and the various contributions to its revision discussed so far, the latter see organisation culture and peer pressure as positive factors which may improve organisational performance. They also pay more attention to the need not to hamper workers' motivation by low-trust management and to the context-dependency of material incentives such as salaries. The premisses of the contributions, however, still rest on the assumption that workers' discretion is a problem which has to be reduced⁸³.

5) Work satisfaction

When arguing for the importance of worker dedication to the performance of an organisation, Tandler draws on the literature on industrial performance and workplace transformation⁸⁴. In this literature greater worker discretion and autonomy, greater cooperation between workers and management and greater trust between workers and their customers are seen as desirable, because it increases worker dedication and thereby organisational performance. Although the research on these subjects refers mainly to manufacturing firms and to some extent to large service firms, Tandler has found the conclusions applicable also to public organisations in developing countries⁸⁵ (Tandler, 1997 p. 4-8, p. 169; Tandler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1771-1773). Christoplos refers to newer management literature on professional service organisations which focus on the relationship between customers and the front-line personnel who are in direct contact with them as a condition for success (Christoplos, 1997b p. 3; Peters, 1992 p. 11). This will be further discussed in the section on demand pressure below.

Their findings are supported by other studies of public sector organisations in industrialised countries. Based on an extensive study of public service workers in the USA, Michael Lipsky concludes that staff who control their work processes and who have good relationships to clients will experience basic work satisfaction and struggle to do a decent job even under adverse

⁸³ In the words of Wade: "This argument suggests that countries with weaker states than East Asia might improve the performance of canal irrigation systems by introducing technological changes in system design that reduce the discretion of staff and increase the incentives of farmers to intervene" (Wade, 1995 p. 40).

⁸⁴ Tandler refers to the literature as the IPWT literature (industrial performance and workplace transformation).

⁸⁵ In Brazil Tandler has carried out studies of public health programmes (Tandler & Freedheim, 1994), government-run extension services (Tandler, 1993a) and an extensive review of 22 World Bank supported integrated rural development projects (Tandler, 1993b).

circumstances⁸⁶ (Lipsky, 1980 p. 210-211). Staff facing too many conflicting objectives in their job and generally lack job satisfaction, on the other hand, are likely to reduce performance. This may happen by concentrating only on clients who are relatively easy to reach (and blame the lack of contact to others on the clients themselves)⁸⁷ or by adopting a mental exit option in the form of absenteeism, slowdowns, etc. (Lipsky, 1980 p. 143, p. 151-153). Also a study by David Carnevale and Barton Wechsler of trust in public sector organisations concludes that trust enables effective performance because it encourages the exchange of relevant information and determines whether team members are willing to allow others to influence their decisions and actions. The study found clear correspondence between, on the one hand, a large degree of discretion and the perception by employees of their jobs as enriched and, on the other hand, their organisational trust (Carnevale & Wechsler, 1992 p. 471, p. 475-480).

Only few studies of public sector performance in developing countries have taken up the question of work satisfaction. In addition to the many other aspects dealt with in Leonard's study on government-run extension in Kenya, it represents one of a few examples of thorough examination of this issue. Leonard finds a clear relationship between job satisfaction and commitment⁸⁸ and points out that the most important determinant of job satisfaction is the degree to which the characteristics of the work conform to the individual's image of himself in his working role. Or in other words: "is the job worthy of him or is it beneath him?" (Leonard, 1977 p. 107-108). Among other factors contributing to work satisfaction for extension workers, he mentions their possibility of drawing a salary while farming and staying with the family instead of migrating, the security of tenure, their relatively high status in rural areas and the satisfaction of working with farmers who are responsive and quick to understand (Leonard, 1977 p. 108-110). The considerations about the worthiness of the job in the perception of the employee leads Leonard to an extensive discussion about higher education and training as factors that may decrease the meaningfulness of a job, and consequently the performance, if employees perceive of themselves as overqualified for their positions (Leonard, 1977 p. 102-128).

Grindle and Hilderbrand's study on public sector performance in developing countries also takes up overeducation as a serious constraint to the perception of meaningfulness. They agree with Leonard that professionals are very sensitive to whether their jobs are meaningful and appropriate to their level of training. To the extent employees believe that they are using their talents to accomplish tasks which they consider meaningful, they are more motivated to contribute to the organisation. The 'problem' of human resources, they argue, is therefore not mainly a problem of insufficient education and training but more a problem of *utilisation* (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 459-460).

A focus on meaningfulness helps to explain the apparent contradiction between considering an organisation a complex structure characterised by conflicts and the view of organisation culture

⁸⁶ Although Lipsky's study on the so-called street-level bureaucrats dates almost 20 years back and is based on public service workers in the USA, many of his observations are highly relevant for studies of present-day problems in African state organisations.

⁸⁷ In the late 1980s, Niels Röling noted that at that time nearly all agricultural extension service in the world operated a progressive farmers strategy implying that they concentrated on the 10% of farmers who were easiest to reach (Röling, 1988 p. 66-69).

⁸⁸ Although the relationship is found to be clear, Leonard argues that there is no simple and causal link between job satisfaction and dedication.

as a phenomenon that binds together the different parts. Grindle and Hilderbrand argue that perceived meaningfulness of a job may cause employees at the lower levels of the hierarchy to struggle against the odds to perform the best they can. It is obviously much easier to find inspiration to perform well in pleasant and convenient offices, but examples were found in their study of workers in poor premises who found their job so rewarding that it even made them contribute to the upgrading of their physical environment (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 456-458). Like Tendler and Christoplos they point to a large discretion of workers, organisational flexibility, use of teamwork, provision of incentives for goal-focussed performance and a close contact to clients as factors contributing to the perceived meaningfulness of the work (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 455-459; Grindle, 1997b p. 487-488).

6) Demand pressure

As it has already been mentioned, demand pressure from people outside the organisation is considered an important aspect both of workers' job satisfaction and of keeping a certain check on their performance (Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1773-1774; Wade, 1995 p. 34-39; Lipsky, 1980 p. 9-11). Especially in the design of agricultural programmes a supply-side approach has traditionally been pursued, but Tendler finds that clients as well as local elites, national governments, other public agencies and donors may be important demanders driving for example research and extension to do better (Tendler, 1993 p. 1568). She mentions both the dramatic example of farmers in Brazil who invaded a research station to demand a more relevant research agenda and the example of less spectacular demands by local and regional actors for a concentrated effort to combat a spreading crop disease (Tendler, 1993 p. 1573-1577). Pressures may be communicated to an organisation through many different channels but organised pressures in the form of farmers' or client organisations are particularly forceful. Tendler gives the example of producer organisations which have been supported by government agencies to which they have had a contractual relationship. Strengthening capacity of such groups has gradually allowed them to raise demands that have led to striking improvements in the performance of support agencies themselves because of continuous requirements by producers for more flexible and customised services (Tendler, 1997 p. 152-153; see also Lipsky, 1980 p. 46, p. 119).

External pressure in the form of specific demands, however, is not all. Authors dealing with the issue of relations among members of an organisation, notably street-level bureaucrats, and their clients, all stress the crucial role of *trust* to the performance of the organisation. Work satisfaction is considerably increased by expressions of gratitude by clients⁸⁹. This enhances performance, and as the usefulness of services is decisive to the legitimacy of an organisation in the eyes of the clients, improved performance is likely to be reflected in increased legitimacy which again may

⁸⁹ Tendler gives the example of local research stations which are more eager than large donor-funded stations to do applied work because their prestige and status come from making things work where they live (Tendler, 1993 p. 1575). Another example is given by a German-funded project in Zimbabwe introducing the adoption of participatory extension approaches. The project found that the experience of working together with farmers as equals increased the motivation and dedication of extension workers. Most extension workers grew up in farming families, but their formal education and the low value of farmers in society made them look down upon farmers. The new way of working together with farmers increased their own cultural identity and pride (Hagmann et al., 1997 p. 12; Hagmann et al., 1998 p. 47).

contribute to increased performance⁹⁰ (Tendler, 1997 p. 6; Christoplos, 1997a p. 11; Christoplos, 1997b p. 18; Wade, 1995 p. 34-38; Lipsky, 1980 p. 59; Uphoff, 1994b p. 209-213).

While none of the authors attempt to present a definition of trust but seem to use the notion interchangeably with 'legitimacy', the definition used in the following is inspired by the definition of legitimacy by Uphoff referred to above. *Trust is considered an expression of a relation where the parties are collaborating because of normative obligations rather than for purely utilitarian reasons.*

As trust often makes workers spontaneously take up a large number of new tasks, the work is very difficult to supervise. In a health programme in Brazil, Tendler and Freedheim found that workers sometimes assisted mothers alone with young children with cooking, cleaning and childcare. This help was crucial to gaining the trust of the mothers as well as that of the community in general, but agency theory would clearly see this as an exposure to self-serving behaviour⁹¹. Tendler and Freedheim point to two factors which might counterbalance such a risk: one is monitoring from the community that can be encouraged to report on all violations of rules. The other is simply workers embedding in a set of trust relations with clients (Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1773-74, p. 1783).

In cases where trust does not exist, public service workers have a wide range of possibilities of exercising control vis-à-vis their clients. Lipsky mentions that they are usually in a position to distribute benefits and sanctions and to give priority to certain favoured clients at the expense of others. They may decide to let clients wait in long queues, provide them only with the minimum service required or look for means to reduce the general service (geographically, by closing outreach services or otherwise). And they may withhold information or talk down to clients in a language which these do not understand (Lipsky, 1980 p. 60-65, p. 90-94, p. 102-104; see also Leonard, 1977 p. 81-82). The possibilities for clients to put pressure on bureaucracies to change such behaviour may be severely limited in cases where they have nowhere else to go for this service, where the workers do not depend on a positive feedback from clients for promotions, and where workers are generally alienated from clients by physical distance and large differences in life styles (Lipsky, 1980 p. 55-56, p. 76-80).

In such situations clients will usually try to find individual solutions to influence the organisation to their advantage. Leonard mentions the so-called 'squark factor' that implies that better-off and well-connected clients are more likely to complain about poor service to superiors in the organisation and therefore generally receive a better service than less powerful clients (Leonard, 1977 p.188-190). Clients who do not dare or do not have the possibility to complain are usually left with the possibility to pay for services supposed to be free of charge. Bribing rendered extension agents is sometimes referred to as 'privately contracted extension', and contrary to what may be expected, most authors agree that bribery may actually mitigate inequality in the

⁹⁰ The usefulness of services - and thereby the legitimacy of the organisation - can be increased also by improving the character of the service rendered. In the case of agricultural extension service, it has proved fruitful to combine extension messages with other services such as credit provision (Gustafson, 1994 p. 129-130; Christoplos, 1997a p. 7; Tendler, 1993 p. 1577; Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1782).

⁹¹ Gustafson gives a similar example from Assam where extension workers spent considerable time on other duties than conveying the extension messages and thereby gained confidence and fellow-feeling among farmers, even though it diminished the extension effort originally envisaged (Gustafson, 1994 p. 130).

distribution of benefits. Thus, a heavy socioeconomic bias of extension services, favouring elites, has been documented in many studies⁹², and the possibility for poorer farmers of paying for services which they otherwise would not get is believed to be to their advantage (Tendler, 1993 p. 1576-1577; Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996 p. 8-10, von der Lühe, 1991 p.253; Leonard, 1977 p.187-189).

The development of trust between front-line officers and clients can be actively encouraged by an organisation. An important means is to ensure that workers live in the area where they work. In case of extension workers, the identification with farmers can be further supported by encouraging extension workers to farm themselves (Wade, 1995 p. 18; Tendler & Freedheim, 1994 p. 1778). This happens in the Korean channel irrigation organisation where other measures include selection and reappointment of patrollers by village chiefs (before their approval by the organisation), information to farmers about organisation budgets, easy contact between farmers and patrollers, and involvement of farmers in maintenance activities. The Indian system, to which the Korean model is compared, represents exactly the inverse priorities, i.e. attempts to minimise identification between patroller and locality and maximise identification with the irrigation organisation: patrollers are selected by the organisation without any hearing of farmers, they cannot be posted in the jurisdiction where they were born, they are quickly rotated to new posts, and they must be full-time employees, hence cannot farm more than a marginal amount of land. Wade describes the different outcomes of the systems as a high-performing system in Korea and a poorly performing system in India, characterised by a large-scale and well-organised system of corruption⁹³ (Wade, 1995 p. 18-19, p. 34-38).

Christoplos takes a different point of departure when discussing how to encourage trust between service providers and clients. Instead of trying to adjust a hierarchical system to allow the development of closer relations between lower-level staff and clients, he suggests to change the basic premises for their encounter. Inspired by the newer literature on professional service organisations, notably the writings by Tom Peters (Peters, 1992), he argues for the need to bring service providers and clients together on a more equal basis. Hitherto service workers have either dictated clients an agenda or been told to uncritically serve clients according to their demands. While in the early 1980s the 'customer-first approach' revolutionised mainstream management thinking, newer management literature has abandoned this approach and has replaced it with a new model of more active discussion. According to Christoplos, there is a need also to replace the 'farmer-first approach' by a different model for encounters between extension workers and staff⁹⁴. Acknowledging the multiplicity of actors and institutions involved in rural development, there is a need to develop platforms for negotiation in which the various actors can meet to clarify

⁹² Based on his study of an extension agency in Kenya and with references to other studies on the distribution of extension efforts, Leonard concludes that the problem of a skewed distribution of benefits favouring better-off farmers at the expense of the poor is general to all agricultural extension services in the world, and only the degree varies (Leonard, 1977 p. 177).

⁹³ Wade has found that net illicit incomes at higher levels of the Indian irrigation organisation amounted to at least seven times annual salaries of employees (Wade, 1995 p. 35, see also Wade, 1982; Wade, 1985). This extent of corruption is far beyond the system of 'privately contracted extension' described by other authors as advantageous to poorer farmers.

⁹⁴ For an early and radical formulation of the 'farmer-first strategy', see Chambers & Ghildyal, 1985. Inspired by Moris (Moris, 1991), Christoplos argue that farmers do not want to hear about their indigenous knowledge. They already have it and if they are to invest their time and effort in working with an extension agent, they do not want him only to sit and listen (Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996 p. 42).

their interests and intentions. The extension service should have a central function in organising and ensuring participation also by the poor in such platforms (Peters, 1992 p. xxxi-xxxii; Christoplos, 1996 p. 200, p. 208; Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996 p. 35-36, p. 41-42).

The radical difference of Christoplos' approach lies in its abandonment of the search for a particular organisational set-up as the solution to the problem of organisational performance. Instead of striving for control of the behaviour of the various actors, it acknowledges the unpredictability of the organisational environment and points to the need for more discretion and negotiation fora for the many different actors⁹⁵. Christoplos supports his focus on change and unpredictability with reference to Tendler's findings about the importance of external shocks to the performance of an organisation. She has found that few agencies can be said to perform consistently well or consistently bad during a longer period. Agencies tend to perform well in turbulent situations where extraordinary demands are put on them, while performance is stagnating or declining in periods of stability. In her various studies of public organisations in Brazil she has found that for example a crop disease threatening a particular region may raise the performance of even mediocre organisations to excellence for a shorter period. The combined efforts of national and regional actors and of highly motivated extension agents who are struggling to save the economy of their region may result in a considerable increase in performance even though much of the organisation structure remains the same (Tendler, 1993a p. 1569-70, 72; Tendler, 1993b p. xx).

Combining characteristics

The list of six factors of particular importance to workers' performance has been compiled from several different contributions, and none of the authors referred to above mention them all. Leonard and Wade concentrate on authority, rewards, peer pressure and organisational identification. While acknowledging the importance of these factors, Tendler gives priority to demand pressure and work satisfaction. Lipsky deals with several aspects but concentrates on work satisfaction and trust in relations to clients. Finally, Christoplos goes rather far when he suggests that other organisational characteristics are of limited importance, if only trust exists in relations between front-line staff and clients.

Although particularly interested in the issue of work satisfaction, Grindle and Hilderbrand come closest to dealing with all of the factors⁹⁶, and they make the important point that the various factors tend to 'go together'. They have found that in better-performing organisations it is likely that several of the performance-encouraging factors are present, whereas poorly performing organisations are generally characterised by the absence of these factors (Grindle, 1997 p. 487-488).

⁹⁵ Christoplos has suggested the notion of 'sense-making' to describe the way an individual finds a way forward in an environment of conflicting pressures and opportunities where it is difficult to define a set of clear interests (Christoplos, 1997a p. 16). This way of thinking societal dynamics has gained inspiration from *chaos theory* which seeks to explain nonlinear dynamic processes. It deals with situations which are always potentially changeable and with outcomes likely to be discontinuous, not proportional to their causes (Uphoff, 1994c p. 220-221; Roche; Christoplos, lecture at IDS, Roskilde, November 1996). For an analysis inspired by chaos theory of the implications for NGOs of the increasingly unpredictable environment in which they work, see Roche, 1994.

⁹⁶ Although their headings differ from those used above, Grindle and Hilderbrand discuss the same factors with the exception of 'peer pressure' (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995; Grindle, 1997b).

This implies that it is not enough for an organisation to provide its staff with a large degree of discretion, if it totally lacks demand pressure. Instead of an increased performance the outcome is likely to be arbitrary decisions to the personal benefit of staff members themselves⁹⁷. A strong demand pressure in an understaffed and under-supplied organisation with low work satisfaction, on the other hand, may result in an even lower morale among employees (Grindle, 1997b p. 486).

While it seems useful to presume that all factors matter and are mutually reinforcing, it does not necessarily mean that they will all be equally important in all situations. Instead of a checklist of factors which have to be present in any well-performing organisation, the list should be considered a framework for empirical investigations which may generate interesting findings.

And when the framework is used in a study of government organisations, it should be recalled that it considers only a list of organisation-specific characteristics. Thus, conditioning factors relating to the role of the organisation as a part of the state and to the special character of societal forces with which they interact have not been taken into account.

3.5. The mechanical model

As the four agencies under study all have significant structural features of the mechanical model, it is relevant to use the insights referred to above to discuss the advantages and problems of this organisation form.

Originally described by Max Weber in his theory of bureaucracy as the most rational and effective way to structure an organisation⁹⁸ and later presented by contingency theory as one of two basic organisational configurations⁹⁹, the mechanical model still constitutes an important element in all attempts to present typologies of organisation forms (e.g. Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987 p.62-73; Mintzberg, 1989 p. 95-252). Thus, the model is common both in the industrial sector and in state organisations and it is widespread in both developing countries and in industrialised countries¹⁰⁰.

Characteristics of the mechanical model can be summarised as a high level of complexity, of formalisation and of centralisation. Management, authority and communication are structured

⁹⁷ This goes against the suggestion by Christoplos to start with increased discretion and see what comes out of it. He argues that if one is first looking for a structural model for rebuilding a collapsed bureaucracy, little can be expected to happen. If, however, one give people room to act, something positive may happen. It may not be sustainable, but it is a place to start (Christoplos, 1997b p. 3).

⁹⁸ In Weber's description of the ideal type bureaucracy, core characteristics included an office hierarchy based on clear lines of super- and subordination, appointment of candidates for office based on technical qualifications, promotions granted according to seniority or achievement, remuneration of staff by fixed salaries, clear separation of officials' public life from their private life, a general set of more or less stable rules governing the performance of staff and strict discipline and control in the conduct of the office (Hatch, 1987 p. 171; Harmon & Mayer, 1986 p. 68-71).

⁹⁹ The earliest contributions to contingency theory introduced the distinction between the mechanical and the organic model of organisation. While the mechanical model is characterised by a high level of complexity, of formalisation and of centralisation and is believed to be effective in stable environments, the organic model is a less specialised, less formalised and less hierarchical organisation form which better responds to rapidly changing environments (Hatch, 1997 p. 76-78; Scott, 1992 p.88-100; Bakka & Fivelsdal, 1996 p. 64-74).

¹⁰⁰ Arguing against Peters' view of hierarchical organisations as gradually dying out because of their inadequacy to the rapidly shifting conditions and demands of the post-industrial society, Blunt notes that "hierarchical forms of organisations are likely to remain part of the institutional landscape for some time to come" (Blunt, 1990 p. 302).

according to a hierarchy. Tasks are standardised and highly specialised, and individual tasks are carried out in relative isolation, while a coordination of tasks takes place at each hierarchical level. All roles and responsibilities are clearly described and usually defined by superiors. Hence, subordinate staff are left with little discretion. Authority is based on position, and loyalty towards superiors is demanded by all staff members. All information is concentrated in the top of the hierarchy, and there is a tendency to emphasise control (Hatch, 1997 p. 76-78, p. 169-170; Bakka & Fivelsdal, 1996 p. 69; Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987 p. 63-65; Mintzberg, 1989 p. 131-152).

The mechanical model is often described as an appropriate organisation form in situations when the organisational environment is simple and stable because of the efficiencies it can generate by using standard procedures to perform routine activities. It is most effective when the demand for its service or products is large and the level of skills which is needed to provide it is low. Thus, it tends to be associated with characteristics such as large size, capital intensity, employment of unskilled labour and use of machine technology. In addition to industrial mass production, the mechanical model is often used to produce certain services such as insurance and banking and public services such as post offices, railroads and telecommunication¹⁰¹. Mintzberg points out that organisations in the business of control (e.g. regulatory agencies, custodial prisons and police forces) often draw on this model, maybe because of its strong orientation towards control (Mintzberg, 1989 p. 137-138; Hatch, 1997 p. 76-77; Hage & Finsterbusch p. 64).

As a general risk of the mechanical model, Mintzberg notes that the obsession with control not just of the internal organisation but also of its environment may lead to a situation where it becomes increasingly immune to external influence - in other words it becomes more and more closed. State organisations in the former Soviet Union are mentioned as examples of such closed mechanical systems. Even if the model does not develop into a closed system, its insensitivity to customers and to individual or local needs may constitute a serious problem. Other general concerns include problems of communication and difficulties of coordination in a system based on narrow functionalism. There is a risk of excessive centralisation of power in the top, while the necessary knowledge is often in the bottom from where it reaches the top only with difficulties and considerable losses on its way through the many hierarchical levels¹⁰² (Mintzberg, 1989 p. 138-148; Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987 p.64).

Drawing on the above discussions, one may add that low-trust management systems are generally likely to result in poor performance. The very limited discretion of subordinate staff and their limited contact to clients may further add to this problem by reducing the meaningfulness of their work. Insensitivity to demand pressures implies that they lack the urge to improve services to become more flexible and customised. This may have fatal consequences for service quality.

¹⁰¹ General Motors, McDonald's and the Swiss railroad are mentioned as typical examples of the mechanical model (Mintzberg, 1989 p. 131).

¹⁰² As an example of the loss of information in hierarchically structured organisations, Røling mentions a study from Nepal which found that agricultural extension officers only recalled 34% of the information they had been given on extension messages. Junior technicians trained by agricultural extension officers recalled 26% of the original message, the village agricultural assistant recalled 20%, contact farmers taught by village agricultural assistant recalled 13% and follower farmers taught by contact farmers recalled only 7% of the original message (Røling, 1988 p. 113-114). For a further discussion, see also Leonard, 1977 p. 138, p. 155, p. 162.

When the model is applied to public service organisations, these problems are believed to be even larger. Orientation towards control usually means that quantitative performance criteria are preferred to other goals which are more difficult to measure such as good service, satisfied customers and pride in work. There is a considerable risk that the organisation becomes “at best, socially unresponsive, at worst, socially irresponsible” because measurable (economic) goals are favoured to intangible social ones (Mintzberg, 1989 p. 169-171¹⁰³). The discussion above about possible consequences of lack of trust between street-level bureaucrats and their clients supports these reservations. When denied a certain discretion and discouraged from developing relations of trust to clients, public service workers are likely to use their power to distribute benefits and sanctions to give priority to certain favoured clients at the expense of others. The cases presented by Leonard and Wade suggest that the resulting socioeconomic bias may be countered by disfavoured clients by corrupting the staff.

The application of the mechanical model to service-providing state organisations in developing countries is considered particularly problematic. The implicit assumption in the model about the possibilities for linear planning has little to do with African realities, and the model lacks the flexibility necessary to respond to the complex and rapidly changing conditions characterising these settings¹⁰⁴ (Moris, 1991 p. 33). Tandler’s findings about the impact of external shocks on organisational performance show that stability is not only unlikely to prevail, but it may also not be desirable.

The World Bank-promoted Training&Visit extension system (T&V system)¹⁰⁵ has often been discussed as the ultimate example of the mechanical model and a heated debate over its merits and demerits reflects a more profound disagreement about the usefulness of the mechanical model. Thus, Jerald Hage and Kurt Finsterbusch advocate the model on the grounds that in developing countries many mechanical organisations would often perform better if they were made more mechanical. Their argument is that many state organisations in developing countries lack a clear-cut system of records, supervision, job descriptions and other managerial tools which could counter the negative impact of the patrimonial relations penetrating the organisations. Extension organisations in areas where a technology package has to be delivered to many farmers over a wide area are examples of the appropriateness of a such increased mechanical orientation¹⁰⁶ (Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987 p. 106- 113, p. 239-241).

¹⁰³ Although Mintzberg discusses the negative consequences of control orientation in relation to the so-called ‘diversified organisation’, it applies to his analysis of the mechanical model, too.

¹⁰⁴ As Jon Moris argues: “If African governments do decide to continue with publicly supported extension, it should be by means of a professional type of service delivery which puts highly trained staff into direct touch with farmers. The ‘machine bureaucracy’ model favoured by civil service agencies is *not* what Africa needs” (Moris, 1991 p. 33).

¹⁰⁵ The T&V system was developed by a World Bank advisor, David Benor, in the early 1970s and after a widespread application of the system in Asian countries, it was introduced to African countries from the mid-1980s. The T&V system consists of a unified extension service where all village extension workers (VEWs) are brought under a single line of command within a structure which permits supervision at all levels. VEWs follow a fixed programme of field visits overseen by supervisors who have an equally rigid schedule (Hulme, 1991 p. 219-224; Hulme, 1992; Venkatesan, 1993; Moris, 1991 p. 135-136; von der Lühe, 1998 p. 14).

¹⁰⁶ Hage and Finsterbusch describe the implementation of the Training and Visit model of agricultural extension in India as an example of a well-designed mechanical-bureaucratic organisation. They argue that clients are better served by a centralised and hierarchical organisation, characterised by simplified and formalised tasks, close supervision of extension agents who are allowed only limited discretion and control over what they do and how they do it (Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987 p. 106- 113, p. 239-241).

Surprisingly, Leonard follows the same line of argument when he concludes the analysis of the Kenyan extension organisation by characterising the society as under-bureaucratised. Despite the emphasis put in the analysis on motivations and means to encourage work satisfaction, he mentions as one of the virtues of the mechanical model that it does not depend on goal orientation which he considers rare to find among the field staff in Kenyan development agencies¹⁰⁷. His basic premiss is that extension is about disseminating technological innovations which are readily available from the research centres and which represent a profitable improvement in the way farming is done by the majority of Kenyan farmers. This involves a lot of routine tasks which can be mechanically structured to the great benefit of organisational performance. He ends up, however, by suggesting the need for an 'intelligent mechanical model', as he acknowledges the fruitfulness of integrating such aspects as flexibility, programming by negotiation and consultation in the setting of work tasks.

While also World Bank advisors at least until recently have unconditionally praised the appropriateness of the T&V extension system (e.g. Verkatesan, 1993)¹⁰⁸, the majority of other authors dealing with extension problems are highly sceptical to the usefulness of the mechanical model for extension purposes and particularly reject its applicability in an African context. Among the general arguments, Daniel Gustafson has pointed out that the "simple application of a standard technological package is rarely what extension is called on to do. It is the complexity, heterogeneity and unpredictability of agriculture that makes an extension service essential" (Gustafson, 1994 p. 125).

In addition to reservations regarding the lack of attention to motivation and work satisfaction of extension agents who are used as mere implementers of preconceived plans, a main argument against the system regards its lack of possibilities of letting extension be driven by problems defined by farmers. It is difficult for farmers to become involved in any kind of dialogue with extension agents conveying standard messages according to a rigid work schedule. Hence, the intended two-way linkage between farmers and extensionists is often weak. As a particular problem to the dialogue between farmers and extension agents it has been mentioned that the system neglects the potentially constructive role played by farmers' organisations. Other reservations against it regard its lack of attention to the need for collaboration among many different state agencies, its bias towards better-off farmers¹⁰⁹ and its priority to the communication of extension messages at the expense of the provision of a broader range of services, including also agricultural credits¹¹⁰ (Gustafson, 1994 p. 124-125; Gustafson, 1990 p. 201-208; Hulme,

¹⁰⁷ This seems to be diametrically opposed to his statement elsewhere in the book that the distinctive features of African behaviour derive from an essentially universal mode of response to the particularities of the African environment (Leonard, 1977 p. 231).

¹⁰⁸ In the 1990s the World Bank at the policy level has become more reserved about qualities of the T&V system, but new T&V-based projects and programmes have still been initiated in the field (Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996 p. 44). A large World Bank-funded T&V-based extension programme was initiated in 1994 in all regions in Mali except Sikasso.

¹⁰⁹ The T&V model implies that extension workers concentrate their efforts on selected contact farmers who then pass on recommendations to around ten follow farmers. As the methodology applied does not ensure that contact farmers represent a cross-section of their community, active commercially-oriented farmers are over-represented (Hulme, 1991 p.221; Moris, 1991 p. 139).

¹¹⁰ In addition to these problems, it has also been stressed that the T&V system is very expensive and supposes the availability of 'off-the-shelves-technologies' to be communicated to farmers (Moris, 1991 p. 136-137).

1991 p. 224-230; Hulme, 1992 p. 435- 444; von der Lüche, 1991 p. 248; von der Lüche, 1998 p. 15-17; Tendler, 1997 p. 139-140; Moris, 1991 p. 136-142).

In a rainfed African setting these problems are even more pronounced: a complex and unpredictable agro-ecological environment calls for much more flexibility and adjustment to local conditions than the mechanical model is able to provide. Farm and household decisions must constantly be adjusted to changing conditions, and a high socioeconomic heterogeneity at local level makes the application of standard solutions inappropriate (Hulme, 1991 p. 224- 230; Hulme, 1992 p. 441; von der Lüche, 1998 p. 16). As Christoplos points out “the field level realities of most agricultural service organisations in developing counties could be described as a parody of the organograms which have been designed to control them...there is an assumption that unpredictability can be addressed by more planning” (Christoplos, 1996 p. 200, p. 202).

While the massive criticism of the mechanical model in general and the T&V model in particular regards the models in their ‘pure’ form, many researchers stress that the principles are often modified somehow in practice to allow adjustment to the particularities of local conditions¹¹¹. Gustafson observes that those T&V programmes, which have moved beyond the mechanical stage of systematically delivering messages and have incorporated some degree of learning from farmers and from the experience of the extension agents, have sometimes induced real improvements (Gustafson, 1990 p. 201; Gustafson, 1994 p. 131-133). Others have found that even hierarchically organised and seemingly unresponsive state organisations have sometimes unintendedly increased the capacity of local farmers to put demands on the organisations. Thus, after years of extension activities producers may gradually obtain the technical knowledge necessary to challenge the top-down approach of the agency or even to take over some of the tasks of extension agents. Also the organisational experience of being included in state-controlled cooperatives and village associations may provide farmers with the strength to organise independently and change the relationship with the state organisations (Jacob & Delville, 1994 p. 9; Gentil, 1986 p. 260; Lachenmann, 1994 p. 75; Tendler, 1997 p. 152-153; James Bingen, personal communication Aug. 1996).

Conclusion

The disaggregation of the concept of the state, proposed by the interactive approach, is considered a very fruitful approach to the study of its interactions with societal forces. It directs the attention towards the particular pressures faced by street-level bureaucracies as compared to other groups in the state apparatus, and it opens for a distinction between the different agencies of the state. Thereby it provides some very useful entrance points both to the empirical analysis of the pressures faced by extension agents and to the analysis of the differences of performance among the four agencies.

The discussion about the ‘anthropology of the state’, however, concluded that the challenge of using a differentiated concept of the state is not to overemphasise state-internal differences at the expense of the concept of state-entity. There is a need to deal with the particularity of the state as both a multitude of different structures and as an abstract entity dependent on a certain amount

¹¹¹ The majority of African countries now apply a ‘modified T & V system’ where the principles of concentrating on contact farmers and on providing agricultural information only have been abandoned (Hulme, 1992 p. 439).

of legitimacy in the eyes of the population. Thus, the state is also a discursive construct resulting from a combination of people's encounters with local-level bureaucracies (such as e.g. extension workers) and their more general image of the state. Both perspectives have to be present in an empirical analysis. In the operationalisation of the 'anthropology of the state' by use of organisation theory it has been attempted to keep this understanding of the state in mind by drawing on Uphoff's point about legitimacy being the core condition for performance.

Organisation theories reviewed have taken the 'anthropology of the state' considerably beyond the sketchy framework suggested by the interactive approach. General conditions for state performance as well as conditions for the performance of particular agencies have been spelled out in sufficient details to provide the tools necessary for an empirical analysis.

At the general level, Bratton's not very specific suggestion that there is a linkage between socio-economy and state capacity has been elucidated by the introduction by Grindle and Hilderbrand of 'the action environment', 'the public sector institutional context' and the 'task network' as important dimensions of state capacity. Their framework suggests a step-by-step investigation of factors affecting capacity, including 1) the general economic and political context, 2) the overall public sector situation with regard to funding and rules and regulations, 3) relations between the organisation and other parts of the state apparatus and non-state organisations, 4) characteristics of the organisation itself with regard to its management style and organisation culture, and 5) the perceived meaningfulness of the work by its employees.

The three first-mentioned elements are directly applicable to an analysis of the shared environment of the four Malian agencies under study. The framework makes it possible to distinguish between situations where, on the one hand, government agencies are inevitably doomed to poor performance due to macroeconomic trends, lack of legitimacy or fundamental institutional constraints and, on the other hand, situations where problems generated by general economic, political and institutional problems may be overcome at the level of individual government agencies.

Uphoff's emphasis on legitimacy as a core variable is an important supplement to the structure-oriented framework provided by Grindle and Hilderbrand. It calls attention to the fact that government agencies cannot be analysed as autonomous organisations which relate only to their own direct clients. The particularity of these agencies is that they are *both* individual organisations with proper structures, cultures and relations to external agents *and* part of a larger symbolic totality or legitimate power. Therefore, they do not depend only on the legitimacy gained through their own interactions with societal groups but also on the general legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the population.

Concerning the analysis of organisation-specific factors (4 and 5 in the framework proposed by Grindle and Hilderbrand), the discussion was broadened by drawing on a range of contributions to revised agency theory and on more recent theories about workers' performance focussing on work satisfaction and demand pressure. Six elements were found to be of special importance to organisational performance, namely 1) *authority*, 2) *rewards*, 3) *organisational identification*, 4) *peer pressure*, 5) *work satisfaction* and 6) *demand pressure*.

While all of these elements are considered important and all of them will be used to structure the analysis of the four agencies in chapter 9, contributions that deal with the importance of work satisfaction and demand pressure are found particularly interesting. The hypothesis that lack of discretion instead of too much discretion by street-level bureaucracies is the core problem is a refreshing contrast to the mainstream view of government agents as purely self-interested. As it was discussed in chapter 1, the organic state-oriented approach which since the mid-1980s has been highly influential in the general debate about the African state is based on such a view of government agents. It provides an extremely instrumentalist understanding of the functioning of state organisations as caught up in a game played only for the personal benefit of those involved. Viewed through these lenses, the suggestion that government agents should develop close relations to clients would appear to be very dangerous, as the problem at the outset is defined as too close personal relations between government staff and external groups.

As it has been discussed in chapter 1 and 2 on general state-society relations, the limitation of approaches that claims universality to the theory about self-interested individuals is their inability to understand how the capacity of the state may also be positively influenced by societal forces. Self-interested agents may be found in some situations, and it seems reasonable to accept that many empirical studies have found them in African state bureaucracies. It is a simplification, however, to expect to find them in all situations, regardless of the specific context. Under certain conditions societal forces may positively influence the state. Thus, the interactive approach argues that the pressure put on state organisations by engaging societal groups may contribute to an important strengthening of the state. Tendler specifies this by explaining how organisations which are open and responsive to demands from clients may develop the ability to adjust to new circumstances and thereby achieve a better performance.

The emphasis put on demand pressure as an important factor of influence on organisational performance, thereby, directly links to the interactive approach. The state is not an organisation which supplies a range of services that citizens may take or leave without influencing the state through their choices. The state offers a set of policies expressed through the actions of its various agencies to which societal groups respond and thereby change. Societal groups are not stable - and very far from homogeneous - but are constantly formed through interaction with the state and with other societal groups. Tendler's example of the strengthening of producer organisations through a contractual relationship with a government agency is a useful illustration.

Relating these conclusions to the mechanical model providing the core organisational features of the four agencies under study would suggest that very poor performance can be expected. The insensitivity of the model to demand pressures implies that the agencies are likely to lack the urge to improve their service to become more flexible and client-oriented. The very limited discretion of subordinate staff and their limited contact to clients may cause a feeling of meaninglessness among the staff which may have fatal consequences for the quality of service. The agencies could be expected to lack the flexibility necessary to respond to the complex and rapidly changing conditions characterising rural African settings in general and the recent social turbulence in the Sikasso region in particular. The extent to which these stipulations hold true will be investigated in chapter 9 where each of the agencies is examined.

CHAPTER 4. DISAGGREGATION OF SOCIETAL FORCES

Introduction

Like the notion of the state must be disaggregated and each of its parts be subject to further examination, there is a need to break down the concept of society “to understand how different elements pull in different directions”(Migdal, 1994 p.8). Social forces making up society embrace a wide variety of movements, networks, groups, cells and formal and informal organisations that differ substantially in size, scope, purpose, composition and resources (Chazan, 1994 p. 256; Migdal, 1994 p.20).

It is the purpose of the present chapter to suggest a number of approaches to the study of societal forces that can be applied to the analysis in chapter 11 of social forces that interact with and influence the four extension agencies in the Sikasso region.

In a proposed overview of the main layers of social structure Chazan et al. distinguish between a) *groups based on identity and affinity* such as kinship organisations, hometown associations and cultural organisations. b) *organisations based on principles of affiliation* such as professional and occupational groups, religious communities, student groups, women’s groups, and c) analytically constituted categories such as *ethnicity and class* (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 77).

Whereas in the 1970s and 1980s many scholars spent a considerable energy arguing for the preeminence of one of these organising principles in analyses of African social relations¹¹², it is a fundamental assumption by researchers applying the interactive approach that identities are coexisting rather than mutually exclusive. An individual member of a particular ethnic group is at the same time involved in various economic roles such as worker, professional, business person or administrator and therefore develops crosscutting ties of ethnic identity, economic class, religion, region etc. Identities are not stable but are constantly shaped and reshaped through the mutual interaction of societal forces and through their interaction with state actors. Or in other words: while all people have multiple identities, the importance of each of them depends on the situation (Chazan et al. 1992, p. 105-107). In this respect the approach is very similar to that of other scholars who have stressed the fluidity and multiplicity of African social relations (e.g. Bangura, 1994 p. 17-20; Berry, 1993 p.6, p.196; Bayart, 1993 p. 47-59, p.96-99; Chambers, 1997 p. 162-174).

Strategies of various groups tied together by common identities are affected by relations to the state but are not just a product of this interaction. Mutual interaction among societal groups constitutes important dynamics in the forming of identities and of the strategies applied both vis-à-vis other groups and in relations to the state.

¹¹² E.g. the discussion about class or ethnicity as the main social identity and the discussion about the relevance of analyses focussing on kinship organisations as a means to understand the patrimonial character of the state. For examples of analyses of African social relations that apply the class analysis as the major analytical tool, see Sklar, 1979 and Samoff, 1982. For applications of this approach to the Malian context, see Amselle, 1985; Bagayogo, 1987; Amselle & Gregoire, 1987; Meillassoux, 1970. For a thorough critique of approaching class and ethnicity as mutually exclusive categories, see Kasfir, 1976 p. 67-83.

While all social groups are seen as contributing more or less significantly to processes of change and persistence, depending on the context, there has been a particular interest among researchers in identifying forces with a more substantial impact on processes of political change, i.e. changing relations between state and society. Many contributions to this issue have moved beyond context-specific analyses of dominant identities and have attempted to establish general rules about the character of forces that have a particular political potential. While in some of the earlier works applying the interactive approach class and ethnicity are described as the most effective identities for demands on the state (Rothchild & Foley, 1988; Chazan et al., 1992), more recent debate has been almost entirely dominated by authors who have found inspiration in the renewed debate about the concept of civil society (e.g. Chazan, 1994; Azarya, 1994; Harbeson, 1994; Bratton, 1994b).

Contributions by researchers inspired by the interactive approach relate to an extensive theoretical debate about how to analyse societal forces. The brief review in the following of two main issues, namely the debate about the role of class and ethnicity and the more recent debate about the notion of civil society, therefore, compares and discusses the writings of the above-mentioned researchers to many other contributions.

4.1. Class and ethnicity

Authors concentrating on class and ethnicity as those identities most suited to make demands on the state explain political changes as the result of changes in social and economic structures. While insisting that class and ethnicity are changing, overlapping and sometimes intertwined categories¹¹³, their analyses focus on the growing lack of compatibility between ethnic and class structures and the prevailing mechanisms for channelling state-society relations (Chazan et al. 1992 p. 170-177). Since independence in many African countries, ethnic groups, defined as culturally based social organisations¹¹⁴, have tended to be a useful instrument for mobilising interests in competition with other groups for state resources. As discussed in chapter 2, many regime types have responded to the need for representation of key interests by co-opting ethnic representatives into the ruling elite i.a. by a widespread use of 'ethnic arithmetic' in appointments to the government and top-level positions in the state apparatus (Rothchild & Foley, 1988 p. 233-248). With ongoing socioeconomic changes new social forces emerge that are not amenable to control in the old ways. Among the new social cleavages mentioned, the growing urban-rural divide and the acceleration of rural social differentiation are highlighted as conflicts that may lead to overt political protests against existing regimes (Rothchild & Foley, 1988 p. 256-257)¹¹⁵.

¹¹³ Class and ethnicity are variable categories that are sometimes reinforcing each other, sometimes acting alone and sometimes working against each other, depending on the situation. By its capacities to allocate resources and set informal guidelines for relations between interest groups and the state, the state plays a key role in influencing the nature of class and ethnic identities (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 124-127). This understanding draws on works by e.g. Nelson Kasfir who states that "there are likely to be situations in which economic interests and ethnicity are both important factors - either reinforcing each other or conflicting with each other. In other cases, possibly involving the same individuals, one or the other may be the sole significant consideration. Any one of these four possibilities may be relevant to a particular case" (Kasfir, 1976 p. 76-77).

¹¹⁴ Ethnic groups united around the subjective perception of shared histories, traditions, beliefs, cultures and values mobilise its members for common political, economic and social purposes (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 106).

¹¹⁵ It is interesting to note that Gibbon describes the inverse trend from class formation to a strengthening of familialism and individualisation after the implementation of structural adjustment programmes since the mid-1980s (Gibbon, 1992 p. 22).

It is important to notice that the definition of class by authors applying the interactive approach differs significantly from the Marxian definition that inspired many of the class analyses of African countries produced in the 1970s and 1980s¹¹⁶. According to the authors, class identities may develop around conflicting interests and lifestyle resulting from such variables as income, occupation and education in so far as there is a conscious recognition of membership of a class by individuals with similar backgrounds. Thus, the rural population or part of the rural population may develop class interests vis-à-vis the urban elite, but this only happens if the rural population develops a conscious recognition of shared economic and political objectives (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 119).

4.2. The notion of 'civil society'

Since the 1980s the reintroduction of the concept of civil society has taken the debate on African state-society relations in many different directions. The debate has roots in classical philosophical thinking (e.g. Locke, Hobbes, de Tocqueville, Hegel) and in the more recent debate on political opposition in the former communist regimes in Eastern Europe and social movements in Latin America. Numerous interpretations of the concept and highly different opinions on its usefulness to an understanding of political changing processes have characterised the debate (Cohen & Arato, 1992; Gibbon, 1996; Young, 1994).

To mention but a few of the many definitions proposed in the debate: in its broadest definition civil society is simply seen as society at large: "what is not of the state becomes civil society" (Chabal, 1986 p. 15). In a still very broad definition, civil society is sometimes seen as the *organised* non-state sphere, i.e. *all organisations based on principles of affiliation* (e.g. Ngaware, 1997 p. 238). This definition is narrowed down by a number of scholars for whom civil society refers to a *particular type of civil associations*. For Gordon White the definition is: "an intermediate associational realm between state and family populated by organisations which are *separate from the state, enjoy autonomy* in relation to the state and are *formed voluntarily* by members of society to protect or advance their interests and values" (White, 1996 p. 5). For others the definition stresses the tendency of civil associations to *engage the state* rather than disengage from the state: "individuals, groups and associations...are part of civil society to the extent that they seek to define, generate support for, or promote changes in the basic working rules of the game by which social values are authoritatively allocated..."(Harbeson, 1994a p.4; see also Chazan, 1994 p.256-278). Finally, a very commonly applied definition draws on the Tocquevillian meaning of civil society to describe the assertion of *society against the state*: "civil society exists only in so far as there is a self-consciousness of its existence and of its opposition to the state" (Bayart, 1986 p. 117)¹¹⁷.

Whereas all these definitions may be characterised as definitions of 'actually existing civil societies' (White, 1996 p. 4), other scholars have attempted to reserve the notion to theoretical ideal type definitions. Drawing on Hegel's works, Bratton defines civil society as "*a public*

¹¹⁶ Class analyses produced in the 1970s and (early) 1980s were often inspired by Karl Marx' definition of a class by its relations to the means of production (a class 'an sich') and its class consciousness (a class 'für-sich') (Marx & Engels, 1976 p. 326-327).

¹¹⁷ For an application of this approach to an empirical analysis of social movements in Senegal, see Lachenmann, 1994 who identifies civil society by its logic different from the logic of the state (e.g. the persuasion of a different development model).

sphere of collective action between the family and the state that coexists in a complex relationship of creative tension with the state” (Bratton, 1994b p.75). Azarya also moves beyond empirical definitions by suggesting that civil society is *a non-state public realm defined by a set of norms* about collective responsibility to the common goods and the positive values of activities meant to safeguard it (Azarya, 1994 p.90-91).

Thus, civil society is defined both theoretically and empirically (White, 1996 p. 5) and both by its location (between the state and the citizen), by its functions (e.g. defending the interests of private memberships against the state), by its institutions (the associational scene) and by its logic (a set of ‘civic’ norms) (Hutchful, 1995 p. 56-57). Chazan summarises the application of the many different definitions in the African context as follows:

“...it has been conceptualized... as a necessary precondition for state consolidation, as the key brake on state power (and consequently in constant confrontation with the state), as a benign broker between state interests and local concerns, or as a medley of social institutions that interact with each other and with formal structures in ways that may either facilitate or impede governance and economic development” (Chazan, 1994 p. 255).

Authors writing along the lines of the interactive approach have applied several different definitions of civil society. But given their search for forces that have a more substantial impact on processes of political change, i.e. *forces that have a political project* in the sense of trying to influence fundamental relations between state and society, they all tend to consider it *a relational concept* (defined by its relations to the state) rather than a locational concept (defined by its non-state character)¹¹⁸ (Chandhoke, 1995 p. 39-40; Chazan, 1994 p. 256). Instead of a priori considering civil society ‘good’ for democracy, for economic development, for ‘good governance’, etc., most of these authors use the notion of civil society to identify forces that have a more substantial impact on processes of political change in its broadest sense, i.e. for better or for worse (Chazan, 1994 p. 255-256, see also Tendler, 1997 p. 156-157).

4.3. Criticism of theories about class and ethnicity and of theories about ‘civil society’

When comparing theories about important political forces to descriptions of empirical realities in the recent decade, scholars concentrating on class and ethnicity seem to find limited empirical backing in the majority of analyses of the various political movements that have contributed to initiation of democratisation processes in Africa. Thus, the suggestion by Rothchild and Foley that the growing urban-rural divide and the acceleration of rural social differentiation are likely to lead to overt political protests against existing regimes find only limited support in the scarce literature on peasant organisations’ role in recent political changing processes in Africa. Instead most empirical analyses concentrate on urban groups such as students’ movements and trade unions and religious groups such as e.g. the Catholic and the Protestant church when pointing out the organisations that have been in the forefront of confrontations with authoritarian regimes (e.g. Gyimah-Boadi, 1994; Fay, 1995; Tripp, 1992; Tengende, 1994).

¹¹⁸ Azarya makes an important exception as discussed in the following (Azarya, 1994).

This does not mean, however, that the value of theories that emphasize class and ethnicity as important identities for political mobilisation should be rejected altogether. It seems that the field is somehow empirically under-researched because mainstream research has concentrated on the concept of civil society. As documented by Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, political protests have often developed out of what initially began as demands by interest groups for improved material conditions. In many countries the first confrontations with authoritarian regimes took place when students protesting against cuts in government grants were joined by civil servants, workers and professionals who all suffered from economic austerity measures. When governments responded with repression and threats, the protests were joined by larger segments of the urban populations and protesters began to call for systemic political change (Bratton & de Walle, 1992 p. 31-35). If class identities are understood in the broad sense suggested by Chazan et al. as identities developed from differences in income, occupation and education, indeed such identities have been important to political mobilisation¹¹⁹.

An important theoretical reservation, however, can be made against both the focus on class and ethnicity and the concentration on civil society in its various definitions. Acknowledging the multiplicity of identities in Africa (and elsewhere), it is theoretically unsatisfactory to expect that certain identities will be of particular importance to processes of political change, regardless of the context. If political mobilisation is expected to take place only along class and ethnic lines, one risks overlooking other important social identities such as those emerging from religion, geography, gender, etc. Furthermore, one risks ignoring important social cleavages inside groups defined as social categories according to their class and ethnic identities, e.g. the considerable differences between farmers' potential for political action, depending on geographical and ecological factors, their particular relations to government agents, their experience with social organisation, etc.

A similar risk is associated with the overwhelming interest in civil society, notably in its associational form. As some authors have pointed out, the focus on visible political actions in the form of demonstrations, strikes, the emergence of a range of new associations, the emergence of a critical press, etc. risks ignoring the political economy aspects of particular forms of politics (Callaghy, 1994 p.233-234; Abrahamson, 1996). When applying very broad definitions of civil society and ascribing a common political potential to these broad categories, there is a serious risk of overlooking important social conflicts within civil society. Civil societies tend to be highly segmented and very often factional interests by elite groups have managed to dominate political actions at the expense of other interests (Chandhoke, 1995 p. 37-38; Gyimah-Boadi, 1996 p. 120-122; Rothchild & Lawson, 1994 p. 256; Tendler, 1997 p. 157-163). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the picture of a strong civil society emerging from below and striving for democracy finds relatively little empirical support in African countries. It has been argued that the observed rebirth of civil society only partly results from a process of organisation from below but is rather the result of a detachment of certain organisations from the state (Gibbon, 1993 p. 26). Others have stressed that civil society is generally too weak to contribute to a democratic consolidation as internal cleavages, co-optation by the government, lack of organisational capacity and financial autonomy limit its potential (Gyimah-Boadi, 1996; Gyimah-Boadi, 1994).

¹¹⁹ John Hutchful goes one step further and argues that the anchoring of the democratic movement in state-connected and middle-class elements may spark the view that civil society is really a form of class politics (Hutchful, 1995 p. 70-71).

The obvious problems related to the construction of general theories about particular important social identities make it relevant to consider the normative connotations of the various attempts. While limitations of the marxist focus on class identities have been extensively debated (e.g. Booth, 1985), a number of scholars have also called attention to what is referred to as the entirely normative arguments used in some analyses of civil society. In neoliberal uses of the notion concepts of freedom and autonomy from the state fit neatly into the agenda of rolling back the state, hence the notion of civil society is simply equated with capitalist market policies. In neo-populist approaches the concept is used to highlight the virtues of grass-roots non-governmental organisations (Gibbon, 1992 p. 11-15; White, 1996 p.3; Chandhoke, 1996 p. 39; Hutchful, 1995 p. 64-65). The problems are summarised by Crawford Young as an unarticulated major premise of the innate goodness of civil society as opposed to an increasingly negative portrait of the African state resulting in a picture of 'a satanic state juxtaposed to an angelic civil society' (Young, 1994 p. 47).

4.4. Contributions by the theories

Despite the limitations related to the 'substantive theory character' of the contributions discussed above, they still contribute valuable insights that can be used in the establishment of a more open conceptual framework meant to guide empirically-oriented research. Thus, it is useful in a particular empirical case to look for class and ethnic identities as potentially important for political mobilisation by testing the empirical relevance of theoretically constructed categories such as farmers, the state bureaucracy, the trade bourgeoisie, the Minyanka population, etc. It is also useful to look for socioeconomic cleavages inside groups sharing a common identity different from class and ethnic identities. Furthermore, it seems useful to approach the analysis of politically important non-class based social organisations (call it civil society or something else) by the application of a tangible and operational definition of possible important characteristics. Finally, some of the contributions to the civil society debate provide valuable inspiration to analysis of the norms guiding different social groups in their interaction with each other and the state, i.e. to the analysis of the kind of relations between state and society that are furthered by various groups.

In the following insights provided by some of the contributions are used to identify a series of questions that it will be worth pursuing in an empirical study of politically important social identities in a case such as the Malian. The framework established by no means aims at covering all the potentially relevant identities or all the questions it may be useful to ask. Based on what appears to be the heuristic utility of the tools they offer, a limited number of contributions have been selected to guide the empirical investigations.

'Civil society' as civil associations

To begin with the definition of politically important non-class-based social organisations, the suggestion by Chazan and Harbeson to define such organisations by their tendency to *engage the state* rather than disengage from the state avoid the serious pitfall of seeing state and society as antagonistic categories ('the more of the one, the less of the other'). The understanding by the interactive approach of the possibility of mutually supportive state-society relations (mutual engagement) opens the possibility that the existence of a strong civil society may strengthen the

state and vice versa (Chazan, 1992a; see also Grindle, 1996 p. 194; Tendler, 1997 p. 156-157; Evans, 1995 p. 249).

The definition of civil associations is very specific and tangible: in addition to the criteria of being associations that take part in rule-setting activities (Harbeson, 1994a p.4), Chazan mentions that civil associations express an aggregation of interests beyond the local level and thereby connect local-level forces to the state. Thus, civil associations do not include parochial associations that do not evince an interest beyond their immediate concerns, groups that do not have a concept of the state independent of their own aims and groups totally controlled by state agencies (Chazan, 1994 p.256 and p. 261). A basic precondition of the vitality of civil society is its autonomy from state structures and the availability of some independent resources (Chazan, 1994 p. 273).

In a rural context this definition has much in common with the definition of a 'peasant movement' (*mouvement paysan*), suggested by Dominique Gentil and Mari-Rose Mercoiret (Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 868). They mention five criteria:

1) independent thinking and a certain financial autonomy from the state and other external funding sources, 2) a set of well-defined objectives (as opposed to the multipurpose economic and social activities of most rural organisations), 3) interaction with government agencies or other societal actors (political parties, church organisations, other social movements) above the village level, 4) a certain size and economic and political power, and 5) a well-established internal organisation.

If 'interaction with government agencies above the village level' is replaced by 'the active attempt to influence decisions by government agencies', this definition comes very close to the one proposed by Chazan and Harbeson¹²⁰.

Civil society as a set of norms

Azarya has objected that this definition contains a theoretical (even tautological) problem as civil society is both defined and explained by its relations to the state: "if civil society is defined by its relationship to the state, all we can say is whether it exists or not or what its components are; we *cannot* say how it *affects* state-society relations" (Azarya, 1994 p.89). While this argument may be plausible, it seems overly ambitious and theoretically problematic to develop a concept that can both identify societal forces that particularly affect state-society relations and predict *how* these relations will be affected, regardless of the context. As explained by White, an approach that does not predict the way various associations interact with the state is more appropriate to the hybrid character of developing societies and allows for a more complete picture of the societal forces which obstruct as well as facilitate particular outcomes such as e.g. democratisation (White, 1996 p. 5).

Having said this, Azarya's attempt to approach the issue of norms guiding societal forces in their interaction with the state provides useful inspiration for specific analyses of *what* identified social

¹²⁰ Several other scholars dealing with rural organisations explicitly stress engagement of the state by an organisation as decisive to its political potential (Bratton, 1994a p. 238; Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 16-17; Ela, 1990 p. 84; Haubert, 1991 p. 735-736)

groups are fighting for. Azarya investigates the 'civility' of civil society and concludes that it is *a set of norms* about collective responsibility to the common goods and the positive values of activities meant to safeguard it¹²¹. Civil society, consequently, is *a non-state public realm defined by this set of norms*. Positive values of civility are contrasted by 'amoral familism' described as a set of norms that does not attribute any moral relevance to activities beyond the family level¹²² (Azarya, 1994 p. 90-92). Civil society is different from the state (a non-state realm) but legitimacy attributed to the public sphere has positive implications for the legitimacy of the state, hence a strong civil society may enhance the legitimacy of the state (Azarya, 1994 p. 96-97). Whereas civil society in this definition does not refer to a particular empirical part of society, the importance of the concept, according to Azarya, is its usefulness as a means to identify societal support for collective responsibility and action.

Hyden has attempted an operationalisation of an idea similar to Azarya's thinking in a study carried out in Tanzania. He differs from Azarya, however, by pointing out that not all forms of 'civility', or 'social capital' as he calls it¹²³, are equally important to the prospects for economic and social progress in a given country. Thus, a strong civil society in the broad definition suggested by Azarya may not necessarily enhance the legitimacy of the state. He distinguishes between three major forms of social capital, viz. '*civic competence*', '*political authority*' and '*social reciprocities*'. Civic competence, defined as the perceived ability to influence public policy (engage the state), is considerably more important than political authority, defined as the faith in the government to solve the major problems, and social reciprocities, defined as investments in social relations only at the local level. In the study the issue was approached by asking three broad sets of questions to various groups in the Tanzanian society (commercial farmers, peri-urban artisans and traders, village farmers and women: 1) what difference did they see themselves being able to make to the problems they faced? (civic competence) 2) what difference did they see government being able to make? (political authority) 3) what prospects did they perceive for cooperating with others to solve these problems? (social reciprocities)(Hyden, 1994).

In order to capture the important distinction between norms that encourage an engagement of the state and norms that would rather lead to strategies of disengagement, it may be useful to slightly reformulate the three questions so that the distinction is made between 1) what difference people see themselves being able to make by trying to influence the state (*civic competence*), 2) what difference they see government being able to make without their cooperation (*political authority*), 3) what difference they see themselves being able to make without the cooperation of the government (*social reciprocities at the community level*).

¹²¹ 'Civil' is used as an adjective and describes "those who wait in line for their turn and follow due process, having strongly internalized the credo 'not to do to others what they do not want done to themselves'" (Azarya, 1994 p. 90).

¹²² Azarya's acknowledges that these definitions may be subject to criticism for being problematic, and even ethnocentric, as civility in social conduct may be hard to expect in countries with acute shortages and extreme gaps between the levels and aspirations and accomplishments. He argues, however, that scarcity and deprivation are relative concepts, hence there is no necessary relation between absolute scarcity and civility (Azarya, 1994 p. 91).

¹²³ Social capital is defined as the norm that one should forgo self-interest and act in the interest of the community or collectivity of which one is a member (Hyden, 1994 p. 88).

Conclusion

Discussions in the present chapter of a range of contributions to theories about societal forces have pointed out the limitations of trying to establish general rules about the character of forces that have a particular political potential. While it is suggested that all social forces have a certain impact on relations between state and society through their mutual interaction and through their interaction with state representatives, the search for forces with a political project, i.e. forces that try to influence the fundamental relationship between state and society, may follow many different paths, depending on the context.

Three possible entrance points have been identified to an empirical analysis of societal forces with a particular political potential, namely

- analyses of class and ethnic relations.
- studies of the strategies and organisational characteristics of a particular part of the associational scene ('civil associations').
- studies of norms guiding the strategies of various social groups with a view to identify a particular set of 'civil norms'.

The various approaches supplement each other, but it does not make sense to try to link them in a coherent framework. Thus, class and ethnic identities prescribe neither specific norms nor specific actions. The actions and organisational characteristics of civil associations do not directly reflect a prevailing set of norms but are very much influenced by a range of constraints facing the organisations. And norms - in particular norms about relations between state and society - can be read neither from the combination of identities of specific social agents (class and ethnic identities, affiliation to certain associations with particular characteristics) nor from the actions undertaken by the agents but are much more complex constructs, as also suggested by Gupta's contribution to the understanding of perceptions of the state.

While it may be useful in a specific analysis to apply all three sets of perspectives, it should be stressed that they are far from exhaustive but only provide an indication of a limited number of possibly relevant issues. Social identities not explicitly considered by the three approaches include i.a. those defined by gender, generation, religious affiliation and locational identities (e.g. hometown groups) that all may be of a certain importance in a particular empirical context. Some of these may be identified when looking for 'civil associations', but to the extent they do not live up to the criteria of engaging the state, while being autonomous from the state, they will not be considered.

In the Malian case presented later, where a wide range of social cleavages is coexisting, the framework suggested will be used to analyse cleavages between poor and better-off farmers, to analyse the farmers' movement as a possible example of a 'civil association' and to look for a particular set of 'civil norms' among farmers in the region.

CONCLUSION TO THE THEORETICAL SECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

In the introduction the objective of the theoretical section was defined as the establishment of a conceptual framework to analyse the differences in interaction between government agencies and their clients as a result of different pressures being exerted upon the respective agencies.

Based on the hypothesis that these pressures are conditioned both by their characteristics as being part of the abstract state, by their specific organisational characteristics and by the character of the social forces with which they interact, three sets of research questions have guided the theoretical analysis:

- *how to understand overall state-society relations*
- *how to analyse factors conditioning the performance of government agencies and*
- *how to analyse societal forces interacting with and influencing government agencies.*

The first question about *how to understand overall state-society relations* has been dealt with in *chapter 1*, presenting a review of a range of contributions to the understanding of African state-society relations, and in *chapter 2*, providing a thorough investigation of the interactive approach. While theories reviewed in chapter 1 contain many valuable insights contributing to the understanding of state-society relations, their limitations are related to the 'substantive theory' character of many contributions. It is considered theoretically unsatisfactory to postulate general context-independent relations between the variables studied instead of establishing a more open conceptual framework that allows analysis of many different outcomes of state-society interaction.

The interactive approach is considered a fruitful attempt to overcome the many deficiencies of theories about state and society which do not sufficiently take account of their mutual interaction. Chapter 2 argues for an understanding of the notions of 'state' and 'society' as analytically separable but deeply interrelated concepts. Instead of a priori perceiving of state and society relations as dominated either by the state or by societal forces, it is considered fruitful to analyse their mutual interaction as being open to many different outcomes. The engagement-disengagement framework, developed by the interactive approach, is found to provide a useful tool to point out some main tendencies in the way society and state can relate to each other. Contrary to the limited perspective applied by theories that view state and society relations as a zero-sum game where one has to lose to let the other party win, the framework opens the possibility of a mutual engagement of state and society. It furthermore contributes to an understanding of how actions by one party may generate particular reactions by the other party.

Whereas many theories about state and society relations apply an agency perspective that make them concentrate on strategies pursued by various individuals and groups, it is considered useful to approach the analysis of both state and societal forces from a structure-oriented perspective. It is believed that a study based on structurally defined units of analysis has considerably more to offer than studies focussing on agents (whether individuals or groups) defined only by their strategies. This would avoid the tendency of many theories about the African state, particularly those dominating analyses of states in Francophone countries, to analyse state-internal dynamics as mainly determined by actions of individuals motivated only by personal interests.

The interactive approach does not entirely solve the last-mentioned problem, as many contributions tend to concentrate on political interpretations of strategies applied by state and societal actors, whereas there is a general lack of reflection about the influence of structural conditions on the 'choice' of strategies.

Another problem related to the interactive approach is that the conceptual framework which it offers is very sketchy and does not provide guidelines directly applicable to an empirical investigation. While the framework represents a constructive starting point for further theoretical analysis, it is considered necessary to fill it in by theories at a lower level of abstraction in order to generate appropriate research questions for empirical studies.

The operationalisation in *chapter 3* of the 'anthropology of the state' by use of organisation theory represents such an attempt to substantiate the framework. The chapter deals with the second of the three research questions to the theoretical analysis concerning *analysis of factors conditioning performance of government agencies*. Performance is defined as the ability of agencies to accommodate farmers' demands. In a particular study it is suggested that the issue of demand satisfaction is assessed by considering the frequency of contacts between the organisation and its clients, reliability of services, the usefulness of services as assessed by clients and personal relations between front-line staff and clients.

The disaggregation of the state concept suggested by the interactive approach is used as a point of departure for an analysis of how agency performance depends on a range of factors outside their own control related to their role as being part of the abstract state as well as on a range of organisation-internal factors. An approach suggested by Grindle and Hilderbrand is found to provide a very useful overall framework for the analysis. It makes it possible to distinguish between situations where, on the one hand, government agencies are inevitably doomed to poor performance due to macroeconomic trends, lack of legitimacy or budgetary constraints, and, on the other hand, situations where problems generated by general economic, political and institutional problems may be overcome at the level of individual agencies.

A combination of this approach to contributions dealing with organisation-specific factors conditioning performance (revised agency theory and more recent contributions concentrating on work satisfaction and demand pressure) suggests a step-by-step investigation of three sets of external factors and six organisation-specific factors. The external factors regard 'the action environment', 'the public sector institutional context' and the 'task network' of government agencies, while the six organisation-specific factors include 'authority', 'rewards', 'organisational identification', 'peer pressure', 'work satisfaction' and 'demand pressure'.

The framework is directly applicable to an empirical investigation such as the one of the four Malian agencies. By stressing the importance of demand pressures for organisational performance it links to the point by the interaction approach that both societal and state-internal factors have to be investigated in order to understand the interaction. It furthermore has the advantage that it counters the potential lack of consideration of structural factors by the interactive approach, as these are contained in 'the action environment' and 'the institutional context of the public sector'

The danger of applying the framework, however, is that it may lead to an analysis that overemphasises state-internal differences at the expense of the concept of state-entity. Uphoff's

emphasis on legitimacy as a core variable to analysis of performance is, therefore, considered an important supplement to the structure-oriented framework provided by Grindle and Hilderbrand. It calls attention to the fact that government agencies cannot be analysed as autonomous organisations that relate only to their own direct clients. The particularity of these agencies is that they are *both* individual organisations with proper structures, cultures and relations to external agents *and* part of a larger symbolic totality or legitimate power. Therefore, they do not depend only on legitimacy gained through their own interactions with societal groups but also on the general legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the population.

The last research question that concerns the *analysis of societal forces interacting with and influencing government agencies* has been dealt with in *chapter 4*. Based on discussions of a range of contributions to theories concentrating on class and ethnical relations and contributions to the debate about ‘civil society’, it is found to be a limitation that many of these aim at establishing general rules about the character of forces that have a particular political potential. While it is suggested that all social forces have a certain impact on relations between state and society through their mutual interaction and through their interaction with state representatives, the search for forces with a political project, i.e. forces that try to influence the fundamental relationship between state and society, may follow many different paths, depending on the context. Three possible entrance points are identified to an empirical analysis of societal forces with a particular political potential, namely 1) analyses of class and ethnic relations, 2) studies of strategies and organisational characteristics of a particular part of the associational scene (‘civil associations’), and 3) studies of norms guiding the strategies of various social groups with a view to identify a particular set of ‘civil’ norms.

The three approaches are considered complementary rather than mutually exclusive, and it should be stressed that they are not fully covering the analysis of all potentially important social forces. Together the approaches form a conceptual framework that generates a series of relevant questions to an empirical investigation, but they do not capture the multiplicity of identities that are at play in a particular empirical context.

Implications for the empirical analysis

It is the empirical objective of the dissertation to illustrate and further explore the theoretical framework sketched above by identifying explanations for the different experience of interaction between farmers in the Sikasso region and four extension agencies that all refer to the same government ministry.

The empirical objective is dealt with by studying pressures put on street-level bureaucracies in each of the four agencies and by assessing how these pressures affect the performance of the agencies (i.e. their ability to accommodate farmers’ demands).

Subsequently this analysis is put in perspective by an analysis of the character of the social forces in the Sikasso region that interact with and influence the four agencies.

The research questions derived from the theoretical framework are as follows:

- 1) Is the Malian action environment dysfunctional to development in the sense that government agencies are doomed to poor performance, regardless of their various organisation-specific characteristics?
- 2) Is the institutional context of the public sector in Mali dysfunctional to development?
- 3) What are the constraints imposed on government agencies by the task network?
- 4) For each of the four agencies under study: what are their characteristics with regard to the six performance-conditioning factors: authority, rewards, organisational identification, peer pressure, work satisfaction and demand pressure?
- 5) To what extent are the agencies able to accommodate farmers' demands?
- 6) What is the economic, social and political context of the Sikasso region?
- 7) What are the societal forces of particular importance in the Sikasso region?

The hypotheses guiding the empirical analysis can be formulated as follows:

- 1) in an empirical analysis of the interplay between extension agencies and farmers in the Sikasso region it is necessary to study both parties. Farmers cannot be seen as reacting only to initiatives taken by government agencies, but societal dynamics in the farming community (the mutual interaction of farmers) are important conditioning factors for their strategies. Similarly, government agencies respond to farmers' strategies to a certain extent but their ways of relating to farmers also very much depend on 'state-internal factors'.
- 2) As the state is both an abstract symbolic totality and a set of specific agencies, 'state-internal factors' are both factors shared by all parts of the state and organisation-specific factors of its individual agencies. Among the shared factors, the overall legitimacy of the state is the most important because the state, and thereby its agencies, depend on a certain amount of legitimacy in the eyes of the population in order to be sustained.
- 3) If the action environment and the institutional context of the public sector are not completely dysfunctional to development, organisational-internal factors in individual agencies to a certain extent can compensate for problems in the environment shared by the agencies.
- 4) Organisation-specific factors conditioning performance tend to reinforce each other and, therefore, it is likely that several of the performance-encouraging factors are present in better-performing organisations, whereas poorly performing organisations are generally characterised by the absence of most of the factors. This does not imply that all conditions need to be present for an organisation to perform well, but only that one factor cannot be expected to compensate for the lack of all the rest.
- 5) Although organisational structures cannot be considered the single most important factor for the performance of an organisation, the mechanical model, constituting the basic organisational feature of the four agencies under study, has a set of characteristics which can be expected to negatively influence their performance. Thus, the agencies can be expected to lack the flexibility necessary to respond to the complex and rapidly changing conditions characterising rural African settings in general and the recent social turbulence in the Sikasso region in particular.

6) Despite its limitations, the mechanical model can develop in many different directions. It is possible for the model to move beyond the mechanical stage by incorporating some degree of learning from clients and staff.

7) When analysing societal forces, many identities are at play, and it will only be possible to identify some of the politically most important by looking for 'civil associations', 'civil norms' and by carrying out an analysis of class and ethnical relations.

SECTION II: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

SECTION II: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

Guided by the hypotheses presented in the conclusion to the theoretical section, the structure of the empirical analysis is as follows:

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the ‘action environment’ of Malian government extension agencies, i.e. the degree of political stability and legitimacy of the government, the rate and structure of economic growth, and the human resource profile of the country.

The next step in the analysis of the shared environment of the agencies is an assessment in *chapter 6* of ‘the institutional context of the public sector’. This includes an assessment of the budgetary support which significantly influences the capacity of the public sector through its impact on salary levels and funding for other recurrent costs and capital investments. Other aspects regard the overall institutional set-up of the public sector, its management practices and existing structures of formal and informal influence.

Chapter 7 and *chapter 8* provide the background for analyses in chapter 9, 10 and 11 of the interaction between extension agencies and farmers in Sikasso. Chapter 7 gives a general description of the agro-ecological and socioeconomic setting in the Sikasso region, while chapter 8 deals with ongoing social and political changes in the region.

While the shared environment of the agencies is analysed in chapter 5 and 6, *chapter 9* contains a thorough analysis of organisational-specific factors which condition the performance of each of the four agencies. Based on the conceptual framework established in chapter 3, the analysis considers six main issues, viz. authority, rewards, organisational identification, peer pressure, work satisfaction by staff, and demand pressure. The chapter opens by a brief portrait of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment describing the ‘task network’ of the four agencies under study, i.e. relations of collaboration and coordination between the agencies.

Chapter 10 presents farmers’ assessment of services provided by the agencies. Based on a village survey in ten villages in the Sikasso region, the chapter assesses the degree of demand satisfaction by different groups of farmers. The analysis considers frequency and distribution of contacts between agencies and farmers, reliability of services, farmers’ assessment of the usefulness of services, and their description of personal relations between extension agents and their clients.

Providing a wider perspective on the analysis of agency performance, the final *chapter 11* deals with some of the societal forces interacting with and influencing the agencies working in the region. Based on the conceptual framework established in chapter 4, an analysis of the farmers’ movement SYCOV is carried out to see if it corresponds to the definition of a ‘civil association’. The existence of a particular set of ‘civil norms’ is discussed in light of answers obtained in the village survey. Finally, an analysis of possible class-based identities is carried out.

CHAPTER 5. MALI: THE ACTION ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

This chapter aims at assessing the so-called 'action environment' of Malian government extension agencies, i.e. the degree of political stability and legitimacy of the government, the rate and structure of economic growth, and the human resource profile of the country.

As discussed in chapter 3, the performance of public sector organisations can be significantly affected and even hampered by conditions in the action environment that individual agencies are unable to control or influence. The portrait in the following of the context shared by the four agencies provides the basis for assessing whether the action environment is so detrimental to public sector performance that the agencies are doomed to poor performance, regardless of their various organisation-specific characteristics and their relations to clients. According to Grindle and Hilderbrand, this will be the case if the action environment is characterised by extensive social conflict, economic stagnation and low levels of human resource development.

5.1. Degree of political stability and legitimacy of government

The democratic regime was newly established at the time when the study of the four agencies was carried out, and the present political situation is difficult to assess without understanding the heritage from former political regimes. Furthermore, memories in Africa reach many years back, and the legitimacy of a government will be strongly affected by the experience the population has had with the state in the past.

In the following, therefore, a brief review of former political regimes is given as the background for the analysis of the present political situation. The review serves at the same time as a historical background to the description in section 5.2. of the economic structure of the country.

Pre-colonial history¹²⁴

The area today known as Mali has been populated at least since 7000 BC. The establishment in 200 BC of the city Jenné on the bank of the river Niger marked the beginning of an era where the area played a prominent role not only in the West African region but also in relations among West Africa and Arabic and European countries. During a period of 2,100 years (until the French colonisation), the great empires and trading centres of the Mali area ranged among the most important on the African continent. The greatest and most famous empires were the Ghana

¹²⁴The brief historical overview of the years preceding the French colonisation is based on my articles in *Den Store Danske Encyklopædi* ("The Danish Encyclopaedia") on the Mali kingdom, the Ghana kingdom, the Kaarta kingdom, the Macina kingdom, the Segou kingdom, Mansa Musa, Jenné, Djenne, Gao, French Sudan, French West Africa (A.O.F), the Mali federation and Mali. Important references include Mann, 1996; McKissack 1994; Imperato, 1986; Gaudio, 1988; de Benoist, 1989; Joseph, 1974; Thompson & Adloff, 1958; Stride & Ifeka, 1971.

kingdom¹²⁵ (approx. 300-1255 AD), the Mali kingdom¹²⁶ (approx. 1235-1500 AD) and the Songhay kingdom¹²⁷ (approx. 800-1580 AD). They were all characterised by a highly centralised organisation, and their enormous wealth were based on extraction of gold, agricultural production on the banks of Niger and control of the cross-Saharan trade of gold, salt, slaves and commodities such as textiles. All the kingdoms were cultural and educational centres with close links to the Islamic world. Also more recent and smaller kingdoms such as the Kaarta kingdom (approx. 1650-1854), the Ségou kingdom (approx. 1600-1862), the Tukulor kingdom (approx. 1852-1889), the Macina kingdom (approx. 1810-1862) and the Kéné Dougou kingdom (approx. 1650-1898) played an important role in the West African region.

The colonial period (1890-1960)

The French colonisation in the end of the 19th century marked the end of the era of great empires and the beginning of a period where areas hitherto divided in competing kingdoms were made part of the same administrative unit. After several years of fighting the area in 1890 became a French colony under the name of French Sudan. Resistance against the French, however, continued for another 25 years, and only around 1916 had the French achieved an effective control of the area¹²⁸ (de Benoist, 1989 p.93-94).

In 1895 French Sudan became part of a federation including a total of eight French colonies called l'Afrique-Occidentale Française (A.O.F)¹²⁹. Under a Governor-General based in Dakar, each colony was headed by a governor. The system was highly centralised: only the Minister of Colonies in Paris could issue laws, and no governor had direct access to the Minister, except through the Governor-General in Dakar (Crowder 1978 p. 235-237). French Sudan was divided into 17 'cercles' headed by a French colonial official ('le commandant') and further subdivided into 'cantons' each headed by a 'chef de canton'. The chefs de canton, who were usually recruited among existing local leaders (e.g. members of royal families), were delegated such tasks as recruitment of forced labourers and soldiers, collection of taxes and report of miscreants to the

¹²⁵ The Ghana kingdom covered parts of the area today known as Mali, Mauritania and Guinea-Conakry. At the time of when it disintegrated in the mid-13th century, the capital, Koumbi Saleh, is believed to have had approx. 15,000 inhabitants, while the army counted 200,000 men.

¹²⁶ In its golden age during the 14th century AD, the Mali kingdom stretched from the coast of Senegal in the west, Mauritania in the north to part of today's Niger to the east, while also covering Guinea-Conakry, part of Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. By 1300 AD, the Mali kingdom was the prime exporter of gold to Europe and the Arabic world.

¹²⁷ The Songhay kingdom was the largest of them all. Under the rule of Askia Muhammad in the late 15th century, it covered parts of the countries now known as Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea-Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger and Nigeria

¹²⁸ In 1898 a major battle of Sikasso was caused by the refusal by the king of the Kéné Dougou kingdom to pay tax to the French and allow the installation of a French garrison. After a siege of two weeks, the Kéné Dougou kingdom had to surrender to the French as the last of the Malian kingdoms on 1 May 1898. In the Bélédougou area north of Bamako and the Dogon area there were several uprisings against the French in the beginning of the century. A Tuareg uprising against the French in February 1916 lasted about 3-4 months, before the French managed to suppress it (de Benoist, 1989 p. 94; Gaudio, 1988 p.85-92).

¹²⁹ In addition to French Sudan the members of A.O.F. were Senegal, Mauritania, French Guinea (Guinea-Conakry), Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey (Benin) and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso).

administration¹³⁰. Their generally unpopular tasks and their frequent abuse of power created a considerable discontent among village populations and seriously challenged the legitimacy of local chiefs¹³¹ (Crowder 1978 p. 216-219; Gellar et al., 1990 p. 9-10).

The main economic interest of the French in the colonies was to ensure the production of cash crops for export to France. To make the population produce such crops, all adult men and women were subject to heavy direct taxation. Until the introduction in the 1950s of cotton production for industrial processing¹³², seasonal migration to the more fertile coastal colonies, notably to Côte d'Ivoire, provided the only opportunity to earn cash for tax payment for the population in a poor and landlocked colony such as French Sudan. In addition to payment of taxes, the colonial regime mainly made itself felt by the population by the introduction of forced labour¹³³, recruitment to the French army during the wars¹³⁴, and compulsory crop cultivation (Crowder 1978 p. 237-238).

Until the second World War, French investments in physical and social infrastructure were negligible. As only areas that had potential for growing cash crops or had mineral resources were opened up by roads and railways, the resource-poor French Sudan was generally neglected. As to the financing of social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and safe water, the colonial regime only provided what could be paid for by taxes, customs and excise duties in the colony itself without transferring money from France. Only during the last decade of the colonial period, the French increased investments in the colonies by transferring substantial amounts from France (Crowder, 1978 p. 244-250; de Benoist, 1989 p. 98-99; Young, 1988 p. 45; Chazan et al. 1992 p. 235).

The socialist regime of Modibo Keita (1960-1968)

In June 1960 French Sudan obtained independence from France in a federation with Senegal. When the federation was soon after dissolved, the independent republic of Mali was proclaimed on 22 September 1960 (Gaudio, 1988 p. 101-198).

¹³⁰ Contributing to the controversy over differences and similarities between the British and French colonial systems, Kirk-Greene argues that the difference between the British direct rule and the French indirect rule was a matter of kind rather than degree. Although also the French system was based on the inclusion of local chiefs, the chiefs often had the role of a subordinate 'fonctionnaire' in the administrative structures and had lost their traditional functions of justice, policing and administering the government of their people. On the contrary, the British system was based on the safeguarding by District Officers of the position and authority of the chiefs (Kirk-Greene, 1995 p. 16-19). The dependence also by the French on local chiefs is illustrated by the limited number of French colonial officers in the vast territory of French Sudan. Thus, the total number of French administrators in the areas today known as Mali and Burkina Faso made up a mere 158 in 1905 and 281 in 1914 (de Benoist, 1989 p. 95).

¹³¹ According to Crowder, the French were much less concerned about legitimacy of local chiefs than the British. The appointment of a chief was often based on his ability to administer in the modern sense, particularly his ability to speak French. Hence, an old soldier or retired clerk would often be preferred to an inefficient, illiterate but legitimate chief (Crowder, 1978 p. 213-215).

¹³² A local cotton industry had existed in Mali for centuries before the French introduced the production of cotton for industrial processing.

¹³³ In A.O.F. all able-bodied men between 18 and 50 years had to provide ten days of labour every year for roads construction and maintenance (Crowder 1978 p. 238).

¹³⁴ Between 1914 and 1918 a total of 41,357 men from French Sudan were sent to fight for France, and again during World War II a forced recruitment of soldiers took place (de Benoist, 1989 p. 95, p. 105).

The radical wing that dominated president Modibo Keita's party, US-RDA¹³⁵, embarked upon a socialist strategy inspired by Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. With the aim of decreasing dependence on France, relations to these countries were extended. The regime forged a highly centralised form of government and established a wide range of parastatals to control import and export of commodities as well as all sectors of the economy. The agricultural policy was based on the encouragement of cooperatives and the establishment of state corporations for management and marketing of agricultural produce. Producer prices were kept below world market prices, and food prices for urban consumers were kept low¹³⁶. A one-party system was established, and the influence of the party on the state gradually increased. All organisations such as trade unions and youth organisations were controlled by the party.

Despite a certain economic assistance from Eastern Europe, China and the Soviet Union, the Malian economy rapidly deteriorated. Growing staff numbers and incompetent management of the many parastatals resulted in serious drain in public finances, the agricultural production stagnated, and the decision by the government to withdraw from the franc zone and establish its own currency had severe negative trade implications (Gaudio, 1988 p. 108-109; de Benoist, 1989 p. 120-125; Amselle & Gregoire, 1987 p. 27-34; Pedler, 1979 p. 163-168; Imperato, 1989 p. 58-62; Diarrah, 1990 p. 13-20).

During this period, strategies of social control relied heavily on ideological mobilisation ('African socialism') through national and party identification and affiliation¹³⁷. The government bureaucracy constituted the core of the political basis of the regime, and important alliances existed between bureaucratic and private trading interests which in many cases were embodied in the very same persons¹³⁸.

Part of the peasant community could be counted as at least half-hearted supporters of the regime during its first years. This support soon faded when government policies became increasingly exploitative and repressive (e.g. forced marketing of cereal production at low government-fixed prices, forced cultivation of collective fields, and restrictions on the free movement of the rural population). Independence had followed a period of relative prosperity for the rural population who expected further increase of wealth during the new regime. Frustrated by deteriorating economic and political conditions, the rural population reacted by disengagement strategies such as black marketing of agricultural produce, concentration on subsistence crops, changing the mix

¹³⁵ US-RDA stands for Union Soudanaise-Rassemblement Démocratique Africain.

¹³⁶ The Malian agricultural policy did not differ from that of the majority of African regimes during this period. Thus, terms of trade have generally been unfavourable to the rural population, resulting in what has been called 'the squeezing of the peasantry'. A wide range of other measures to control the agricultural production has included i.a. establishment of commodity production schemes, close monitoring of farmers by government extension services, state-sponsored rural organisation, e.g. in the form of cooperatives and imposition of one-party-structures on village-level organisations (e.g. Boone, 1994; Bates, 1981; Bratton, 1994a; Gentil, 1986; Ela, 1990).

¹³⁷ According to a classification of regime types suggested by Chazan et al., the Keita regime can be portrayed as a 'party-mobilising regime' characterised by a strong one-party domination with centralisation of power around the leader of the party coupled with bureaucratic expansion (Chazan et al. 1992 p. 142-144).

¹³⁸ This interpretation differs from the most often quoted analyses of post-independence Mali which see the struggle over economic and political power as a classical example of rivalry between merchant and bureaucratic 'fractions of the dominating class', eventually won by the bureaucratic nomenklatura (Meillassaux 1970, Amselle 1985, Amselle & Grégoire 1987, Bagayogo 1987; Cisse et al., 1981). For a critical discussion of the contribution by Amselle, see Morice, 1987 p.54).

of crops, switching to other income strategies including out-migration of rural areas and maintenance of parallel political structures at village level¹³⁹.

While the discontent of the rural population did not constitute a serious threat to the continued existence of the regime, the undermining by the economic crisis of its political basis among urban-based groups turned out to be fatal. Certain of these groups were hard hit by the decision to establish an inconvertible Malian currency, and many did not receive what they believed to be a fair share of the revenue from the rapidly expanding government sector. In November 1968 a group of young officers made an end to Keita's regime (Coulibaly, 1994 p.20; Soke, 1990 p. 9-10; Coulibaly, 1987 p. 68-69, p. 73).

The military regime of Moussa Traoré (1968-1991)

The leader of the coup, Moussa Traoré, became the new president of Mali. In many ways the strategy of the new regime was similar to that of the Keita regime with the only exception that the state was now controlled by the military. In 1974 a new party, UDPM¹⁴⁰, was established, while all other parties remained illegal. By 1979 a gradual return to civilian rule under the military-sponsored party was initiated. UDPM soon achieved a total control of all organisations in society from the village to the central level (Coulibaly, 1994 p. 23-24; Fay, 1995 p. 20-22; Imperato, 1989 p. 64-79).

While relations to China and the Soviet Union were maintained, relations to France and other western countries were improved, and Mali became a major recipient of international development assistance. This, however, did not prevent the outbreak of a serious economic crisis in the late 1970s: the steady rise in the number of public sector employees, initiation of large and ambitious public projects, a drought period in the early 1970s, deteriorating terms of trade and widespread corruption eventually forced the regime in 1981 to accept the demand by the World Bank and IMF that a structural adjustment programme was initiated. During the 1980s the crisis continued as the country was hit by a new drought in 1984, while at the same time international cotton prices declined. Gradually the influence of the Bretton Woods institutions on the economic policy became virtually absolute, and an extensive programme of privatisation, liberalisation and public sector cuts was initiated (Gaudio, 1988 p. 110-113; EIU, 97 p. 48-49; Founou-Tchuigoua, 1989 p. 26-28 and p. 36-40; Diarrah, 1990 p. 95-125, p. 170-180; Cisse et al., 1981 p. 139-145).

During its first years the regime was able to maintain a certain political stability through bargaining relations and a widespread distribution of state resources primarily to urban-based elite groups. At the surface main policy decisions seemed to be centralised around the leader, Moussa

¹³⁹ In a few cases farmers also participated in overt protests such as e.g. 'the revolt of Ouélessebouyou' in 1968 when farmers confronted the regime in an alliance with private traders. Such protests, however, were exceptions to the general rule of clandestine and hidden resistance (Soke, 1990 p. 9-10). For a further description of the ways found by African farmers to evade some of the adverse consequences of government policies, see e.g. Bates, 1981 p. 82-87; Hyden, 1983 p. 6-15; Ela, 1990 p. 164-169. For a description of the various 'everyday forms of resistance' (Scott, 1985), including ridiculing government authorities in songs and oral histories, refusal to participate in meetings called by government representatives, refusal to send children to school, use of witchcraft to chase away state agents visiting their villages, etc., see Ela, 1990 p. 155, p. 159-163; Bratton, 1994a p. 245. Comi Toulabor has described an urban counterpart to this in the form of a language of political stultification used by the young population in Lomé (Toulabor, 1992).

¹⁴⁰ UDPM stands for Union Démocratique du Peuple Malien.

Traoré, and his advisors, but in practice leaders of key interest groups such as ethnic, regional, class and occupational groups took an active part in policy making¹⁴¹.

The rural population was poorly represented in the various arrangements made to ensure a certain representation of key interests in society. This was reflected in a continuation and even intensification of the policy by the former regime of extracting the largest possible surplus from the rural sector. Thus, farmers' purchasing power rapidly declined during the 1970s¹⁴², and from 1977 to 1981 the government pursued a much-hated policy of forced sale of millet to a government monopoly agency¹⁴³. Like in the previous period, farmers reacted mainly by silent forms of resistance, notably by selling their produce at parallel markets (i.e. to private traders and across the borders)¹⁴⁴ (Cisse et al., 1981 p. 58-59, p. 85-96; Coulibaly, 1994 p. 21; Jonckers, 1987 p. 192).

When in the early 1980s the economic crisis became manifest, and international financial institutions forced the regime to change its economic strategy, it had important consequences for its political basis. The rural population experienced a substantial improvement of their living conditions as the economic liberalisation allowed them to obtain better prices for the agricultural produce. At the same time the transfer of certain tasks from government structures to party-dominated village associations contributed to a gradual strengthening of hitherto powerless peasant organisations (Coulibaly 1994 p. 27).

Many urban groups, on the other hand, suffered from generally harshening conditions. While privatisation and price liberalisations paved the way for new income sources for some elite groups, other groups such as artisans, hawkers, students, unemployed graduates, many public sector employees and what is often referred to as 'the urban poor' were hard hit by the new economic policies.

Certain attempts were made to include urban groups such as trade unions and private trading interests in negotiations with IMF, but they generally failed, and an immense discontent was spreading among former supporters of the regime. Students were the first to openly protest against the regime: the first public manifestations took place already in 1977, and throughout the 1980s confrontations between students and government authorities became increasingly frequent and violent. While in the beginning their demands were defined by relatively narrow interests in improving their own conditions (e.g. increase of government grants, improved working conditions

¹⁴¹ The military regime at least in its initial phase (1968-1982) exposed characteristics very similar to those described by Chazan et al. as typical for 'administrative-hegemonic regimes' (Chazan et al 1992 p. 137-140).

¹⁴² According to calculations made by Cisse et al., the price of agricultural equipment increased by an annual average of 30.96% during the years 1967-1977, whereas in the same period producer prices for agricultural products increased by a mere 0.2% per year (Cisse et al., 1981 p. 58-59, see also p. 96 on the contribution by agriculture to the government budget).

¹⁴³ During the period of forced millet sales, each village was given a production quota to fulfill, regardless of its own consumption needs. The army was used to oversee that agricultural produce was sold only to the government monopoly agency, OPAM (Office de Production Agricole du Mali). The policy caused considerable losses for farmers who often had to purchase the same amount of grain during the famine months but now at a much higher price. In certain cases the policy even led to starvation (Coulibaly, 1994 p. 21; Jonckers, 1987 p. 192).

¹⁴⁴ In 1978-1979 illegal markets are believed to have accounted for an estimated 60% of all grain sales (Cisse et al., 1981 p. 89).

in educational institutions, access to employment in the public sector), they gradually formulated broader political demands, partly as a reaction to the repression by government authorities.

Around 1989-90 students were joined by what had hitherto been considered the 'official' trade union of the regime, UNTM¹⁴⁵, and when in 1990 a Tuareg revolt broke out in the north¹⁴⁶, the regime came under a pressure that it could not stand. With students in the forefront and the active support by trade unions, the emerging democratic movement, unemployed graduates as well as other urban poor, demonstrations developed into a public uprising in March 1991, and eventually army and security forces arrested Traoré (Courrier de la Planète no. 23, 1994 p. 33-34; Francois, 1982 p. 22; Fay, 1995 p. 25-30; Sveinall & Hardeberg, 1997 p. 21-25).

The democratic regime after 1991

Events leading to the change of regime in March 1991 were very violent: an estimated 180-300 people lost their lives and about a thousand were injured when armed forces fired into the crowd of demonstrating people¹⁴⁷ (Jeune Afrique no. 1664, 1992 p. 29). In the immediate aftermath of the turbulent days 22-26 March, violence continued in the form of destruction of public and private property¹⁴⁸ and persecution of the most hated representatives of the former regime¹⁴⁹.

Soon after, however, peace was installed. A transitional government including both military and civilians was formed, and in July and August 1991 a national conference was held to draft a new constitution and prepare the transition to democracy. The new constitution was approved by a referendum in January 1992, municipal elections were held the same month, legislative elections were held in February and March, and presidential elections took place in March and April 1992. Although voter participation was very limited even for an African country¹⁵⁰, international observers assessed that the elections were free and fair. ADEMA, one of the leading forces in the democratic movement obtained 74 of 116 seats in parliament and formed a majority coalition government. The party's candidate, Alpha O. Konaré, was elected president (Nzouankeu, 1993 p. 46-47; Bertrand, 1992 p.9-22; Vengroff, 1993 p. 549-560).

Since 1991 the freedom of speech and the freedom of association have allowed the creation of a wide range of new associations, interest groups and political parties¹⁵¹. The media are playing a critical role in the democratic process: by the mid-1990s Mali had no less than eight nationwide

¹⁴⁵ UNTM stands for Union Nationale des Travailleurs Maliens.

¹⁴⁶ In 1990 Algeria expelled a large number of refugees from previous risings by the Tuareg population in 1916 and 1963, and serious unrest broke out in the northern regions of Gao, Timbouctou and Kidal. See also below.

¹⁴⁷ The turbulent days 22-26 March 1991 are still referred to as 'les événements'.

¹⁴⁸ Total losses during the month of March 1991 are estimated to have amounted 30 billion CFA (Drabo, 1993b p. 81).

¹⁴⁹ Certain custom officers, forestry agents and policemen were subject to the so-called 'article 320' where 300 indicated the price of petrol and 20 the price of a box of matches (Le Roy, 1992 p. 139).

¹⁵⁰ From an initial 40% during the referendum in January, voter participation went down to 20% in the second round of the presidential elections in April 1992 (Diarrah, 1996 p.86-87).

¹⁵¹ From the existence of a mere three political parties in March 1991, the number rapidly grew to 14 after one month, 45 at the time of the national conference and about 80 in late 1997 (Bertrand, 1992 p. 13; Sveinall & Hardeberg, 1997 p.38).

independent radio stations and eight provincial stations, while dozens of independent newspapers have appeared since 1991 (Skattum, 1994 p. 310-318; Josserand & Bingen, 1995 p. 34-45).

With the important exception of violations of human rights committed by army forces during the Tuareg conflict until early 1996¹⁵² (Amnesty International, 1994), the Malian government respects the integrity of the person, civil liberties and political rights such as freedom of speech, press, assembly and association (US Department of State, 1997). During 1997, however, a series of events in relation to new presidential and legislative elections discredited the generally positive image of the Malian democracy. Thus, political unrest resulted in the arrest of many opposition activists and journalists of whom some have been subject to ill-treatment or torture (Amnesty International, 1997; US Department of State, 1998).

While many observers have agreed to portray the Malian transition to democracy as exemplary (Boilley, 1994 p. 119-121; Berrubé, 1995 p. 103; Boyer 1992 p. 40-43; *Jeune Afrique* 23-29 April 1992; *Marchés Tropicaux* 22 May 1992 p. 1320), it seems that the consolidation of democracy entered a difficult phase from 1977. The number of political parties has rapidly expanded, but only a limited number of parties have a national base. The rest are relatively small regionally and locally-based parties that suffer an ongoing fragmentation into even smaller organisations (Sveinall & Hardeberg, 1997 p. 38; Vengroff & Kone, 1995 p. 51; Mozaffar, 1995 p. 14, p.18). The initial unity in the democratic movement has been replaced by a growing divide between on the one hand the ruling party, ADEMA, and on the other hand the extensive number of opposition parties. After two coalition governments in two years, the government since 1995 has consisted of members of ADEMA in a coalition with one other party only.

Since late 1997 the political situation has been relatively peaceful, but both national and international observers consider a series of dramatic events during the elections in 1997 a major setback for democracy. After severe criticism the first round of legislative elections held in April 1997 was annulled by the Constitutional Court on the grounds of poor organisation of the polling process. When the government refused to accommodate demands by the opposition that presidential elections were postponed, all but one opposition party reacted by boycotting the elections. Konaré was reelected president in May in an election described as technically correct, but the conflict between the government and the opposition was further aggravated during the following months. The opposition organised demonstrations which were suppressed by security forces, and on two occasions opposition leaders were arrested and kept in jail for up to two months. When legislative elections were undertaken in July and August, the boycott by 18 opposition parties resulted in a further consolidation of the ADEMA majority in parliament¹⁵³ (Sveinall & Hardeberg, 1997 p. 44-57; Amnesty International, 1997 p. 2-7; *Jeune Afrique* no.

¹⁵² The Tuareg rebellion broke out in 1990. In January 1991, the Traoré regime managed to conclude a peace agreement in Tamanrasset in Algeria, but it was soon broken and fighting continued throughout 1991. In April 1992 the Konaré-government signed a new peace agreement (the National Pact) with the United movement of Azaouard (MFUA), but also this was broken. When in late 1994 the Songhay population became involved in the conflict in the form of 'self-defense' militias, the violence escalated considerably. It is a widespread suspicion that at least parts of the Malian military participated in the severe violation of human rights committed by the Songhay militias. The conflict apparently came to an end in early 1996 with a symbolic burning of weapons in Timbouctou (Maymann, 1996).

¹⁵³ ADEMA now holds 127 out of 146 seats in parliament. Voter participation went down from 35% in the first presidential election in April to 25% in the last legislative election in August 1997 (Sveinall & Hardeberg, 1997 p. 56, p. 61; EIU, 1998 p. 43-44).

1917 October 1997 p. 79-81; Cauris, various issues; *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 1997; EIU 4th quarter 1997 p. 26-29; EIU, 1998 p. 44-45).

Problems encountered during the election process reflect both the lack of a democratic tradition and the difficulties for a pluralist regime of accommodating the many often conflicting demands put on it. Immediately after the change of regime the obligation by the new government to reward its main supporters resulted in substantial wage increases to all government staff and increases in government grants to students¹⁵⁴. Private traders successfully put pressure on the government and were rewarded with tax exceptions, remission of debts to the government-run bank and remission of outstanding taxes and customs. In order to restrict public spending, however, the government was soon after forced to pursue an economic policy that disfavoured those organised urban groups that formed the core of the democratic movement, hence the core of its political basis. Already in 1993 students were subject to cuts, after the devaluation of the CFA in January 1994 only limited compensation was given to government staff, and recently the government refused to accommodate demands by trade unions for major wage increases after prices of water and power were significantly raised. These policies had unavoidable consequences in the form of constant confrontations between government and notably the students' movement and to lesser extent trade unions¹⁵⁵ (*Jeune Afrique* 10-16 June 1994; *Jeune Afrique* 19-25 May 1998 p. 28-29; *Marchés Tropicaux* March 1994; Smith, 1997 p. 250).

While the government finds itself in a difficult balancing act in its relations to the urban-based groups that brought it to power, large parts of the initially sceptical rural population have experienced real improvements of both their economic and political situation. After a period of relative economic improvements during the last decade of the Traoré regime, the rural population first feared that urban-based groups would manage to undermine the results achieved (Coulibaly, 1994 p. 27, p. 57-58). Having significantly benefited cotton and livestock producers, the devaluation in 1994 have made many farmers change their mind (interviews with farmers and resource persons in the Sikasso region, February 1996).

Regarding the access by the rural population to the formal political system, much is still left to be desired. At the national conference the rural population for the first time were allowed to express themselves. They managed to ensure that another conference was held to examine the problems facing the rural population, but since then their direct influence on official policies has been limited. The overwhelming majority of political parties remain urban-based and urban-oriented, and only in May 1999 elections to the new rural councils were held. Among the more promising changes, however, is the emergence of a number of farmers' organisations with the SYCOV movement in the Sikasso region as the most spectacular example. Although specific achievements vary, the various organisations all demonstrate the potential benefits also for the

¹⁵⁴ Government staff were granted a wage increased of 50% immediately after coup, while government grants to the students increased by 75% (Smith, 1997 p. 250; *Jeune Afrique* 10-16 June 1994; *Marchés Tropicaux* 22 May 1992 p. 1322).

¹⁵⁵ The continuous conflicts with the students' movement, AEEM (Association des Élevés et des Étudiants) resulted in violent confrontations in 1993-1994, in early 1996 and again in the academic year 1997-98. In 1994 the crushing of the student leadership by the prime minister resulted in the breaking up of the government coalition when CNID (Congrès National d'Initiative Démocratique) and the smaller RDP (Rassemblement pour la démocratie et le progrès) left the government (Smith, 1997 p. 249-250, EIU, 1998 p. 46; *Jeune Afrique* 19-25 May 1998 p. 28-29).

rural population of the increased political freedom¹⁵⁶ (Cauris no. 9, August 1991; Coulibaly, 1994 p. 28-33, p. 57-58).

Despite the various difficulties encountered by the democratic regime, observers generally agree that the possibility of a sudden change of regime in the form of a coup is not very likely and that the present political situation must be described as relatively stable¹⁵⁷ (EIU 4th quarter 1997 p. 24).

5. 2. Rate and structure of economic growth

Mali has one of the smallest economies in the world measured according to GNP (2.7 bn USD in 1997), and one of the poorest economies in the world measured according to GNP/capita (260 USD/capita in 1997) (World Bank, 1999 p. 190)¹⁵⁸. The country is landlocked, resource poor and has a very poor infrastructure in the form of roads and railways. The backbone of the economy is the production of food crops, cotton and livestock.

With an estimated population of 11.5 million and an area of 1,240,190 km², overall population density is down to 9.3 inhab./km². Approximately two thirds of the extensive area is desert, and the population is concentrated in the southern fringe of the country where climatic conditions allow a certain agricultural production (EIU, 1998 p. 48).

After the first two decades after independence characterised by an economic policy oriented towards the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, structural adjustment programmes have radically changed the Malian economy after 1981. Since 1988 when the influence of the IMF and the World Bank on economic policy markedly increased and especially since the democratic government has shown a keen interest in fulfilling the conditions set by international financial institutions, Mali has become a model pupil of IMF. International economic trends and climatic conditions, however, are as important as the economic policy. Both were unfavourable to the Malian economy in the 1980s when first a severe drought and later declining cotton prices worsened an already difficult situation. After the devaluation in 1994 that considerably improved exports of main products such as cotton, livestock and gold, the economy has moved into a period of steady expansion. The growth rate that was down to 2.5% in the period 1980-91, averaged about 4-6% per year in the period 1995-1997¹⁵⁹, and it now figures among the highest in the

¹⁵⁶ Like the SYCOV movement at least three of the other farmers' organisations, having seen the light of day after 1991, are found in relatively prosperous agricultural zones, namely the rice cultivation area in the Niger River Valley in the Ségou region, the vegetable production zone in the Koulikoro region, and the groundnut producing area around Kita in the Kayes region (Marchés Tropicaux 28 June 1996 p. 1349; Le Roy, 1992 p. 140; Tag, 1994 p. 140-161).

¹⁵⁷ It may be worth recalling the assessment by Richard Sandbrook that due to the lack of a democratic tradition and the pursuing of an economic policy that disfavour those organised urban groups that form the core of the democratic movement, Mali ranks among the least likely prospects for durable democracy in the world. The mere fact that multiparty politics have survived thus far may, therefore, be considered an achievement in itself (Sandbrook, 1996 p. 69, p.81).

¹⁵⁸ For a discussion of the reliability of statistical data, see 'Fieldwork methodology and literature study' in the annex.

¹⁵⁹ While IMF figures indicate an average growth rate of 4% in the years 1995-1997 (IMF, 1998 p. 96), EIU refers to a growth rate of 6% for each of the years 1995, 1996 and 1997 (EIU, 1998 p. 48).

African region¹⁶⁰ (IMF, 1994 p. 106; IMF, 1998 p. 96; EIU, 1998 p. 48-49; African Development Bank, 1998 p. 23).

Structural problems remain, though. Although 80% of the population work in the rural sector, the country is self-sufficient in *food* only in years of over-average rainfall. Until the mid-1960s, Mali was a net food exporter, but drought periods, inadequate agricultural policies, and increasing consumption of imported rice and wheat, especially by the urban population, have made the country increasingly dependent on food imports. Considerable regional diversities add to the problem. While the southern Sikasso region produces a substantial grain surplus, the northern regions Gao, Tombouctou and Kidal have a permanent deficit (Staatz et al. 1989 p. 704; Dioné, 1995 p. 8; Marchés Tropicaux 28 July 1996 p. 1351).

Cotton accounts for about 8% of GDP¹⁶¹, an estimated 80% of agricultural incomes and about 50% of exports¹⁶². Linkages to other sectors in the economy are poor. Hence, more than 90% of cotton fibres are exported without any local processing. The importance of exports makes the Malian cotton production heavily dependent on international factors such as world market prices for cotton and international marketing structures. Although Mali since 1994 has been the second largest cotton producer in Africa after Egypt¹⁶³, Malian cotton accounts for only 3% of the annual global trade. It therefore relies on a distinct market identity and on a link to international marketing structures which can reduce some of its vulnerability. While its market identity consists in a steady and high quality cotton supply, linkage to marketing structures is provided by a French company, COPACO, which has an exclusive buying arrangement with the Malian cotton parastatal, CMDT¹⁶⁴ (Coton et Développement no.2, 1996 p. 38; Marchés Tropicaux 3 March 1995 p. 460, p. 472; Bingen, 1998 p. 269-272; EIU 4th quarter 1996 p. 32 EIU 1st quarter 1997 p. 26; EIU 2nd quarter 1998 p. 22).

Mali has the largest number of cattle in West Africa, and production and export of *livestock* have been significantly improved after the devaluation of the CFA in January 1994¹⁶⁵. In recent years the share of livestock in GDP has been around 13%¹⁶⁶, while the share of livestock in exports has

¹⁶⁰ A comparison made by the African Development Bank of real GDP growth in 1997 in 50 African countries rank Mali 6th from the top with a growth rate well above the regional median of 4.5% (African Development Bank, 1998 p. 23).

¹⁶¹ Calculation for the years 1994-1996 based on EIU 4th quarter 1996 p. 32

¹⁶² Calculation for the years 1994-1996 based on EIU 1st quarter 1997 p. 26 and EIU 2nd quarter 1998 p. 22.

¹⁶³ Mali accounts for 2.5% of the international cotton trade and is the 8th largest exporter in the world (Coton et Développement no. 2, 1996 p. 38).

¹⁶⁴ COPACO (la Compagnie Cotonnière) is the marketing unit of the French parastatal CFDT that holds 40% of the share in the Malian cotton parastatal, CMDT.

¹⁶⁵ During the 1980s, Malian livestock exports to Côte d'Ivoire were reduced by 50% due to the dumping of subsidised meat from the European Union. Reduced subsidies after a campaign in 1993 run by a number of European NGOs had little impact on livestock prices in Côte d'Ivoire and thereby on Malian trade conditions. After the devaluation of the CFA in January 1994, however, the demand for European meat in Côte d'Ivoire fell to zero, and Malian exports increased considerably (Ruben et al., 1994).

¹⁶⁶ Calculation for the years 1994-96 based on EIU 4th quarter 1996 p. 32.

been about 15-20%¹⁶⁷ (Marchés Tropicaux 28 June 1996 p. 1356-57; Ruben et al., 1994; EIU 4th quarter 1996 p. 32; EIU 1st quarter 1997 p. 26).

Other important economic activities include *gold mining*¹⁶⁸ and *migration*¹⁶⁹, while the *manufacturing sector* in Mali is negligible¹⁷⁰. Both gold exports and migrant remittances provide an important capital input to the Malian economy, but like cotton these activities also enforce the dependency of the country on international economic trends¹⁷¹.

The fragility and international dependence of the Malian economy is reflected in large and permanent trade deficits. From the mid-1970s to the early 1990s exports have covered only about 50% of imports. In the 1990s and especially after the devaluation in 1994, import coverage has improved to around 70-75%. The external debt is considerable, and debt service constitutes a major burden on the economy¹⁷² (EIU, 1997 p. 63-66, p. 80; EIU 2nd quarter 1997 p. 37-38; World Bank, 1997b p. 348-349; IMF, 1998 p. 100).

On this background it is hardly surprising that Mali has become one of the world's most aid-dependent economies. *Net official development assistance* made up 19.4% of GNP in 1996¹⁷³. In

¹⁶⁷ Calculation for the years 1994-96 based on EIU 1st quarter 1997 p. 26 and EIU 2nd quarter 1998 p. 22. It should be noted that general reservations concerning the validity of data particularly concern figures on livestock exports due to the long tradition of smuggling cattle across Mali's borders (EIU 1st quarter 1998 p. 36).

¹⁶⁸ Gold mining, constituting the basis of the economic prosperity of the ancient empires, has in recent years undergone a remarkable economic revival. From a negligible production in the early 1990s, investments by foreign capital (mainly Canadian and South African) in the rehabilitation of existing mines and the opening of new and the devaluation of the CFA in 1994 has resulted in a marked production increase, and gold now accounts for about 16% of exports (Calculation for 1996 based on EIU 2nd quarter 1998 p. 22, see also *Jeune Afrique* no.1917 1997 p. 104-106; EIU, 97 p. 58-59; *Marchés Tropicaux* 28 June 1996 p. 1365).

¹⁶⁹ The tradition for *migration* to the coastal areas, established during the French colonisation, is still very vivid: an estimated 3.5 million Malians, corresponding to about one third of the total population, live outside the country, the majority of whom in Côte d'Ivoire (1.5 million) (*Jeune Afrique* no. 1805-1806 1995 p. 49; EIU, 1997 p. 47-48; *Marchés Tropicaux* 29 June 1996 p. 1319; World Bank, 1997 p. 348; Maiga et al. 1995 p. 40-41). Migrant remittances constitute around 20-25% of total exports of goods and services (calculation based on World Bank figures for the period 1980-1995 (World Bank, 1997b p.346).

¹⁷⁰ Consisting mainly of agro-industrial and textile industries, the manufacturing sector accounts for only 6-7% of GDP (Calculation for the years 1994-96 based on EIU 4th quarter 1996 p. 32). Years of protection and government control have resulted in poor utilisation of capacity, high production costs and insufficient linkages among enterprises and between the manufacturing sector and other sectors of the economy. Damages in relation to the riots in 1991, liberalisation policies, competition from cheap smuggled Nigerian imports and the devaluation in 1994 have hit the sector hard (EIU, 1997 p. 58; *Marchés Tropicaux* 28 June 1996 p. 1358; *Marchés Tropicaux* 3 March 1995 p. 470).

¹⁷¹ World market prices for gold are presently falling (EIU, 1998 p. 57). The economic crisis in Côte d'Ivoire during the late 1970s and 1980s seriously affected the Malian economy, while its recent upsurge has had a positive impact on Mali.

¹⁷² According to the World Bank, total outstanding debt in 1995 was 3,066 billion USD. (World Bank, 1997b p. 349). Data on debt service ratio (in percent of exports of goods and services) vary considerably from one source to another. According to recent IMF figures, it has been about 30%-40% in the years 1993-95, whereas the World Bank indicates a ratio of 15-20% in the same years (IMF, 1998 p. 100; World Bank, 1997b p. 349). The debt to Russia accounts for 42% of bilateral debt, and debt service paid to China and Russia makes up about 50% of total debt services (*Marchés Tropicaux* 28 June 1996 p. 1325; EIU, 1998 p. 63).

¹⁷³ Only in eight African countries the share of official development assistance in GNP is higher than in Mali. These are Chad, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda and Sierra Leone (World Bank, 1999 p. 230-231).

recent years the externally-financed share of the total government budget has been about 60%¹⁷⁴, while the externally-financed share of capital expenditures has been about 90% (World Bank 1999 p.230; EIU, 1998 p. 71; Marchés Tropicaux 28 June 1996 p. 1325). Main donors in order of importance are France, the World Bank, Germany, the European Development Fund and the Netherlands (OECD, 1997). To the official development assistance is added a non-negligible amount transferred by an estimated 650 NGOs (of which about half are active) working in the country (Coulibaly & Poulton, 1997 p. III).

5.3. Human resource profile

The structural problems of the economy translate into a series of social indicators that give Mali one of the lowest rankings on the UNDP's Human Development Index: in 1997 it was placed 171 out of 174 countries with only Burkina Faso, Niger and Sierra Leone faring worse (UNDP, 1998 p. 128-130).

Health conditions are alarming: in 1996 the infant mortality rate was 134, the under-five mortality rate was 220, the maternal mortality rate was as high as 1,200, while life expectancy at birth was 47 years only¹⁷⁵ (World Bank, 1999 p. 192; UNDP, 1998 p. 130, p. 157). Poor overall figures hide a substantial bias in favour of the capital and urban areas. Thus, Bamako region, where only 10% of the population live, accounts for no less than 60% of recurrent government spending on health and 70% of investment spending¹⁷⁶ (World Bank, 1995 p.26). After having declined in the late 1980s and early 1990s both in relative and absolute terms, health expenditures have increased since 1994 (World Bank 1995 p. 26). In 1990 public expenditures on health made up 2.8% of GDP. Although low, this share is higher than in many other countries in the Sub-Saharan African region (UNDP, 1998 p. 158-159).

Also *educational standards* are very poor even in a regional perspective. With only 25% of an age group enrolled in primary school in 1995, Mali suffers from one of the lowest net primary school enrollment rates in the world¹⁷⁷. The adult illiteracy rate is 69%, and for women it is as high as 77%¹⁷⁸ (UNDP, 1998 p. 147; World Bank, 1999 p. 193). Like health expenditures, educational spending has increased in recent years. Measured against GNP, however, public expenditures on education are still lagging behind the share in the majority of other countries in

¹⁷⁴ The external share of the total government budget was 62% in 1994, 58% in 1995 and 55% in 1996 (calculations based on EIU, 1998 p. 71 and Marchés Tropicaux 28 June 1996 p. 1325).

¹⁷⁵ Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births, under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births, and maternal mortality rate per 100,000 births. Only in Sierra Leone, Niger, Malawi and Angola the infant mortality rate is higher than in Mali, and only in Sierra Leone, Niger and Guinea-Bissau the under-five mortality rate is higher than in Mali (UNDP, 1998 p. 156-157).

¹⁷⁶ While virtually all of the urban population have access to safe water supplies, it is only one third of the population in rural areas (World Bank, 1996 p. 216; World Bank, 1995 p. ii and p.26).

¹⁷⁷ For girls the school enrollment rate is down to 24%. Only in Niger the primary school enrollment rate is lower than in Mali (UNDP, 1998 p. 162-163).

¹⁷⁸ The adult illiteracy rate is higher only in Burkina Faso, Niger and Sierra Leone (UNDP, 1998 p. 146-147).

the Sub-Saharan African region¹⁷⁹ (UNDP, 1998 p. 162-163; African Development Bank, 1998 p. 147; EIU, 1998 p. 52-53).

Conclusion

The Malian action environment is far from favourable: lack of a democratic tradition, extremely fragile economic structures, and a human resource situation among the poorest in the world are all factors that can be expected to negatively influence the performance of government organisations.

Despite the rather bleak portrait given above, however, present positive trends in both the political and economic development make it fair to conclude that the action environment is not completely dysfunctional to development.

The difficulties of accommodating the many different interests and the challenge to the legitimacy of the government constituted by the election process in 1997 should be seen on the background of more than 100 years of highly centralised rule where large parts of the population, notably the rural population, have been cut off from political decision-making. While the long history of repressive regimes may negatively affect the image of the state held by the population, it also gives the present government a certain credit even for small improvements in the access by the population to express itself and to influence decision-making. The situation has been relatively stable since the dramatic events in 1991, and none of the social conflicts presently characterising the situation seem to have the potential of resulting in a change of regime.

Although economic structures of the country provide a poor basis for the government's ability to make its agencies work, the replacement in recent years of an extended period of economic stagnation by quite impressive growth rates gives reason to some optimism. The country is highly dependent on international trends, but given that these have been favourable for some time and that international donors are pleased with the development and willing to continue assistance, a country in Mali's structural position cannot expect a much more favourable economic situation than the present.

While the political and economic situation is presently undergoing a positive development, the low level of human resource development seems to constitute the most serious challenge to public sector performance derived from the action environment. It takes much longer to achieve significant improvements in the fundamental health situation and in educational standards than it takes to change a stagnating economy into an economy of growth.

If despite the recent positive trends, the Malian action environment appears to be poor, a comparison to other countries in the region reveals that it could have been considerably worse. In neighbouring Niger a series of coups and counter-coups have in recent years resulted in an extremely unstable political situation. Development assistance has been cut down, and for years the state has been unable to ensure a regular payment of salaries to government staff. In Burkina

¹⁷⁹ In 1995 public expenditure on education made up 2.2% of GNP (as against 3.7% in 1985). Among Sub-Saharan African countries for which data are available, only Zambia and Equatorial Guinea have lower shares (UNDP, 1998 p. 162-163). See also African Development Bank, 1998 p. 147.

Faso the political situation has so far been stable, but the legitimacy of the Blaise Compaoré-government has been repeatedly challenged by the persecution of the political opposition. While Mali shares with these countries a fragile economic structure and a poor human resource situation, it adds to the legitimacy of the Malian government that the political situation compares favourably with that of neighbouring countries.

CHAPTER 6. THE MALIAN STATE: THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Introduction

The next step in the analysis of the shared environment by the four agencies under study is an assessment of 'the institutional context of the public sector'. This includes an assessment of the budgetary support which significantly influences public sector capacity through its impact on salary levels and funding for recurrent expenditures and capital outlays. Other aspects regard the institutional set-up of the public sector, its management practices and existing structures of formal and informal influence.

As discussed in chapter 3, the institutional context of the public sector similar to the action environment may not only influence the performance of individual government organisations, but it may be so poor that it is dysfunctional to development, regardless of the qualities of individual agencies.

6. 1. Size and financing of the state apparatus

Measured in economic terms, Mali does not differ from the general pattern in the Sub-Saharan African region concerning the relationship between the size of the public sector and that of the economy. Until the mid-1990s central government expenditure accounted for about 25% of GDP, while the share in recent years has been slightly reduced, mainly due to containment of wage expenditures¹⁸⁰ (IMF, 1998 p. 96; World Bank, 1995 p. 56).

Measured as staff numbers in relation to the number of inhabitants, however, the Malian public sector is smaller than in most other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Whereas the overall ratio of government staff to inhabitants is a mere 0.3% in Mali, the average for Sub-Saharan Africa is 1% and for other developing regions it is 3% (Lienert, 1998 p. 45; World Bank, 1993 p. 5).

Until 1990 the size of the state apparatus grew continuously. During the first 15 years after independence, staff numbers tripled from 10,534 in 1961 to 31,783 in 1975 (Pierot, 1979 p. 57; Kone et al., 1994 p. 3). Although growth in staffing numbers slowed down during the next 15 years, it remained very high, and in 1990 the public sector reached a maximum of 42,300 employees. By 1993 retrenchments had reduced the number to about 36,000. The significant downsizing makes Mali member of a small group of African countries that have reduced the number of civil servants by more than 10% between 1986 and 1996 (World Bank, 1993 p. 5; Lienert, 1998 p. 44).

Despite the fact that Malian civil service salaries have historically been among the lowest in the CFA zone, personnel spending until recently has made up a larger share of recurrent expenditure than in many comparable countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The attempts by the new government

¹⁸⁰ Only for a limited number of countries data are available on central government expenditure in percent of GDP. Existing data suggest an average share of 20-30% for most sub-Saharan African countries (UNDP, 1998 p. 182-183).

to reduce the number of employees have changed this picture, and the share of personnel spending in recurrent expenditure has gone down from 50% in the late 1980s to 31% in 1996 (World Bank, 1995 p. 7-8 and p. 57; EIU, 1998 p. 50; Kone et al., 1994 p. 45). It is worth noting that no less than 1/3 of the public sector wage bill is spent on military salaries (World Bank, 1995 p. 8). This heavy burden on the government budget reflects the continued existence of a large coercive apparatus that even in a regional comparison appears to be substantial¹⁸¹ (UNDP, 1998 p. 170-171).

Low government salaries have a number of very unfortunate consequences for the functioning of the public sector. A major challenge to the democratic government has been to combat corruption and mismanagement of funds reaching historically high dimensions during the last part of the Traoré regime. The freedom of the press to report incidences of mismanagement and the fact that the government on several occasions has acted upon reports compromising high-level officials are believed to some extent to have reduced the dimensions of this problem. It gives reason to serious concern, however, that mismanagement of funds in the early 1990s was believed to amount to several times the total budget of the state¹⁸². Other problems derived from low salaries are absenteeism by government staff from their offices when they are minding private businesses and low morale of government staff who compare their situation to those of NGO or private sector employees¹⁸³ (Kone et al., 1994 p. 40-48).

While the ratio of civil service employees to total population is low in Mali, a highly skewed distribution of staff further limits the direct contact between government agents and large parts of the population. The distribution of staff is skewed both across the various sectors and across regions. According to an assessment made by the World Bank, staff numbers in the agricultural sector substantially exceed staffing norms, whereas in the health sector there is a considerable under-staffing. The regional bias is reflected in a concentration of staff in virtually all sectors in administrative positions in Bamako (World Bank, 1995 p. ii, p.9). The situation does not seem to have changed much since 1976 when 50% of total government staff was based in the Bamako region (Pierot, 1979 p. 61-62). Thus, in 1994 60% of all professional health staff were concentrated in the Bamako region¹⁸⁴, while Bamako received about six times the average per capita education expenditures received by each of the other regions (World Bank, 1995 p. ii, p. 21). The limited direct contact between government staff and large parts of especially the rural population is further illustrated by the fact that in 1990 only one third of the about 3,000

¹⁸¹ In 1990-1991 military expenditures accounted for 53% of combined health and education expenditures. This percentage is very high for a country not involved in major wars (in a regional comparison the Tuareg rebellion must be considered a minor conflict), and for comparison the share for neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger was 30% and 11%, respectively (UNDP, 1998 p. 170-171).

¹⁸² In 1993 the prime minister had to acknowledge that illegal appropriation of funds by the customs service alone amounted to 100 billion CFA, corresponding to 240% of the total amount spent on salaries to all government staff (41 billion CFA) (Kone et al., 1994 p. 48).

¹⁸³ A 1993 example from the Mopti region illustrates the highly different conditions for government staff who carry out ordinary duties of their service and those seconded to projects and programmes funded by NGOs or bi-or multilateral donors: while there were no daily allowances for government staff on field trips that formed part of routine tasks, staff working on a UNICEF-sponsored project were given motorbikes and a daily allowance of 1,500 CFA. Those working on CARE-sponsored activities were given 2,500 CFA/day and transport or alternatively 5,000 CFA/day if they could provide their own transport. Staff working on a World Bank-sponsored extension programme (PNVA) were given 40,000 CFA per months for 4-10 visits (interviews with government staff in Mopti cercle, August 1993).

¹⁸⁴ 60% of professional staff, 64% of midwives, and 39% of state registered nurse were located in Bamako region (World Bank, 1995 p. ii).

employees in the Department of Agriculture¹⁸⁵ were operating at village level¹⁸⁶. Of these 50% were employed by CMDT who operates only in the southern part of the country (MDRE, 1991 p. 15-16).

As mentioned in chapter 5, about 60% of total government budget and 90% of capital expenditures are funded from external sources. The internal financing mainly derives from customs accounting for 40-60% of total government revenue excluding grants, while income taxes provide about 30% of domestic receipts¹⁸⁷. During the first three years after the change of regime, domestic receipts fell dramatically as a result of widespread tax refusal by the population who claimed that president Konaré had promised to abolish all taxes in case of his successful election¹⁸⁸. In recent years, however, a more consistent collection of taxes in rural areas, more attention paid to large tax payers and reorganisation of the customs service have significantly improved the revenue (IMF, 1998 p. 97; *Marchés Tropicaux* 28 June 1996 p. 1923-1925; *Jeune Afrique* no. 1735 1994 p. 47).

Despite increased incomes and the substantial down-sizing of the public sector, the World Bank in a public expenditure review in the middle of the decade concluded that funding levels remained inadequate for the proper functioning of public services and for undertaken the necessary capital investments (World Bank, 1995 p. 7).

6.2. Institutional set-up

After independence, the new government replaced the 17 'cercles' from the colonial period by six new regions, each of them headed by a governor. The cantons were dissolved and new cercles were established under the leadership of a 'commandant de cercle'. Below the cercle level new 'arrondissements' were created and headed by 'chefs d'arrondissement'. With the division of the Gao region in two (Gao and Tombouctou) in 1977 and the establishment of the Kidal region in 1991, Mali today has a total of 8 regions, 50 cercles, 290 arrondissements and 19 urban communes. When a large administrative reform approved by the Parliament in 1993 is fully implemented, the present arrondissements will be replaced by 701 communes of which 664 are rural communes. While the process of division was finalised in late 1996, elections to new rural councils were repeatedly postponed until May 1999 when they eventually took place¹⁸⁹ (Sow,

¹⁸⁵ The Department of Agriculture under the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment.

¹⁸⁶ Village level here refers to those based either in a village or in a group of 6-11 villages called a secteur (Sow, 1992 p. 11).

¹⁸⁷ The remainder of government incomes are non-fiscal incomes such as incomes from privatisations. Calculations based on IMF-figures presented in *Marchés Tropicaux* 28 June 1996 p. 1325-1325 and *Jeune Afrique* no. 1735 1994 p. 47.

¹⁸⁸ In 1991 only 52% of the regional and local development tax (TDRL) was collected, and in 1992 the share collected further declined to only 31% of outstanding taxes (Sall, 1993 p. 120). Konaré had promised to abolish the national head tax ('minimum fiscal'), but people understood that all taxes (including TDRL) would be abolished (Kassibo, 1997 p. 12).

¹⁸⁹ The administrative reform was approved by Parliament in 1993 under the title of 'Loi déterminant les conditions de la libre administration des collectivités territoriales' (Loi no.93-008/P-RM, Sall, 1993 vol. II p. 329-332). During 1995 and 1996 a large exercise was undertaken to involve the population in the establishment of new communes each comprising between 4 and 25 villages or about 5,000-15,000 inhabitants (Mission de Décentralisation, 1994 p. 4-6; Mission de Décentralisation, 1995a; Mission de Décentralisation, 1995b; *Marchés Tropicaux* 5 May 1995 p. 922-924; Soumaré, 1995 p. 58-59; *Le Démocrate* édition spéciale July 1995; Kassibo, 1997; Bérédogo, 1997; Coill, 1997). The new rural communes are described in *Journal Officiel de la République du Mali*. Loi no. 96-059 du 4

1992 p. 9-12; Sall, 1993 vol. II p. 329-332; Le Démocrate Édition Spéciale July 1995 p. 31; JORM, 1996; Coll, 1997 p. 39).

The institutional set-up of the Malian state is based upon the organisational configuration described in chapter 3 as the mechanical model. It is characterised by a high level of formalisation and centralisation. Management, authority and communication are hierarchically structured. All information going both up-wards and down-wards have to follow the hierarchy of administrative levels which often lead to considerable delays in decision-making and task execution. While the central level has a certain technical capability and retains exclusive authority over provision of functions, personnel and general policy, the *arrondissement* level in rural areas and the communal level in urban areas are left with little discretion. Staff at these levels are the ones who meet the population face-to-face and who deliver most of the services, but they have to do with very modest material and human resource capabilities (Sall, 1993 vol. I p. 70-73; Traoré, 1988 vol I, p. 253-259, p. 268-269; Gellar et al., 1990 p. 21-22, p. 50-51).

Although some trace this organisation back to the ancient empires¹⁹⁰, at least the historical heritage from the colonial period is evident. The Malian constitution, thus, is modelled after the French constitution of 5 October 1958, in some of its articles down to the detail where only the names of administrative units in France have been replaced by Malian names. French inspiration is furthermore reflected in i.a. the division of power among central, regional and local authorities, the role of the president and the electoral system (Sall, 1993 vol. I p. 75-92).

In addition to the historical heritage from the French, at least two other factors explain the present centralisation of power in the state. The first is the obvious fact that after independence competent staff were extremely scarce¹⁹¹, hence a devolution of authority to regional and local authorities was difficult. The other reason is political: like in other newly independent countries the elite that came into power in 1960 had a strong wish to consolidate its own power base by supporting the national unity and combatting regional and ethnic disparities. This was best ensured by a centralisation of power (Traoré, 1988 vol I, p. 145; Chazan et al., 1992 p. 46-47).

The socialist option inspired by the Soviet Union and China further enforced the tendency towards centralisation of power in the central administration and especially in the hands of the president: 20 years of control of the state apparatus by the only legal party¹⁹² (1960-1968 and again 1979-1991) and 11 years of its control by a military committee (1968-1991) has taken centralisation of power and the role of the president far beyond the situation set for in the French-inspired constitution (Sall, 1993 vol. I p. 70-73; Traoré, 1988 vol. I, p. 253-259, p. 268-269; Gellar et al., 1990 p. 21-22, p. 50-51).

Novembre 1996 (JORM, 1996).

¹⁹⁰ It is a much debated issue among historians whether the ancient empires were characterised by a strong central power that intervened in all aspects of the social and economic life of subordinate states, or whether they were rather characterised by a large extent of devolution of power from the central level to local authorities (Cauris no. 184 13 June 1997 p. 4).

¹⁹¹ At independence on 22 September 1960, Mali had a total of 3 veterinary doctors, 10 doctors and 3 pharmacists for a population of 4.3 million (Kone et al. 1994, p. 13).

¹⁹² For a description of the control of the administration by the party, see Traoré 1988 vol. I, p. 275-280; Gellar et al., 1990 p. 35-37. For a presentation of the opposite view, namely that the party was controlled by the administration, see Félix, 1996 p. 148.

While many factors have contributed to centralisation of the administration, only modest attempts have been made to counter it before the change of regime in 1991. After having paid lip service to decentralisation plans for more than a decade¹⁹³, the economic crisis in the late 1980s eventually forced the Traoré regime to implement a limited reform in 1988. In order to mobilise local resources the reform replaced a number of taxes by a regional and local development tax (TDRL) meant to feed a local development budget (FDRL) at each of the administrative levels¹⁹⁴. The reform was presented as an attempt to decentralise government administration and increase the influence of its lower levels on development activities. In practice, however, additional funding obligations were transferred to the regional, cercle and arrondissement levels, and although the TDRL was supposed to be supplemented by subventions from the central administrative level, such subventions have rarely come. Difficulties of collecting taxes and unequal revenue distribution among the various local levels further constrain the budget of arrondissements and often imply that development activities carried out at village level are negligible¹⁹⁵ (Sow, 1992 p.22-24; Sall, 1993 vol.II p. 246-260; Diallo, 1995 p. 37; Gellar et al., 1990 p. 45-48; Kassibo, 1997 p. 1-4; Ousmane Traoré, personal communication, Oct.1994).

The institutional set-up of the Malian state still corresponds to the description above, but changes are taking place. During the 1990s the issue of decentralisation has been high on the agenda¹⁹⁶, and among the many reorganisation initiatives taken by the Konaré government, the most important is an ongoing administrative reform. It is the objective of the reform to replace existing arrondissements with rural communes and to replace the administratively appointed chef d'arrondissements by rural councils elected by the local populations among candidates presented by the political parties.

¹⁹³ An administrative reform approved in 1977 was meant to deconcentrate the government administration from the central level to regional, cercle and arrondissement levels and to increase the involvement of elected representatives of the population in local decision making. The reform, however, is believed to have led to a further concentration of power in the hands of the administrative staff. While it included the decision to establish rural communes, nothing happened in practice, as no legal texts existed to implement decisions. It also made part of the reform to establish development committees at each of the administrative levels (described in Ordonnance no. 77-44 of 12 July 1977 and in Décret no. 193 of 10 August 1981, Sall, 1993 vol.II p. 160-165, p. 170-173). The development committees that only started operating in 1981 and are still functioning consist of representatives from the various government technical agencies and are formally responsible for the scheduling, coordination and evaluation of all locally originating development projects in the area under their charge. In practice, however, development committees have tended to be entirely dominated by the administration that has assumed a total control of locally-funded public investments in most areas and a certain control also over NGO-funded projects (Traoré, 1988 vol.I p.111, p. 126-129; Sow, 1992 p.43, p.48, p. 66; Bishop, 1988 p. 16-18; Sall, 1993 vol. I p. 93-94; Mission de Décentralisation, 1994 p. 4; Gellar et al.,1990 p. 30).

¹⁹⁴ The TDRL ('Taxe de Développement Régional et Local') was introduced by Loi no. 88-64/AN-RM of 15 March 1988. The FDRL ('Fonds de Développement Régional et Local' was established by Loi no. 88-65/AN-RM of 15 March 1988 (Sall, 1993 vol II p. 253-258).

¹⁹⁵ With the assistance of chefs de village - and if necessary the gendarmes - the tax is collected at arrondissement level. In principle 60% of the revenue remain at this level, whereas 25% go to the cercle level and 15% to the regional level. In practice, however, many arrondissements only dispose of a considerably smaller share, and of the remaining amount most is used for salaries to security guards, midwives and administrative clerks, repairs and improvements of offices and staff houses (notably the house of the chef d'arrondissement) and fuel for office cars (Ousmane Traoré, personal communication, Oct.1994; interviews with chefs d'arrondissements, and studies of budgets for seven arrondissements in the Sikasso region, the autumn of 1994).

¹⁹⁶ Already at the national conference held in July and August 1991 the issue of decentralisation was much debated, and there has been a substantial pressure on the Konaré government to initiate specific reforms (Cauris, various issues). For analyses of the decentralisation process since 1991, see e.g. Felix, 1996; Coulibaly, 1994; Soke, 1997; *Le Républicain* no. 198 26 June 1996; *Marchés Tropicaux* 5 May 1995 p. 922-924; Soumaré, 1995; *Le Démocrate* édition spéciale July 1995.

The specific competence of rural councils and their financial status have been subject to heated debates. It was the initial intention that the rural communes would be responsible for local tax collection and for managing a local budget covering e.g. the running costs of primary schools and primary health care. It was also expected that the rural councils would get competence to hire and fire staff of the various government technical services. Both, however, were increasingly seen as unrealistic by both local observers and the government body in charge of the implementation¹⁹⁷. When the last fieldwork was carried out in early 1996, it seemed likely that the central administration would remain responsible for the financing of the various social services as well as for personnel management (Kassibo, 1997 p. 12-12; *Le Républicain* no. 198 26 June 1996; Ousmane Sy and Noël Diarra, personal communication, November 1994; Noël Diarra, personal communication Feb. 1996).

6.3. Structures for formal and informal influence on government administration

Until elections to the new rural councils in May 1999, formal structures for influence of the population on the government administration (except for the population in the 19 urban communes) have been completely absent. Until 1986-87 no attempts were made to allow the rural population to become involved in local-level decision-making. During a short period from 1987 to 1992 advisory bodies to the local administration consisting of representatives of the population existed on paper¹⁹⁸, but these bodies, generally acknowledged to be useless, were abolished by the new government in 1992 (Sow, 1992 p. 41-43, 48-50; Bishop, 1988 p. 18-19; Gellar et al., 1990 p. 29-30; Sall, 1993 vol. II p. 160-165, p. 235-244). Since the change of regime, however, it has represented a considerable change that the freedom of expression and the emergence of the many new parties have made it easier for the population to protest against patronising and arbitrary behaviour by government staff. It is now possible to lodge a complaint against the government administration for improper treatment, and according to interviews with government staff, this may negatively influence the career of those involved (interviews with a number of chefs d'arrondissement in the Sikasso region, the autumn of 1994).

Regarding informal structures of influence, much has been done to prevent development of close ties between the government administration and the local population. After independence new administrative divisions were crafted with a view to break the power of canton chiefs. Thus, new cercles usually grouped together several cantons, and the arrondissements were created in such a way as to break up or regroup the territories of the old cantons. Although many chefs de canton had often been selected by the French without considering their legitimacy in the eyes of the local

¹⁹⁷ La Mission de Décentralisation established in 1993 with the mandate to prepare and organise the implementation of reforms to redefine the administrative and economic relationship between the central government level and subordinate levels (Sall, 1993 vol. II p. 325; Kassibo, 1997 p. 6-7).

¹⁹⁸ These advisory bodies were established at each of the administrative levels and named 'conseil d'arrondissement', 'conseil de cercle' and 'conseil de région', respectively. Although formally established already in 1977 (by Ordonnance no. 77-44 of 12 July 1977 concerning the territorial and administrative reorganisation of the Republic of Mali and further described by Décret no. 14/PG-RM and Loi no. 82-49/AM-RM), the conseils de développement were not operational until 1986-87. In theory members were supposed to represent 'civil society' ('représentants des Organismes à caractère économique et social', 'membres élus par les Conseils de Villages et les Conseils de Fraction', Ordonnance no. 77-44 article 11, article 20 and article 31). In practice, however, members of the councils were often retired civil servants with close relations to the administration. Being totally dominated by the administration, the influence of the councils were limited to 'rubber stamp' decisions that had already been taken by the development committees (Bishop, 1988 p. 18-19; Sow, 1992 p. 48-50; Gellar et al., 1990 p. 29-30; Sall, 1993 vol. II p. 160-165, p. 235-244; Yaya Sididé, personal communication Oct. 1994).

population, the dissolution of the cantons has been described by Bishop as a final break of the 'genetic' link between local people and the state: instead of being representatives of the local population, the new administrators were selected from a professional corps of nationally trained civil servants, and their authority depended exclusively on their hierarchal superiors (Bishop, 1988 p. 12-13).

At independence, the government, furthermore, adopted a policy of frequent circulation of state administrators among posts all over the country. One reason for the policy was the wish to ensure cohesion of the new state by letting all ethnic groups getting to know each other. Another reason was the wish to prevent administrators from becoming entrenched in a particular area. Administrators, thus, were never assigned to their home area where it was feared that family ties could have a corrupting influence. Subsequent governments including the present government have pursued the same policy, and as a consequence few administrators are knowledgeable about local conditions in the area they govern. Nor do they have time to become familiar, as they are usually reassigned within 3-5 years and sometimes already after 1-2 years (Bishop, 1988 p. 12-13; Ousmane Traoré, personal communication, Oct.1994).

Despite the various means used to prevent informal ties between government staff and the population, it seems that in practice such ties often play a considerable role. While a large part of the rural population tend to perceive of the state as something distant and useless, mainly manifesting itself in the form of tax collectors and agents involved in repression, findings from the village survey in the Sikasso region suggest that many other types of contacts between government agents and the population exist (for a discussion of this, see chapter 11).

During the one-party era, the position of the village chief in the party appears to have significantly affected the assistance provided to a village. Villages which were canton headquarters during the colonial period still seem to hold a certain power advantage as compared to villages with a less impressive past history. Villages where inhabitants have relatives in high positions in the government apparatus - not necessarily in the same geographical region as the village - seem to enjoy the advantage of being able to short-circuit usual administrative procedures. The physical nearness of a village to administrative headquarters matters, and so does the general wealth of a village: a village with many large-scale cash crop producers seems to be more able to influence decisions by the government administration than poorer villages. The latter relates to the issue of corruption which, according to information gained through the village survey, is still a common means used by people wanting to influence the government administration (interviews with farmers and resource persons in the Sikasso region, the autumn of 1994 and Feb. 1996).

Conclusion

Whereas in the preceding chapter it was concluded that the action environment although far from favourable cannot be characterised as completely dysfunctional to development, a similar conclusion regarding the institutional context of the public sector seems more problematic. Based on the above description, it appears to be suffering from many and serious constraints.

The budgetary support is very low and is likely to negatively affect the general performance of government agencies. In certain cases it may even be detrimental to their basic functioning due to lack of resources for investments and recurrent expenditures.

Low salaries and retrenchment of staff that result in poor motivation and widespread corruption are critical parameters that individual agencies may find it extremely difficult to overcome. While the various measures related to structural adjustment policies may have strengthened the overall economic situation of the country, it seems likely that this has happened at the expense of the institutional capacity of the state.

Mali is characterised by a historical heritage in the form of a generally centralised and hierarchical institutional set-up based on the mechanical model. This provides a poor basis for responsiveness by the various government agencies to demands raised by their clients. Limited formal access by the population to influence government structures further reduces possibilities of government agencies to gradually adjust to changing conditions and improve their performance.

In chapter 5 it was concluded that the legitimacy of the government is not fundamentally challenged by developments in the formal political system. Still, the fact that informal access to government structures is highly uneven and to a certain extent determined by corruption is likely to negatively affect the legitimacy. This is at least so in the case of agencies most susceptible to these practices, and may also affect the legitimacy of the state as such.

Dimensions of corruption makes it appropriate to consider if after all the organic approach, criticised in chapter 1 for neglecting the influence of societal forces on state structures and policies, has something to offer in an analysis of a state such as the Malian. The approach obviously provides an excellent entrance point to the study of corruption and informal relations within the state apparatus, and given that these phenomena are important also in the Malian context, the contribution by the approach cannot be ignored. What was criticised in chapter 1, however, was the tendency by theories applying the organic approach to concentrate *only* on these phenomena and thereby leave little scope for changes in state and society relations, including changes in the scale and broader nature of corruption, generated by new demands by societal forces.

The overall conclusion to the analysis of the institutional context of the public sector is that many explanations for poor performance of government agencies may be lodged in the environment beyond their own control. Or in the words of Grindle and Hilderbrand: poorly performing officials and organisations may only be symptoms of dysfunctions rooted more deeply in political, social and economic contexts. The extent to which this is the case for the four agencies under study is examined in chapter 9.

CHAPTER 7. THE SIKASSO REGION

Introduction

The present chapter contains a general description of the agro-ecological and socioeconomic setting in the Sikasso region. Together with chapter 8 dealing with ongoing social and political changes in the region, it provides the background for understanding analyses in chapter 9, 10 and 11 of the interaction between extension agencies and farmers.

The chapter presents a relatively prosperous region characterised by favourable conditions for agricultural production. The picture of the generally privileged situation of the region, however, is modified by the description of two main sets of division of the population: *one is geographical* and relates to the marked differences between the northern and the southern part of the region, and *one is socioeconomic* and reflects a differentiation of households across the region.

Koutiala cercle in the north and Kadiolo cercle in the south differ in a number of respects: they are populated by two different ethnic groups, natural resources are more abundant in Kadiolo, while population pressure is higher and social conflicts more pronounced in Koutiala. The most important difference between the two parts of the region, however, seems to be that cotton cultivation was introduced much earlier in Koutiala than in Kadiolo, hence the present level of integration into the cotton economy is considerably higher in the north.

A certain socioeconomic differentiation of the population has always existed, but since the integration into the cotton economy this seems to a very large extent to have become conditioned on the level of mechanisation of individual households and thereby on their possibilities to grow a large area of cotton.

While the north-south division is further discussed in chapter 8 on social and political changes in the region, emphasis in this chapter is put on a presentation and discussion of socioeconomic differentiation processes.

7.1. The Sikasso region as an administrative unit

The Sikasso region is located in the southern part of the country where it borders Burkina Faso to the East and Côte d'Ivoire to the South.

In the region the symbolic and mythological importance of the Kéné Dougou kingdom is still significant. This initially rather small kingdom was established in present-day southern Mali in the 17th century. By the mid-18th century it became an organised state and by the mid-19th century the kingdom under the reign of the Traoré family¹⁹⁹ started a rapid expansion into neighbouring empires. It became a commercial centre for trade in slaves, guns, horses and gold and prospered by demanding tributes from villages in the area and by raiding for pillage and slaves. After relatively friendly relations with the French who assisted the kings in their various wars, tensions between the French and the Kéné Dougou kingdom increased during the 1890s. In

¹⁹⁹ Doula Traoré (reigning 1845-1860), Daouda Traoré (1860-1862), Molo Kunafa Traoré (1862-1864), Tieba Traoré (1866-1893) and Babemba Traoré (1893-1898).

1898 the French demanded an annual tax from the king and the installation of a French garrison in the capital of Sikasso²⁰⁰. The king refused, and a French army attacked the town. After a siege of two weeks and a major battle, the French took the capital on 1st May 1898. Rather than being captured by the French, King Babemba committed suicide. This act and the fact that the Kéné Dougou kingdom was the last of the Malian kingdoms to surrender to the French is often referred to by the local population who consider the kingdom a symbol of African resistance against the colonial power²⁰¹ (Loosvelt et al., 1995 p.45-55; Imperato 1986 p. 173-174; Warms, 1992 p.488-489, p. 492).

During the colonial period the area controlled by the former kingdom was made an administrative unit called the cercle of Sikasso²⁰². It was headed by a French colonial official (le commandant) and further subdivided into 12 cantons each headed by a chef de canton. In several cases the chef de canton was identical to the local leader of the Kéné Dougou kingdom, 'the dougoukounassigui'²⁰³, but in other cases the French just appointed a person of their choice. The canton consisted of several villages each headed by a village chief ('chef de village'). A traditional chief ('chef coutumier') already existed in the villages, but the French introduced the parallel position of administrative chief and thereby provoked a division of power at village level²⁰⁴. The abuse of power in this period by many chefs de canton seriously discredited traditional authorities and constitutes a root causes of many present day conflicts in the area²⁰⁵ (Rondeau, 1980 p. 451-452; Coulibaly, 1994 p. 24; N'Golo Coulibaly, personal communication, August 1998).

Considerable centralisation both of political power and of economic resources took place in the period. The town of Sikasso expanded and received certain infrastructural investments, while in

²⁰⁰ In 1876 king Tieba Traoré moved the capital of the Kéné Dougou kingdom to Sikasso which was thereby transformed from a small village into a larger town.

²⁰¹ In May 1998 an event of commemoration of the battle of Sikasso led to a heated discussion among Malian intellectuals about interpretation of the French colonialism in general and the symbolic value of the battle in particular (various contributions to the Malinet, July 1998). The fact that Modibo Keita, the first president of independent Mali, worked as a teacher in Sikasso when he prepared the establishment of his party, l'Union Soudanaise RDA, associated Sikasso with the independence movement. This has further contributed to the view of Sikasso as an area of resistance. Also the current president Alpha Konaré has earlier worked as a teacher in Sikasso (Loosvelt et al., 1995 p. 61; Warms, 1992 p. 492).

²⁰² In addition to the area controlled by the Kéné Dougou kingdom the cercle of Sikasso included some neighbouring areas.

²⁰³ Under the Kéné Dougou kingdom the dougoukounassigui was the leader of one of several villages. He was provided with a woman, a horse, a groom and food by the village population, and his tasks were to defend the villages and to keep the king ('fama') informed about developments in his area.

²⁰⁴ The position of chef coutumier is inherited within the lineage of the first inhabitant of a village. He is responsible for land management (hence, in the Minyanka community he is named 'chef de terre'), definition of rules concerning natural resource management and religious matters. The administrative chef de village represents the village in its relations to government authorities, and for this he receives a certain salary from the government. The administrative chef de village is appointed by the government administration based on a proposal made by the village. To avoid competition among villagers, the chef coutumier often suggests somebody from his own lineage (N'Golo Coulibaly, personal communication, August 1998).

²⁰⁵ Many chefs de canton pocketed the money paid by the French administration for crops cultivated by the villages, and it was very common for them to force people to grow their private fields without any remuneration (Rondeau, 1980 p. 451-452). The case of Molobala village illustrates how the behaviour of the then chef de canton during the colonial period at this very day is reflected in conflicts about the village leadership. The present village chief is a descendant of a former king and son of the chef de canton. After 1991 his position has been challenged by fellow villagers who in addition to other charges refer to the improper behaviour by his father in the past (interviews carried out in the village in February and March 1996).

rural areas very few investments in physical and social infrastructure were made by the French (Loosvelt et al., 1995 p. 55-56, p. 60-61).

After independence in 1960 Sikasso was made a region and subdivided into seven cercles²⁰⁶ and 46 arrondissements including a total of 1821 villages. This division is being changed with the final implementation of the ongoing administrative reform²⁰⁷.

7.2. Population

With a population of 1,473,895 in 1992 and an area of 71,790 km², the population density in the region (20.5 inhab/km²) is relatively high in a Malian context. There is a marked difference between the densely populated northern part of the region, including the Koutiala cercle, and the more thinly populated southern areas, where the Kadiolo cercle is found²⁰⁸. A total of 83% of the inhabitants live in rural areas (DRPS, 1994). Estimates of the population growth rate vary considerably from 2% p.a. to 4.2% (Loosvelt et al., 1995 p. 13; Bagayoko & Bengaly, 1995 p.3).

The dominating ethnic group in the northern Koutiala cercle is the Minyanka, while the Senoufo constitute the most important ethnic group in the southern Kadiolo cercle²⁰⁹. Until the first anthropological study of the Minyanka community was made by Danielle Jonckers in the 1980s, it had been common to consider it a subsection of the Senoufo community or at least not to make any major distinctions between the two²¹⁰ (Jonckers, 1987). It is now acknowledged that the two groups differ in several important respects, including the level of centralisation of decision making. Thus, in the Senoufo community it is still common to find hierarchically-organised extended families where the head of household has the sole authority. The Minyanka community, on the other hand, is characterised by a non-centralised organisation. Very large families are less common, and subordinate household members have more individual space (Loosvelt et al., 1995 p. 15; Wentholt et al., 1998 p. 4; Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 2).

7.3. Agro-ecological conditions

Conditions for production of cotton, cereals and vegetables are favourable in the Sikasso region, whereas the climate is not sufficiently humid for production of coffee, cacao, pineapple and bananas (Rondeau, 1980 p. 466). The region has the most abundant rainfall pattern in Mali:

²⁰⁶ The seven cercles are Bougouni, Kadiolo, Kolondiéba, Koutiala, Sikasso, Yanfolila and Yorosso.

²⁰⁷ The administrative reform has resulted in the establishment of 9 rural communes in the Kadiolo cercle and 35 rural communes in the Koutiala cercle (JORM, 1996 annex 3). For a discussion of risks and advantages related to the establishment of the many 'micro-communes' in the Koutiala cercle, see Koné, 1997.

²⁰⁸ The population pressure in the Koutiala cercle is the highest in the country: with a total number of inhabitants of 315,413 (1992) and a surface of 8,740 km², the population density is as high as 36.1 inhab./km². With a total population of 112,016 inhabitants and a surface of 5,373 km², the population density in the Kadiolo cercle is only 20.8 inhab/km² (DRPS, 1994).

²⁰⁹ In the entire Sikasso region principal ethnic groups are, in order of importance, the Bambara, the Senoufo, the Bobo, the Minyanka, the Fulani and the Samogo (Loosvelt et al., 1995 p. 15; Wentholt et al., 1998 p. 4; Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 2).

²¹⁰ Jonckers' study *La société minyanka du Mali* is praised as the first and very successful anthropological study of the Minyanka community that combines a historical, an anthropological and an economic anthropological approach (Amselle, 1988 p. 135-136). For another study published a year after the one by Jonckers, see Colleyn, 1988.

average annual precipitations vary from about 700 mm in the northern part of the region to about 1200 mm in the southern part of the region (CMDT, 1995b; Berthé et al., 1991 p. 8).

Soils are fertile, but many researchers are concerned about the level of degradation. The mainstream view of the situation seems to be that an increased population pressure exceeds the carrying capacity of the land²¹¹. The main problem highlighted by researchers is a decreasing soil quality due to acidification, 'soil mining' and soil erosion. This is explained by changing farming systems that imply a suppression of fallows and a rapid extension of the area cultivated. Under these conditions the level of application of fertilizers and manure and of soil conservation techniques such as construction of small dikes and tree planting are insufficient to maintain soil fertility. In addition to these problems, excessive pressure from cattle and deforestation resulting from increased domestic firewood consumption are often mentioned as factors further contributing to the degradation (Guindo & van Campen, 1994 p. 47-48; Berthé et al., 1991 p. 60; Bagayoko & Bengaly, 1995 p. 8-13; Maiga et al., 1995 p. 47; Giraudy, 1996 p. 3; Pol & Giraudy, 1993; Hesselting & Coulibaly, 1991 p. 22-26, Hilhorst & Coulibaly, 1998a p. 3; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998)

Tor Benjaminsen, who has a more optimistic assessment of the situation, has called attention to the fact that only few attempts have been made to quantify the regeneration and use of resources²¹², and that in particular there is a lack of studies over time (Benjaminsen, 1996 p. 5). Recently, he has challenged the mainstream view by the presentation of a study that shows that at least firewood-induced deforestation does not represent an urgent and immediate problem even in the most densely populated areas in the northern part of the region (Benjaminsen, 1997 p. 169; Benjaminsen, 1998).

Regardless of the conclusions reached with regard to the existence of a degradation problem, all researchers agree that the situation varies considerably from the northern to the southern part of the region. Even the most pessimistic researchers do not deny that in the southern Kadiolo area there is still plenty of uncultivated arable land, hence the present use of resources does not represent a threat to the carrying capacity (Pol & Giraudy, 1993 p. 22; Berthé et al., 1991 p. 9-13, p. 28; CMDT, 1993a p. 16-18).

Conflicts over natural resources

Regional differences with regard to land availability are reflected in the concentration of land tenure conflicts in the northern part of the region, whereas in the southern part tenure conflicts are still few.

²¹¹ In some cases the situation is described as very dramatic, e.g. by Souleymane Ouattara who refers to "une croissance démographique galopante" and a resulting "dégradation irréversible de l'environnement" (Ouattara, 1993 p. 13-15).

²¹² For an attempt to quantify pastoral resources (i.e. pastures, water and mineral resources) in the Sikasso region, see MDRE, 1994m p. 9-15. It should be mentioned that assumptions and calculations in the paper were questioned by participants in the 'réunion de concertation des structures gestion des terroirs en troisième région' held on 30 November 1994 at ESP-GRN, Sikasso.

Compared to the situation in other parts of the country (e.g. the Niger river delta) tenure conflicts in the Sikasso region are very few²¹³. In the Koutiala area, however, there is a tendency to increased involvement of the government administration in the solution of tenure cases²¹⁴ (Sanogo, 1994 p. 17; deuxième adjoint au chef d'arrondissement de Koutiala central, personal communication Nov. 1994). Increasing pressure on the land in the north and in consequence hereof increased awareness by villagers of the value of the land are believed to be major reasons for the registration of more tenure conflicts²¹⁵ (Hilhorst & Coulibaly, 1998a p. 3-5).

Other factors, however, may have contributed as well. During the recent decade, civil servants and traders in the Koutiala area have become owners of quite considerable cattle herds. When these urban-based cattle owners have conflicts with local farmers, they tend to go straight to the administration with their cases, instead of leaving it to village authorities to mediate. Conflicts, which would otherwise have been solved locally, thereby becomes registered by the government administration²¹⁶ (Yaya Sidebé, personal communication, Oct. 1994; Souleymane Ouattara, personal communication, Nov. 1994).

Finally, the more limited capacity of village-level political structures in this part of the region to manage village-internal conflicts seems to be a contributing factor. A few decades ago it would have been considered a scandal that a village chief was unable to mediate between two conflicting parties without involving the government administration. The loss of authority in recent years by many village chiefs in the Koutiala area has made people jump the village-level mediation and instead present their cases to the administration²¹⁷ (Yaya Sidebé, personal communication, Oct. 1994; Demba Samaké, personal communication, Oct. 1994).

²¹³ An unpublished study carried out by the Direction Nationale de l'Élevage in 1993 concludes that tenure conflicts involving cattle owners are very few in the Sikasso region as compared to the situation in other parts of Mali (MDRE, 1994d). See also Coulibaly et al., 1991 p. 69-82; Crowley, 1991b; Kintz et al., 1992 p. 21-37.

²¹⁴ Procedures for managing tenure conflicts are not very clear. According to the law ('Le Code domanial et foncier'), all conflicts that cannot be solved at village level have to be transferred directly to the juridical system. In practice, however, a tenure case is first seen by the chef d'arrondissement, then transferred to the commandant de cercle, and only in case of failure to solve the conflict at this level, it is transferred to the juridical system (Traoré & Fomba, 1991 p. 29; Yaya Sidebé, personal communication, October 1994). According to Tinougou Sanogo, an average of 5-7 cases are transferred to the juridical system every month in Koutiala (Sanogo, 1994 p. 17). During an interview in November 1994, the deuxième adjoint au chef d'arrondissement de Koutiala centrale estimated that during the five month of a rainy season, approximately 20 cases were received and passed on to the juridical system. Cases regard both conflicts in relation to borrowed land, conflicts concerning field boundaries and conflicts deriving from crop damages caused by cattle.

²¹⁵ A certain land grabbing seems to take place in some villages. Thus, more land than needed are cleared and fallows are suppressed. The increasing awareness of the value of land is also reflected in attempts to use the various government agencies to strengthen their claims vis-à-vis neighbouring villages. Numerous village wood lots are situated exactly at the boundaries of a village, and villagers have asked research institutions to install tests on pastures in disputed zones (Hilhorst & Coulibaly, 1998a p. 5; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998).

²¹⁶ The strength of the new type of cattle owners is reflected in a different outcome of cases transferred to the administration. Whereas previously cattle owners were likely to lose the battle in a conflict with farmers, civil servants and traders benefit from their connections and financial means, and they are often able to influence authorities to their own advantage (Yaya Sidebé, personal communication, Oct. 1994).

²¹⁷ The legitimacy crisis of village-level political structures is discussed in further details in the next chapter.

The situation is very different in the Kadiolo area in the south. In this part of the region only few conflicts reach the government administration²¹⁸. Although rarely brought to the knowledge of the government administration, conflicts between sedentary farmers and transhumant pastoralists seem to be on the increase (Sanogo, 1994 p. 35). After the return in the early 1990s of a significant number of Malian pastoralists from Côte d'Ivoire²¹⁹, the pressure on pastures has been growing²²⁰ (MDRE, 1994m p.3). Usually transhumant pastoralists like the sedentary population prefer to leave the solution of conflicts to village-level political structures²²¹, but in some cases violent conflicts have forced government authorities to intervene²²² (chef d'arrondissement Kadiolo central, personal communication Nov. 1994).

The limited number of tenure cases presented to the administration in this part of the region is likely to be explained first, by the more abundant pastures and second, by the authority still possessed by village chiefs in the south²²³ (Sanogo, 1994 p. 13-16; Souleymane Ouattara, personal communication, Nov. 1994).

7.4. Economic profile

Cotton constitutes the main economic axis in the region, but the production structure is highly diversified and includes both cereals and vegetable production, livestock production and a range of non-farm activities such as e.g. migration, trade and handicraft.

Cotton

With a wish to break the American control of the provision of cotton to the French textile industry, the French colonial power in the beginning of the century launched an extensive programme to promote cotton cultivation in West Africa. Despite the existence of a well-

²¹⁸ In Kadiolo central only two cases were ongoing when the chef d'arrondissement was interviewed in November 1994. One of the cases dated back to 1956: for three decades the case had been presented to the administration at regular intervals without ever being transferred to the legal system. Similar information was given by chefs d'arrondissement in Fourou and Loulouni (Interviews carried out in October and November 1994).

²¹⁹ In the early-1990s violent conflicts between Ivorian farmers and Malian transhumant pastoralists resulted in the adoption by the Ivorian government of a range of laws that seriously obstructed the movements by Malian pastoralists in Côte d'Ivoire, e.g. a demand that cattle can only be transported across the border by vehicles (Intérim du Directeur Régional de l'Élevage in Sikasso, personal communication, September 1994).

²²⁰ The majority of conflicts are around watering points. More cattle are coming into the region from outside, and it has furthermore contributed to increasing conflicts that farmers are now establishing small gardens of vegetables or larger unfenced plots of rice around land previously treated as 'livestock-only zones' (Joshua Ramisch, personal communication, August 1998). During village interviews taken in N'Golokasso, Chième and Nafegue, all situated in the Kadiolo cercle close to the border to Côte d'Ivoire, the issue of transhumant pastoralists were brought up again and again (November-December 1994).

²²¹ Herders do not have much choice and are inevitably classed as the villains, when village-level authorities resolve a conflict (Joshua Ramisch, personal communication, August 1998).

²²² This was the case when in 1992 a Fulani transhumant pastoralist killed a woman from N'Golokasso village. In revenge he was killed himself by a group of young men from the village. The young men executing an order by the village chief were taken to prison by the chef d'arrondissement. After the village in 1995 had paid 700,000 CFA (= 7,000 FF) two of the men were released, while two others remained in prison when the latest interview was taken in February 1996 (information given by the village population and the village chief in Dec. 1994 and Feb. 1996).

²²³ A third factor possibly contributing to the limited number of conflicts between villagers is the existence of taboos concerning conflicts over land. People rather leave the land to somebody else than risk to cause the anger of ancestors by speaking about limits of the land. Such taboos also exist in Koutiala, but there they are gradually losing importance (Souleymane Ouattara, personal communication, November 1994).

developed local cotton production and handicraft cotton textile industries, French efforts generally failed. The measures used were forced cultivation of imported varieties (abolished in 1946), establishment of an extension programme, and introduction of tax payment in cash rather than kind. Prices, however, remained low, and competition from local handicraft cotton industries implied that exports were negligible. By the late 1920s the French had virtually abandoned the cotton programme in the Sikasso area. As the climate prevented a large scale production of other cash crops such as e.g. coffee and cacao, the French considered the region a labour force reserve for plantation activities in the coastal area (Roberts, 1995 p. 223-236; Fok, 1994a p. 330-331; Rondeau, 1980 p. 410-412, p. 466; Jonckers, 1987 p. 195-196)²²⁴.

After World War II the French made a second attempt. In 1949 the parastatal CFDT²²⁵ was established to promote the production of cotton in West Africa in order to generate an income from the colonies and redress the French trade deficit. Seeking to learn from past failures, CFDT made an effort to ensure stable and acceptable producer prices. Relatively soon production exceeded local demands, and with the assistance of the colonial administration²²⁶ the company got a monopoly of purchase, grinding and export of cotton (Deveze, 1994 p. 6-7; Fok, 1994a p. 331-332).

At independence, the importance of CFDT for the generation of incomes to cotton producers and export earnings to the country made the new government allow it to continue its activities without major changes. Unlike similar companies in neighbouring countries, CFDT gradually took up more and more development tasks. In addition to organisation of all aspects of production and marketing of cotton, the company also became responsible for extension activities in relation to cereals production, it became involved in provision of rural infrastructure such as roads and water supply, credit provision, organisation of farmers at village level, and organisation of literacy and account courses (Fok, 1994a p. 331-333; Deveze, 1994 p. 7-8; Marchant, 1991 p. 76-80). The partial nationalisation in 1974 of CFDT through the establishment of CMDT formalised the mixed role of the agency as both a public agent and a private sector actor with economic interests in cotton production, processing and marketing²²⁷.

Since independence the area cultivated by cotton has expanded rapidly: since 1960 the area has six-doubled, and in the decade 1984-1994 alone it has almost doubled²²⁸. In the northern part of the region the expansion started already in the 1960s, whereas in the southern part of the region

²²⁴ The French had a similar negative experience in Upper Volta where local cotton production was also well-developed before the introduction by the colonial power of production for industrial processing (Larsen, 1996 p. 15-16).

²²⁵ In 1949 the company was named la Compagnie des Textiles de l'Union Française and in 1950 the name was changed to CFDT (Compagnie Française de Développement des fibres Textiles). Today the French state holds 64% of the shares, while the rest is controlled by private interests (Fok, 1994 p. 331).

²²⁶ The assistance not least consisted in the collection of taxes that forced farmers to continue and even expand the production of cotton (Deveze, 1994 p. 7).

²²⁷ When CFDT was nationalised in 1974, the Malian government was given 60% of the shares in the new company CMDT (Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Textiles), while 40% remained in the hands of CFDT. (Bulletin de l'Afrique Noire no. 1697 Nov. 1994 p.6; Bulletin de l'Afrique Noire no. 1743 10 Nov. 1995 p. 3)

²²⁸ The calculation is based on addition of data for the CMDT regions Koutiala and Sikasso which together correspond to the administrative Sikasso region. The area cultivated by cotton in the Koutiala region was 13,999 ha in 1960 and 87,104 ha in 1994, while in the Sikasso region it was 6,710 ha in 1960 and 56,322 ha in 1994.

the process has only been gaining pace in the 1980s²²⁹ (CMDT, 1995b p. 3; Sanogo, 1989 p. 149). In the beginning, the production was characterised also by a marked increase in yields, but since the mid-1980s yields have been virtually stagnating²³⁰ (Fok, 1994 p. 113; Kébé et al., 1995b p.2).

Food production

Contrary to the earlier widespread belief that an expanding cotton production - as cash crop production in general - tends to replace food crops²³¹, it is the experience in the Sikasso region as well as in other parts of the Sahel, that cotton and cereals production are mutually reinforcing. The positive impact of cotton on food crops is explained partly by the introduction into cotton production of modern agricultural practices (such as mechanisation and the use of fertilizers) which also benefit the productivity of food crops. Partly it is explained by the fact that income from cotton production allows more flexibility in (and often reduction of) cereals sale²³² (Dioné, 1989; Raymond & Fok, 1995 p. 225; Coton et Développement no.17 1996 p.11-12; Giraudy, 1996 p. 8). Thus, in Sikasso cereals (millet, sorghum and maize) account for no less than 68% of the cultivated area²³³, while cotton represents only about 20%²³⁴. The remaining area is used for pulse crops (10%) and vegetables (2%) (CMDT, 1995b p.4; Coton et Développement no.17, 1994 p.6). The Sikasso region is self-sufficient in food, and the cereals production per capita is considerably higher than in other regions of Mali²³⁵ (MATDB, 1987; Kébé & Brons, 1994 p. 10-11; Coton et Développement no. 17 1996 p. 11).

At the household level the positive correlation between cotton and cereals production is reflected in the fact that coarse grain production per capita, net grain sales per farm, and per capita grain availability are markedly higher for cotton producers than for non-cotton producers, and higher for large-scale cotton producers than for small-scale producers (Weber et al., 1988 p. 1047;

²²⁹ In the Koutiala region the area cultivated increased by a factor 3.7 in the period 1960 to 1980 (52,417 ha in 1980), while in the Sikasso region the increase in the same period was 2.8 (18,867 ha in 1980). After 1980 the increase, however, has been more rapid in the Sikasso region (200% from 1980 to 1994) than in the Koutiala region (66% from 1980 to 1994).

²³⁰ In the Koutiala area average yields in 1960 were about 200 kg/ha, in 1985/86 they reached 1,300 kg/ha and since then they have varied around this level. In the southern part of the region yields are still increasing but at a lower level. In an estimate of the development until year 2000, CMDT does not expect a yield increase above 1,300-1,400 kg/ha (CMDT, 1995b p. 3; Giraudy, 1996 p. 6).

²³¹ This view is represented in e.g. Campbell, 1984 who refers to the conclusion of several studies made in Côte d'Ivoire during the 1970s.

²³² According to Staatz et al., incomes from cereals sales depend on 3 conditions: 1) rainfall and soil conditions 2) the level of farm technology and 3) the level of institutional supporting services (Staatz et al., 1989 p. 713). Whereas conditions number 1 and 3 mainly explain the difference between the Sikasso region and other regions in the country, condition number 2 is central to the explication of social differences within the region.

²³³ Unlike cotton, yields for millet and sorghum have virtually stagnated since independence at about 800-1,000 kg/ha for millet and 400-600kg/ha for sorghum. Maize yields vary around 1,500 kg/ha (Kébé et al., 1995 p. 2).

²³⁴ There is an important difference between the northern part of the region, the Koutiala-area, where the share of cotton of the area cultivated by a household varies between 20% and 50%, and the southern part, the Kadiolo-area, where the share is 10-30% (Kébé & Brons, 1994 p. 3). CMDT expects the share of cotton to increase to 25% of the cultivated area in the region by year 2000 (CMDT, 1995b p. 4; see also Giraudy, 1996 p. 6). For cotton-growing households the share of cotton is 26% of the cultivated area, whereas for non-cotton-growing households the share of cereals is 82% (Coton et Développement no. 17 1996 p. 6).

²³⁵ Cereals production per capita varies around 380 kg in Koutiala and 350 kg in Kadiolo (235 kg for the entire Sikasso region) as compared to a national average of about 164 kg (PNUD, 1987; Kébé & Brons, 1994 p. 11).

Sanogo, 1989 p. 148; Dioné, 1989; Raymond & Fok, 1995; Coton et Développement no. 17 1996 p. 12).

Livestock

A similar positive correlation exists between cotton production and livestock raising. Since the introduction of animal traction in the 1960s, the number of draught oxen possessed by a household has been decisive to the size of the area cultivated by cotton, and there is a clear tendency for farmers to invest the surplus from cotton production in cattle²³⁶ (Kébé & Brons, 1994 p. 5; Kébé et al., 1995b p. 6-7; CMDT, 1992 p. 21). The simultaneous increase in cattle raising by farmers and the southward movement of transhumant pastoralists after the droughts in the 1970s and early 1980s have made Sikasso the leading cattle-producing region in the country²³⁷. After the devaluation of the CFA in 1994 and the recent return of many Malian transhumant pastoralists from Côte d'Ivoire, the importance of livestock production in Sikasso has further increased (Bengaly et al., 1993 p. 5-6; MDRE, 1994 p. 3; Marchés Tropicaux 28 June 1996 p. 1357).

Non-agricultural activities

In the case of cotton production and non-agricultural activities, the correlation seems to be inverse: the involvement by a household in out-migration, trade and handicraft increases as the importance of cash crops production diminishes. In a study from 1985 it was found that only about 26% of households surveyed in the CMDT area were involved in non-agricultural activities, whereas in the predominantly food crop producing OHV-zone²³⁸ nearly 50% of the households were involved in such activities (Dioné, 1989 p. 294-296). Due to extensive migration, the economy in the Kadiolo area until a few years ago has been oriented more towards Côte d'Ivoire than towards the rest of the country. With the expanding cotton production, however, the importance of migrant remittances seems to be decreasing²³⁹ (Tor Benjaminsen, personal communication, March 1997).

²³⁶ Kébé and Brons mention that an estimated 20-40% of net cotton incomes are invested in cattle, and an estimated 15% are invested in small ruminants (Kébé & Brons, 1994 p. 8).

²³⁷ Figures on livestock production are generally not very reliable because of widespread smuggling across the borders. Furthermore, a tax of 250 CFA/head of cattle, 100 CFA/donkey and 50 CFA/head of small ruminant discourages correct registration (Le Faye, 1992 p. 35). Still, it appears from official statistics that cattle production in the Mopti region until 1985 exceeded that of the Sikasso region, whereas in the late 1980s Sikasso took over the leading position (Bengaly et al., 1993 p. 5). In 1992 Sikasso accounted for about 20% of the total Malian cattle production (calculation based on MDRE, 1994 p. 3 and Marchés Tropicaux 3 March 1995 p. 462). Draught oxen make up an estimated 20% of the total number of livestock (cattle, small ruminants, donkeys and porc) in the southern part of Mali, while another 50% are owned by cotton-cultivating farmers (Marchés Tropicaux 28 June 1996 p. 1356). The remaining 30% are owned either by transhumant pastoralists or by urban-based groups such as civil servants or traders. During the 1980s the importance of the latter has increased significantly (Yaya Sidebé, personal communication, October 1994).

²³⁸ The OHV (Opération Haute Vallée) is a government agency established in 1964 to promote agricultural development in an area around Bamako stretching from Banamba in the north to Ouélessebouyou in the south (Dioné, 1989 p. 286-290).

²³⁹ Whereas reference to migration as an important aspect of livelihood strategies in the region is made in many reports (e.g. Ouattara, 1992; Kébé & Brons, 1994; Loosvelt et al., 1995), very limited data on its proportion and specific economic importance exist.

Farm income

Lack of reliable data on the distribution of total farm income on various agricultural and non-agricultural activities prevents a calculation of the real importance of cotton cultivation for individual households²⁴⁰. The only data available indicate the share of cotton in net income from farming activities. If net income from farming activities for an average household is calculated as the simple difference between production value and input costs, the share of cotton has increased from about 40% in the early 1990s to about 55% after the devaluation in 1994²⁴¹ (Kébé & Brons, 1994 p. 8; Kébé et al., 1995a p. 5). If, however, the *monetary* income is considered (i.e. food consumed by the household and losses are subtracted), cotton accounted for more than two thirds of net farming income for an average household in 1994 (Coton et Développement no. 17 1996 p. 11). With the exception of public employment, no activities generate an income comparable to the income from cotton cultivation (CMDT, 1992 p. 22).

Until 1985 net incomes from cotton production slightly increased, but the suppression in the mid-1980s of input subventions made the purchasing power of cotton farmers fall dramatically (Fok, 1994 p. 333; Raymond & Fok, 1995 p. 222; CMDT, 1992 p. 22). Although a price increase in 1991 and particularly the increase in 1994 have raised the incomes of cotton producers, their share of the surplus generated by the upsurge in international cotton prices and the 1994-devaluation remain very modest²⁴² (Dioné, 1995 p. 13).

7.5. Social indicators

The general impression by observers both inside and outside of Mali is that the Sikasso region, given the large production of both cotton, cereals and livestock, is more prosperous than other regions in the country (e.g. Staatz et al., 1989 p. 713; Maiga et al., 1995 p. 51; Bingen et al., 1995 p.5²⁴³). Thus, wealth is displayed in the form of consumer goods such as e.g. clothing, motorbikes and radios both in the larger towns as Koutiala and Sikasso and in surrounding rural areas (Sanogo, 1989 p. 238).

²⁴⁰ A limited study including only 30 households in five villages in the Sikasso region has attempted to describe the distribution of income on monetary income, non-monetary income from production and non-monetary income from other sources (Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 19-22). As the presentation of data reflects the primary interest of the study in differences of income sources for individual household members (notably differences between men and women), findings from the study are difficult to use for a calculation of the importance of cotton in total household income.

²⁴¹ A study has found that the share of cotton in average net farming income of a household in Koutiala was 45% in the period 1990-92, whereas in Kadiolo it was 37% in the period 1988-92 (Kébé & Brons, 1994 p.8). A study on the impact of the devaluation shows that in both cercles the share of cotton in average net household income from farming activities had increased to 58% in 1994-95 (Kébé et al., 1995a p.5)

²⁴² The nominal international price of cotton fibre rose by 180% in 1994/95, while the producer price in Mali rose only by 45%. CMDT reported a net profit in 1994 of more than 10 billion CFA, while the level of compensation for family labour invested in cotton by producers increased only by 5% after the devaluation (Dioné, 1995 p. 13). In 1995 the net profit of CMDT rose to 20 billion CFA, and in 1996 the expected profit was 30 billion CFA (L'Indépendant no. 54 22 February 1996 p. 6).

²⁴³ According to Bingen et al., the estimated household income for Malian cotton farmers prior to the January 1994 devaluation was 100,000 CFA or five times the national average for all farmers (Bingen et al., 1995 p. 5). A recent study including a limited sample of 30 households suggests that average household incomes in the Sikasso region may be as high as 230,000 CFA (Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 24-28). Due to the lack of reliable data on income, reservations must be made for all specific figures given.

Somewhat surprising, however, three studies of poverty in Mali undertaken in the early-1990s by the World Bank, the national statistical office and a team of international consultants all point to the conclusion that the Sikasso region ranges as one of the poorer regions in the country²⁴⁴ (World Bank, 1993a; MEFP, 1993; IDS, 1994). All of the reports apply a multidimensional concept of poverty which takes into account both consumption levels, access to health and education, knowledge and cultural values. However, in two of the studies the classification of the Sikasso region immediately after the poorest region in the country, the Mopti region, and well below the northern regions Tombouctou and Gao, results from definition of a poverty line based solely on expenditures²⁴⁵ (World Bank, 1993 p. 9; MEFP, 1993 p. 16-17). In addition to general problems such as limited reliability of data²⁴⁶, emphasis put on expenditures can be criticised for providing only a situational as opposed to a more historical picture of poverty, for neglecting the structural dimensions of poverty, and for not approaching the overall issue of vulnerability²⁴⁷.

Despite these - important - shortcomings of the studies, it must be acknowledged that also social indicators tend to assign Sikasso a less prominent position in the regional distribution of wealth than it could have been expected. Data are generally not very reliable, differ considerably according to sources, and more recent data are not available. However, even the most favourable assessments of the situation in the Sikasso region do not suggest health and educational standards markedly above the national average, and more negative assessments place it in the bottom of national statistics.

According to the national statistical office, thus, in 1980-85 a gross school enrollment rate of only 12% in the Sikasso region²⁴⁸ was the lowest in the country. The national average in the same

²⁴⁴ The three studies are 1) an assessment of living conditions in Mali published by the World Bank (World Bank, 1993a), 2) a study of the poverty profile in the country undertaken by the Mali National Office of Statistics and Data Processing (MEFP, 1993) and 3) a study carried out by a team from the Institut Universitaire d'Etudes du Développement (IUED) in Geneva as part of a larger assessment of World Bank poverty alleviation activities in various African countries (IDS, 1994).

²⁴⁵ The WB assessment bases the poverty line on the maximum yearly per capita expenditure of the poorest 40% of the population (World Bank, 1993a p. 8-9). The study by the statistical office, on the other hand, focuses on the household consumption basket measured in calories and takes as a reference point the level of consumption below which the population cannot satisfy food requirements. This is then converted into a money equivalent (MEFP, p. 13). The IUED team does not present a regional profile of poverty, but the report does not question those presented by the other studies. In fact the team substantiates the characteristic of southern Mali as relatively poor by including in the study a report on rural poverty in south-western Mali (IDS, 1994 p. 65-77).

²⁴⁶ The WB assessment is based on results of a national household budget survey conducted in 1988/89 by the Mali National Statistical Office, on an urban household consumption survey carried out in 1985/86 in the regional capitals, on a beneficiary assessment of urban poverty carried out in Bamako in late 1992, on a rapid rural assessment conducted in Kayes, Sikasso and Mopti in early 1993, on the 1987-survey of health and demography in Mali and on various studies carried out by NGOs and donors (World Bank, 1993 p. 8). The study published by the Statistical Office is also based on results of the 1988/89 consumer budget survey (MEFP, 1993 p. 9-11), and the IUED study is based on a critical reading of the WB assessment, on a mission to Mali by the team and on a special study on rural poverty in South-western Mali by Adrian Gnägi (IDS, 1994 p. 7).

²⁴⁷ These points of criticism and several others are raised by the IUED-team (IDS, 1994 p. 20-27) and are also touched upon by the authors themselves when e.g. they explain the relatively low incidence of poverty in Tombouctou and Gao by the relief assistance provided to these regions by NGOs and donors after years of drought and civil unrest (World Bank, 1993a p. 9).

²⁴⁸ The report operates with a regional division where 'rural sud' is more or less identical to the administrative Sikasso region. According to schoolteachers interviewed in the villages under study, the school enrollment rate has even been declining after 1991. Before the change of regime parents often bribed the head master, if they wanted to keep their children away from school, whereas the present general lack of respect for government authorities has made them abandon that practice, and many more now prefer to send the children to work in the fields rather than allowing them to go to school. In some villages (e.g. Koloni) conflicts regarding village authority are said to have

period was 23%²⁴⁹, and for comparison it can be mentioned that it was 17% in the northern regions (MEFP, 1993 p. 34). A slightly more positive picture is presented by two other sources: the World Bank poverty study points at Kayes and Mopti as the two regions with the lowest school enrollment rate (World Bank, 1993a p.20), while an older report from the Ministry of Territorial Administration compares a school enrollment rate of 17.8% in the Sikasso region to a national average of all regions except Bamako of 18.2% (MATDB, 1987). Regarding the literacy rate, the various sources differ even more. A rough estimate of 20% in the Sikasso region²⁵⁰ (Le Faye, 1992 p.4) compares favourably to a national average of 18% (1980-85) and in particular to an average of rural areas of only 8% indicated by the national statistical office (MEFP, 1993 p.5). World Bank sources, however, present a higher estimate of the national average (23% in the period 1980-85 according to World Bank, 1996 p. 217²⁵¹).

According to the regional statistical office, the estimated life expectancy in the Sikasso region is 54 years (Loosvelt et al., 1995 p. 13). Depending on the sources, this is substantially above or slightly under the national average (48 years according to World Bank, 1993a p.14 and World Bank, 1996 p. 216, but 57 years according to MEFP, 1993 p.7). Also figures on the number of inhabitants per doctor vary around the national average²⁵². The most striking information on the health situation, however, is the substantial share of malnourished children in this high-producing agricultural region. A survey by a Norwegian-Malian team has found that 41% of children under five years in Koutiala are chronically malnourished. This corresponds to the findings by the same team in the Gourma region in the northern part of the country (Diarra et al., 1992 p. 3; Oshaug et al., 1992 p. 12-13). Also the statistical office highlights the problem of widespread malnutrition in the Sikasso region and adds that also undernourishment among the poorest population is more prevalent than in other parts of the country (MEFP, 1993 p. 26-28).

7.6. Socioeconomic differentiation

The main reason for the surprisingly low average figures on indicators of wealth in the Sikasso region seems to be the existence of a substantial group of very poor households and a smaller group of extremely poor households. Thus, growing general prosperity in the region has been accompanied by increasing economic inequalities resulting in marked differences between farmers with ox-traction and sufficient equipment, farmers with insufficient equipment and farmers depending on manual cultivation (Jonckers, 1994 p. 121-122; Sanogo, 1989 p. 238-244;

contributed to the problem, as a strong village chief used to be able to make the villagers obey when he told them to send their children to school.

²⁴⁹ Also the World Bank indicates that the national gross enrollment rate was 23% in the period 1980-85 (World Bank, 1993a p. 15, World Bank, 1994e). According to UNDP, the most recent estimate is a national rate of 32% in 1995 (UNDP, 1998 p. 163).

²⁵⁰ The estimate is supported by a survey undertaken by DRSPR in 1991 that found literacy rates for men between 16% and 41% and for women between 1% and 11% (highest in the Koutiala area and lowest in the Kadiolo area) (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 1 in the annex).

²⁵¹ The most recent estimate (1995) of the national literacy rate is 31% (UNDP, 1998 p. 147).

²⁵² Le Faye and Loosvelt et al., both basing their information on data from the regional statistical office, differ considerably with respect to the number of inhabitants per doctor: according to Loosvelt it is 25,702 (Loosvelt, 1995 p. 37), while Le Faye mentions 19,500 (Le Faye, 1992 p. 14). The national average is 25,000 according to the statistical office (MEFP, 1993 p. 6) but only 19,450 according to the World Bank (World Bank, 1996). The older report by the Ministry of Territorial Administration compares 61,657 inhabitants per doctor in the Sikasso region to a national average of 45,634 (MATDB, 1987).

Colleyn, 1988 p. 62; CMDT, 1992 p. 20-22). The situation is reflected in the conclusion by the Norwegian-Malian nutritional study that differences in the nutritional situation of the various households are to be explained mainly by differences in wealth (Diarra et al., 1992 p. 11).

No studies on socioeconomic differences in the region have applied an approach that focuses on vulnerability and coping capacities. The few existing studies all focus on monetary incomes, primarily from agricultural and livestock production.

For lack of more comprehensive data, an indication of socioeconomic inequalities is given by data on the distribution of incomes from cotton production²⁵³. According to an estimate by CMDT made in the early 1990s, the wealthiest 20% of the cotton-producing population accounted for 34% of total net cotton incomes, whereas the poorest 11% accounted for a mere 5% of cotton incomes. Furthermore, a very substantial lower-middle group comprising about 40% of the cotton-producing population received only 27% of net cotton incomes (calculations based on CMDT, 1992 p.20-21)²⁵⁴. According to the same source, only the 10% best-earning households had a substantial monetary income from cotton cultivation. Even for these households, however, the income was considerably lower than that of civil servants²⁵⁵ (CMDT, 1992 p. 22).

Also data on cereals sales show a highly uneven distribution. A study carried out during two good cropping campaigns in the late 1980s found that only 53% of all households were net sellers, whereas 43% were net buyers of coarse grain. The concentration of cereals sales was important: only 16% of the households accounted for no less than 75% of total net sales (Dione, 1989, p. 282; Staatz et al., 1989 p.712). These findings are supported by more recent estimates that point to high correlation between the level of mechanisation and cereals sales²⁵⁶ (Coton et Développement no. 17 1996 p. 12).

Estimates on the ownership of livestock suggest a similar difference: according to data from the livestock service, 80% of the cattle belonging to cotton-producing farmers are owned by only

²⁵³ As all studies on income distribution have dealt only with cotton-producing households and no reliable data exist on the distribution of total farm incomes on various agricultural and non-agricultural activities, it cannot be documented that non-cotton producing households are the poorest households in the area. Hence, the only indication of socioeconomic differences can be obtained by comparing large-scale cotton producers to small-scale producers.

²⁵⁴ An older study from the early 1980s, also made by CMDT, suggests an even more uneven distribution of net cotton incomes. According to this study, less than 20% of the households accounted for more than half of total net incomes from cotton production, whereas another 48% of the households received only about 10% and the poorest third of the households received only 3%. The concentration was found to be particularly pronounced in the Koutiala area, where 23% of the households received 61% of net cotton incomes (referred in Sanogo 1989 p. 240-242). It should be noted, however, that better-off households tend to be significantly larger than poorer households which means that their percentage of the population is higher than their share of the households (CMDT, 1992 p. 21). Also studies made in cotton-producing areas in Côte d'Ivoire (Campbell, 1984 p.163-168) and Burkina Faso (Larsen, 1996 p. 90-92) point to increasing social differentiation as a general consequence of the introduction of cotton production for industrial processing.

²⁵⁵ The report presents a calculation of the monetary income from cotton cultivation/person/day: for the poorest 20% of the households it was 231 CFA, for the next group comprising 46% of the households it was 320 CFA, for the next group comprising 34% of the households it was 380 CFA and for the upper 10% of the households it was 510 CFA. This is compared to the average income of 1,200 CFA per day for seasonal labourers employed by CMDT (CMDT, 1992 p. 21-22).

²⁵⁶ An estimate of the net cereals balance/person/year in cotton producing households indicates 170 kg for the wealthiest households, 150 kg for the upper-middle households, 15 kg for the lower-middle households and only 10 kg for the poorest households who depend on manual cultivation (data are based on the DRSPR-typology to be explained below)(Coton et Développement no. 17 1996 p. 12).

20% of the households, whereas 10% of households in the northern part of the region and 30% of households in the southern part of the region do not possess any cattle at all²⁵⁷ (referred in Kébé et al., 1995b p. 6).

Typology of households

It is a common conclusion by most studies dealing with socioeconomic differences in the region that, roughly speaking, it boils down to the matter of mechanisation level. Thus, it has already been mentioned that cotton-producing households are better off than non-cotton producing households. Among cotton producing households it has been found that the size of the area cultivated matters less to the income than the level of mechanisation and the availability of labour (Sanogo, 1989 p. 242). While the latter is considered important, most authors concentrate on the level of mechanisation as the single most important factor determining the economic situation of a household²⁵⁸ (Jonckers, 1994; Sanogo, 1989; CMDT, 1992; Kébé et al. 1995b; Staatz et al., 1989). This is also the classification criteria used in a typology of cotton-producing households developed by the research centre DRSPR²⁵⁹ in Sikasso in the late 1980s. The typology defines five different socioeconomic groups as follows²⁶⁰ (Fomba & Joldersma, 1991 p. 4-12; Sanogo, 1989 p. 215-218, 243-244):

Group-m households are farmers equipped with tractors²⁶¹.

Group-a households possess at least two pairs of oxen, a plough, a multipurpose cultivator, a seed drill, a donkey or ox cart and a minimum of six animals in addition to the draught oxen. These households are usually referred to as 'gros producteurs': they have high incomes from cotton sales, and they are self-sufficient in food. Their main problem is a threat of declining yields, as fallows are gradually abandoned when the area cultivated is extended.

²⁵⁷ A calculation based on data provided by CMDT suggests a slightly less uneven distribution: 76% of the cattle are owned by 34% of the households, whereas 20% of the households have no cattle at all (calculation based on CMDT, 1992 p. 21).

²⁵⁸ Van der Pol & Giraudy, looking for factors determining the *intensification* of the production rather than those explaining social differences, point to availability of labour as the single most important factor. They mention tenure security and the presence of literate members of the household as other factors possibly influencing intensification (Van der Pol & Giraudy, 1993 p.10 and p. 15). In a discussion of socioeconomic differentiation among cotton-producing farmers in northern and central part of Côte d'Ivoire, Campbell also concentrates on unequal access to labour and agricultural equipments as the most important factors (Campbell, 1984 p. 160-163).

²⁵⁹ DRSPR (Département de Recherche sur le Système de Production Rural) is the farming system research unit of the Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER) under the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment. DRSPR which receives Dutch funding and has a collaboration with the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam changed its name in 1994 to ESP-GRV (Équipe Systèmes de Production et Gestion des Ressources Naturelles). With a view to classify households in relatively homogeneous groups based on the level of mechanisation and the size of their herds, the typology was developed by DRSPR as part of ongoing attempts to improve extension activities carried out by CMDT.

²⁶⁰ In practice the typology is not as clear-cut as it may seem. Thus, it has been reported by DRSPR (Coulibaly et al. 1993 p.11) and was also witnessed during my survey that the interpretation may vary from one CMDT extension agent to another. Thus, examples were found of CMDT staff who defined group-a households by their possession of 1-2 pairs of oxen, while others defined group-b households by their possession of a minimum of two pairs of oxen and group-c households by their possession of a minimum of one pair of oxen.

²⁶¹ In 1971 CMDT launched a mechanisation programme targeted towards better-off farmers with a large labour force and plenty of land. In the mid-1970s these farmers had an average of 27 ha and each of them produced 21 T of cotton (Jonckers 1987 p. 187-189). By 1990 mechanised farmers made up only 1% of the households supported by CMDT (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 23-24). It seems that recently tractors have become more popular after a cattle disease in 1993-94 killed many oxen (Thea Hilhorst, personal communication June 1998).

Group-b households possess at least one pair of oxen and either a plough or a multipurpose cultivator. Insufficient equipment makes it difficult for the household to respect the agricultural calendar, while lack of cattle prevents the application of sufficient amounts of manure. They have modest incomes from cotton sales and are only self-sufficient in food in good harvest years. These households are sometimes referred to as 'middle households'.

Group-c households have either no draught animals or a pair of oxen but insufficient equipment. The households have some experience with animal traction either from renting or borrowing neighbours' equipment or from past ownership of oxen now lost. They are usually short of land and/or labour, have poor incomes from cotton sales and are not self-sufficient in food. Together with group-d households they are referred to as 'poor peasants'.

Group-d households cultivate manually and have no experience with animal traction. They have very tiny incomes and are not self-sufficient in food.

There is a considerable variation in data on the distribution of households on each of the five groups defined by the typology. Table 7.1 that presents the most recent figures available should therefore be considered only a rough indication of main proportions²⁶².

Table 7.1. Distribution of cotton-producing households in the Sikasso region according to the DRSPR typology (1993)

	group-a	group-b	group-c	group-d	group-m	total
Koutiala region*)	40%	42%	13%	5%	n.a.**)	100%
Sikasso region*)	32%	38%	11%	19%	n.a.	100%

Source: CMDT 1995b p. 4

notes: *) CMDT operates with a division of the administratively defined Sikasso region in a northern region, called the Koutiala region, and a southern region, called the Sikasso region.

**) According to DRSPR, group-m makes up an estimated 1% of the households (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p.23).

The typology may, even on its own purely economic criteria, be criticised for overlooking the importance of incomes from trade, migrant remittances and remittances from relatives who are public employees and for underestimating income differences between owners of small herds of 6-10 animals and owners of large herds of e.g. 50 animals. More important, however, the typology totally neglects political dimensions of wealth and poverty. It says little about *processes* of differentiation in which political power is an important element but provides only a situational analysis based on economic indicators at a given moment of time.

²⁶² Even data produced by CMDT vary substantially, compare e.g. CMDT, 1992 p. 2 where 20% of the households are classified as group-d to the figures in the table based on CMDT, 1995b p.4. In the village survey undertaken in relation to the present study, the position of each of the 312 respondents according to the DRSPR typology was noted. Results of the survey show that the distribution between the four groups varies substantially among villages, and it is notable that in all ten villages under study except two, the share of respondents in the better-off groups (a and b) are considerably below the average for the area given by CMDT (see table C and D in the annex).

Causes of differentiation

As regards *the causes* of differentiation, no researcher would claim that processes of economic differentiation are recent phenomena and that the society before the introduction of the cotton economy was characterised by equality (Jonckers, 1994 p. 123). However, there seems to be agreement about the importance of the cotton economy for the differentiation process that has characterised the region during recent decades. Among the few existing studies the above-mentioned focus on the level of mechanisation makes most authors concentrate on access to capital input from outside the household, and more specifically access to credit, as the single most important factor determining the socioeconomic situation of a household²⁶³ (Dioné, 1989 p. 308-309; IDS, 1994 p. 70; Jonckers, 1994 p. 128).

Credit for agricultural equipment and input was initially managed by CMDT which gave credit to individual farmers. With the establishment of AVs (Associations villageoises - village associations²⁶⁴ - in the northern part of the region in the 1970s and further south in the 1980s), these organisations were made intermediaries between CMDT and the farmers. Although the AVs were responsible for the administration of credit provision, CMDT kept an upper hand in the credit system by maintaining the right to automatic subtraction of outstanding debt from payment to farmers for the cotton harvest. When in 1989 the credit system was transferred from CMDT to BNDA²⁶⁵, the cotton harvest guarantee was maintained, and in 1994 it was reinforced by a group guarantee from the AV. All members of an AV are now made collectively responsible for repayment of credit allocated to individuals unable to repay their debt (De Groote et al., 1995a p. 9-14).

The combination of a core role of the AV management in the allocation of credit and the automatic subtraction of loans from the cotton harvest is often stressed as a main reason for remarkably high repayment rates (Belloncle, 1990 p. 11). It is obvious, however, that the system may result in serious problems at village level. Thus, the active promotion by BNDA in recent years of credits also for consumption and the use of the group guarantee to ensure repayment of loans has created fraud and frustration in many villages. A study carried out in four villages in the Koutiala area has found that despite an overall repayment rate from the villages of 100%, between 5% and 17% of the households were unable to repay their debts. Some AVs try to solve the problem by selling goods such as agricultural equipment belonging to delinquent borrowers (De Groote et al., 1995b p. 7, p.14; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998). Findings from the village survey suggest that another response by the AV may be a relentless social

²⁶³ Dioné has found a correlation of 0.76 between cotton production and access to credit and concludes that the more farmers engage in cotton production, the better their eligibility for seasonal credit to purchase input, which again determines their output and thereby their income (Dioné, 1989 p. 308-309). Also Campbell discusses the credit policy as a factor reinforcing existing inequalities in cotton growing areas in Côte d'Ivoire (Campbell, 1984 p. 167-168).

²⁶⁴ The establishment and role of AVs are further described in the next chapter.

²⁶⁵ BNDA (Banque Nationale de Développement Agricole), established in 1981, is a parastatal that provides credit and collect savings. Eleven of BNDA's 20 branches are found in the CMDT-zone in Southern Mali (De Groote et al., 1995a p.10).

screening of applicants for credit that has made it extremely difficult for poorer households to be considered²⁶⁶.

The difficulties for poorer households are further aggravated by limited access to labour to compensate for their low level of mechanisation. On average poorer households are significantly smaller than better-off households²⁶⁷. Previously, labour associations ('tons'), which could be either lineage or age-based, used to ensure a certain assistance to the poorest households. While many of these organisations are still very active in the Kadiolo area, there is a tendency for them now to work only against payment which obviously limits the possibilities of poorer households to make use of them²⁶⁸. In the Koutiala area where the general level of mechanisation is higher, labour associations tend to disappear altogether, because heads of household deny younger members the right to work for others (Jonckers, 1987 p. 204; Hilhorst & Djouara, 1996 p. 7-8, p. 29; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication Oct. 1994 and June 1998). Thus, poor households often find themselves in a vicious circle where lack of credit forces them to borrow equipment from better-off households against repayment in the form of manual labour. This again reduces their own work force and thereby their income from cotton cultivation. Limited agricultural income has to be supplemented by migrant remittances which further reduces their work force and their income. While agricultural equipment is obtained with considerable difficulties for these households, it is easily lost when cash for tax payment and purchase of food can only be provided by selling off the existing equipment (Jonckers, 1994 p. 126; Sanogo, 1989 p. 243-244).

Better-off households, on the other hand, have access to paid day-labourers in addition to their own labour force (Sanogo, 1989 p. 243; Jonckers, 1994 p. 128-130).

In addition to economic differentiation mechanisms associated with the integration into the cotton economy, political changes in the same period have enforced social differences, notably in the Minyanka community. According to Jonckers, the replacement of the lineage group by the AV management as the core social unit of a village has contributed to the differentiation by centralising decision-making and economic allocations. In her view, the introduction of a structure organising *all* the population in a village breaks radically with the tradition in the past of many competing and sometimes collaborating lineage groups each of them with a certain

²⁶⁶ The difficulties for poor farmers are summarised in this statement by a group-d farmer met during the village survey: "*L'AV du village n'est pas sérieuse. Il faut que tu as beaucoup d'argent pour qu'elle fasse ta commende à la CMDT. Puisque c'est l'AV qui fait les bons du commande des exploitant à la CMDT, elle fait le choix et préfère généralement les chefs d'exploitations qui ont déjà assez d'équipements de travail. C'est cet état de chose qui nous fatigue dans notre travail*" (Nafegue no. 17). It should be noted that this description is questioned by researchers working in the region who stress that only farmers who are not producing cotton (i.e. typically farmers belonging to group-d) do not have access to credit (N'Golo Coulibaly, personal communication, August, 1998; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998).

²⁶⁷ According to data presented by CMDT, the average size of a household without equipment was 9 persons in 1992, while the average size of a fully equipped household was 31 persons (CMDT, 1992 p. 21).

²⁶⁸ Zuidberg and Djiré make a distinction between "...les associations de solidarité réunissent des membres d'une même famille élargie pour l'entraide entre les exploitations des membres associés" and "les associations de prestations de services contre paiement ne dépendent pas de la parenté, mais recrutent leurs membres au niveau du village ou du quartier" (Zuidberg & Djiré, 1992 p. 18). It is quite costly to employ a labour association, as the employer has to feed them well in addition to the payment in cash, salt or clothes (Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998). Chantal Rondeau concludes: "...ce sont surtout les familles les plus riches ou suffisamment nombreuses qui en profitent" (Rondeau, 1994 p. 187). Similar experience with the replacement by wage labour of traditional reciprocal labour arrangements have been found in Côte d'Ivoire (Campbell, 1984 p. 163).

responsibility to care for their less affluent members²⁶⁹ (Jonckers, 1987 p.105-111; Jonckers, 1994 p. 122; Colleyn & Jonckers, 1993 p. 43-45).

In the southern part of the region dominated by the Senoufo community lineage structures are still very important, and the more limited integration into the cotton economy implies that differentiation processes are less pronounced.

Conclusion

The portrait of the Sikasso region has questioned the widely held picture of it as one of the most prosperous regions in the country having favourable conditions for agriculture and income levels above the national average. Although statistical data are highly uncertain, available sources suggest that average living conditions are not particularly favourable compared to other parts of the country. Whereas the position as the leading cotton and food producing region in the country is undeniable, and very high incomes in certain households have been documented, social inequality and the existence of a group of poor farmers are reflected in relatively modest social indicators.

The chapter has described two main lines of division of the population: a geographical division between the northern Koutiala area and the southern Kadiolo area, and a socioeconomic division which cuts across the region and reflects the highly different situation of large-scale mechanised cotton-producers and small-scale producers who cultivate manually. While the north-south division is further discussed in the next chapter, emphasis in the present chapter has been put on socioeconomic differentiation processes which to a large extent seem to be linked to the integration into the cotton economy. Thus, a vicious circle has been described for small-scale producers who lack equipment and therefore have to borrow equipment from better-off households against repayment in the form of manual labour. This reduces their already limited labour resources and thereby their income from cotton cultivation. Large-scale producers, on the other hand, usually have both a high level of mechanisation and better access to labour.

Thus, far from a homogeneous area where standard extension packages can be used, the description of the region suggests that extension agencies are working in a highly heterogeneous context which is very taxing on their capacity to adjust and differentiate their approach.

Variations in the integration into the cotton economy account for major parts of the differences observed. This again points to a key role of government intervention in shaping the social setting in the region, but relations are more complicated than that. The north-south difference is very much conditioned by factors outside the traditional sphere of government influence, such as e.g. the orientation of the Kadiolo area towards Côte d'Ivoire because of geographical nearness, differences in population pressure and pressure on natural resources and the different social organisation of dominating ethnic groups.

²⁶⁹ This description is questioned by Thea Hilhorst who argues that competition among members of the AV leadership counters the tendency to centralised decision making (Thea Hilhorst, personnel communication, June 1998).

Similarly, the socioeconomic differentiation is both related to the integration into the cotton economy, as it has been promoted by CMDT, and to social processes that have to do with the organisation of authority at family, lineage and village level. Changes in these processes are further discussed in chapter 8.

The chapter seems to confirm the theoretical hypothesis that interaction between state and society influences the character of societal relations but is not fully explaining these, as important 'society-internal' dynamics play a decisive role as well.

CHAPTER 8. ONGOING CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL FABRIC IN THE SIKASSO REGION

Introduction

The present chapter further describes the heterogeneity of the Sikasso region as it adds a portrait of rapidly changing social and political relations to the picture given in chapter 7 of highly varying agro-ecological and socioeconomic conditions.

Together with chapter 7 it provides the background for understanding the interaction between government agencies and farmers analysed in chapter 9, 10 and 11. While the previous chapter sketched two main lines of division of the population in the region and dealt most thoroughly with the socioeconomic differentiation, this chapter further details the differences between the northern and the southern part of the region as a background for analysing the emergence of new social identities in chapter 11.

Thus, the chapter shows that changes in family structures, lineage structures and in village-level relations are presently very rapid in the northern Koutiala area where authorities at all levels are being questioned, whereas in the southern Kadiolo area village and family leaders to a large extent have maintained their authority.

8.1. Changes in traditional family structures

Although challenged (e.g. Becker, 1990²⁷⁰), the widespread assumption about a link between the introduction of commodity production and the breaking up of large farming households seems to find some support in studies focussing on the Sikasso region.

The dissolution of extended families is a well-established historical phenomenon in the Minyanka and Senoufo communities, but before independence the phenomenon was of relatively limited importance²⁷¹. When the French abolished the forced labour during the 1950s, the control by the head of household of its subordinate members was significantly weakened²⁷². During the following decades increased conflicts between generations, especially in the Minyanka community, have led to a growing number of extended families being broken up into smaller units, initially comprising only a nuclear family of a man and his wife (wives) and children and later including also adult sons with their families. (Rondeau, 1994 p. 92; Fok, 1994a p. 334; Ouattara, 1992 p. 27; Sanogo, 1989 p. 237, Jonckers, 1994 p. 122; Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 3).

²⁷⁰ Based on a study in a Bambara village close to Bamako, Becker argues that a wide range of different responses to the introduction of commodity production can be found. Thus, certain farmers prefer to maintain the relation to the extended family farm as the large household labour group may provide an economy of scale for the food production and thereby allow them more time to grow crops for sale on their individual plots (Becker, 1990).

²⁷¹ In the past as well as today the breaking up of an extended family was often related to rivalries among brothers (often of different mothers) concerning heritage of land and position in the family.

²⁷² According to Chantal Rondeau, the colonial period contributed to making internal differences and conflicts in a household more transparent, as the head of household would typically respond to the request by the French of providing labour by sending those members of a household that he perceived of as opponents to his power. Until the last decade of colonialism these conflicts could not be resolved as the only protection against the French consisted in the solidarity of a household. When the external pressure on the households was reduced, its subordinate members reacted by refusing to obey the head of household (Rondeau, 1994 p. 91-92).

Both in the Minyanka and the Senoufo community the extended family typically consists of the head of the family and his younger brothers and/or sons and their wives and children (Jonckers, 1994 p. 123; Ouattara, 1992 p. 26). In addition to the common field, of the household mainly used for cultivation of staple crops, it is sometimes possible for its members to obtain a personal plot for cultivation of vegetables, cotton, rice, fonio, etc²⁷³. Also prior to the introduction of cotton, individual fields could be found, but at that time the control of a personal income from private fields remained the privilege of elderly people (men and women). Younger women were expected to use their personal fields for production of rice and vegetables for the consumption of the household²⁷⁴.

With the introduction of cotton the pressure on the head of household to allow personal plots increased, and the number of days dedicated to work outside the common field gradually went up from one to two to three days per week (Rondeau, 1994 p. 72-74 and p.110-112; Sanogo, 1989 p. 236-237). Access to a monetary income from individual plots has made the unpaid work on the common field considerably less attractive and has led to serious conflicts between the head of household and its younger members²⁷⁵. In the Koutiala area most heads of household have responded by refusing younger men the right to individual plots as this is considered the first step towards their establishment of a new production unit²⁷⁶. To keep the young men on the farm, heads of households are increasingly inclined to buy them consumer goods such as motor bikes and tv sets (Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998).

Also tax paying has become an issue of conflict. Whereas it used to be the responsibility of the head of household to pay taxes for all adult members, some of them now want their younger brothers or sons to use incomes from cotton production to pay for themselves (Jonckers, 1987 p. 197; Jonckers, 1994 p. 126; Fok, 1994a p. 334). Finally, forced marketing of millet from 1977 to 1981 has contributed to this development. While increasing the work load of the household, it reduced its income and thereby increased the discontent among subordinate members of the household (Jonckers, 1987 p. 198).

Conflicts between generations are believed to have been further aggravated by the way extension staff from CMDT have approached a household. While lack of influence on decisions concerning the income from the common field creates discontent among the younger men, CMDT interferes in this conflict by preferring to talk to those who cultivate the land, i.e. the younger men, rather than the old and retired head of household (Jonckers, 1994 p. 126). Furthermore, literacy courses and training activities have mainly involved younger members of a household who are more

²⁷³ According to Dembélé et al., women in the Minyanka community only have very small individual plots, whereas women in the Senoufo community spend most of their time on their individual plots. In none of the communities women have tenure rights to the land they cultivate as individual plots. The owner (whether their husband or the head of a neighbouring household) can reclaim that land, whenever he wants (Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 4, p. 17).

²⁷⁴ Jonckers makes the point that in the Minyanka community plots outside the common field were rarely individual but rather cultivated by small working teams such as e.g. a man and his brothers or a woman and her children (Jonckers, 1994 p. 123).

²⁷⁵ In the southern part of the region where cotton was introduced only in the 1970s, access to a monetary income from migrant work in Côte d'Ivoire seems to have played the same role as access to individual incomes from cotton production in the north (Rondeau, 1994 p. 92-93).

²⁷⁶ When a household breaks up, it does not happen overnight, but the process usually stretches over several years where younger members gradually increase their work outside the common field of the household (Rondeau, 1994 p. 110-111; Sanogo, 1989 p. 237)

perceptible to educational activities (Kébé & Brons, 1994 p. 14). This again has been a considerable asset for the younger men also at village level where they are often preferred for the positions as secretary and treasurer to the village association (Jonckers, 1994 p. 126).

Finally, the general exposure to a wide range of new consumer goods and a 'modern' way of life in the larger towns of Koutiala and Sikasso are likely to have further contributed to the wish by the young generation to become independent of the old.

The speed of the process of breaking up larger households varies considerably from the northern to the southern part of the region. In the northern Koutiala area it seems to be relatively fast, whereas the process is less pronounced in the southern Kadiolo area where cotton production was introduced much later. This is reflected in variation of average farm units from 18 members in the Koutiala area to 23 members in the Kadiolo area (Kébé et al., 1995a p. 8; Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 12; Demba Samaké, personal communication, Oct. 1994; Souleymane Ouattara, personal communication, Nov. 1994). It should be noted, however, that the organisation at household level features an extensive variation even within the same village. Thus, management skills of the head of household are of crucial importance to willingness of its members to stay together (Jonckers, 1987 p. 155-159; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998).

8.2. Changes in the role of lineage structures

Paralleling the changed organisation at household level, the importance of lineage structures as decision-making units in the Minyanka community seems to be on the decline²⁷⁷. First, the emergence of a multiplicity of social units (the many new households) renders decision-making within the lineage considerably more complicated (Ouattara, 1992 p. 28). Second, organisation by lineage of mutual assistance has gradually become weakened by the monetisation of work relations (Jonckers, 1994 p. 127; Sanogo, 1989 p. 245-246; Colleyn, 1988 p. 63-65). And third, the individualism superseding the 'esprit communautaire' simply does not encourage solidarity associated with lineage groups or - as seen from the point of view of younger family members - the concentration of decision-making power in what is looked upon as non-transparent bodies controlled by the old. In the Senoufo community, on the other hand, lineage structures are still very important (Ouattara, 1992 p. 28; Jonckers, 1994 p. 127; Sanogo, 1989 p. 244-246).

8.3. Changes in the political organisation at village level

Village leadership

In both the Minyanka and the Senoufo communities the position of chief of the land ('chef de terre') is inherited within the lineage of the first inhabitant of a village. With the introduction by the French of the position of administrative head of the village ('chef de village'), village power relations were seriously complicated. The mere introduction of a power division challenged the traditional political organisation, and furthermore the French sometimes interfered in the selection of village chiefs by taking a candidate of their own choice rather than the one suggested by dominating political forces at village level. In the Minyanka community changes in land tenure

²⁷⁷ Lineage structures are defined by Jean-Paul Colleyn as all the people who consider themselves descendants of the same ancestor (even if this cannot be genealogically documented) (Colleyn, 1988 p. 63).

and the spread of Islam into the region since the beginning of the century²⁷⁸ have weakened the position of chef de terre. In the Senoufo community, on the other hand, the chef de terre (or 'chef coutumier' as he is called here) still manages the majority of disputes over land (Jonckers, 1987 p. 106-108; Ouattara, 1992 p. 13-14; Crowley, 1991b p. 43, p. 46; Dembélé, 1997 p. 4; Coll, 1997 p. 47-50; Demba Samaké, personal communication, Oct. 1994; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998).

In addition to the two main political characters at village level, a whole range of political leaders at lower levels have existed and sometimes still exist²⁷⁹. These leaders together with the head of each of the lineages constituted the traditional village council ('conseil de village'), an advisory board to the village chief. Researchers have described the system as based on an equilibrium of power among the various leaders and have stressed the decentralised and negotiated character of power (Crowley, 1991b p. 47).

After independence, the new regime turned the village council into a formal political association of which seven members were to be elected by all male inhabitants of the village and approved by the administration, and 13 other members, who were *not* heads of lineages, were to be selected by the village chief. The village council maintained its advisory role to the village chief (Jonckers, 1987 p. 108-110). While the intervention by the government administration implied a (formal) weakening of lineage structures, hitherto represented in the council by all the heads of lineages, the position of village chief was further strengthened by his new role as village representative of the party.

In addition to the village council, the association of young farmers (ton) has traditionally had an advisory role to the village chief. Also the ton became subject to intervention by the new socialist regime who found it useful as a forum for education of the young rural population. It encouraged the establishment of 'Mali ton' in all parts of the country (Jonckers, 1987 p. 110-111; Coulibaly, 1987 p. 69-70).

The purpose of these interventions was to increase government control of the organisation of the rural population. The attempt was further strengthened after the military coup in 1968 when the new regime made membership of the party a precondition for obtaining agricultural credit, established a national youth organisation to replace the village based tons²⁸⁰, a national women's

²⁷⁸ Until the mid-19th century there were relatively few Muslims in the Sikasso region. Through merchants' trading networks and increased contacts to other areas, Islam expanded very fast in the beginning of the century. During the three recent decades, the spread of Islam has been particularly fast in the towns of Koutiala and Sikasso, and today almost all of the urban population and the majority of the rural population consider themselves Muslims. (Warms, 1992 p. 487-494; Jonckers, 1987 p. 202; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998). The spread of Islam has made the religious aspect of the work of chef de terre controversial.

²⁷⁹ During colonialism many villages had a chief of war ('chef de guerre') or a chief of the hunters ('chef de chass'). While the former is no longer to be found, the position of chef de chasse, a non-hereditary position depending on skills, is still very common. Ward chiefs ('chefs de quartiers') are hereditary positions within the lineage of the first occupant of the ward. Age-grade leader and heads of initiation societies ('chefs des sociétés initiatiques') have important religious tasks and may be replaced in case of failure such as e.g. hunger and social unrest (Jonckers, 1987 p. 109-110.; Crowley, 1991b p. 43-44).

²⁸⁰ L'Union Nationale des Jeunes du Mali (U.N.J.M.).

organisation to replace the traditional women's organisations²⁸¹ and considerably increased the practice of intervening in the selection of village chiefs.

Implications of various government interventions on village-level political structures have varied substantially among the villages and not least between the northern and the southern part of the region. In many cases villagers have just integrated the new structures into those already there without changing existing power relations (Coulibaly, 1994 p. 24; Soke, 1990 p. 9-10; Gentil, 1986 p. 70; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, June 1998). In other cases government interventions have created conflicts that have been smouldering beneath the surface for years, until the political changes in March 1991 made them erupt together with numerous other latent conflicts at all levels of the Malian society.

Whereas overt expressions of village-level tensions were previously kept down by government supervision and repression and the lack of freedom to organise outside government-controlled structures, the years after 1991 have been characterised by a questioning of all authorities. In the Koutiala area difficulties of village-level authorities are particularly pronounced. Some chiefs chosen by the previous government administration have been forced to resign, and in many other cases village chiefs face an undisguised contempt by their fellow villagers²⁸².

Previous government intervention, however, is only one among several factors that have contributed to tensions between the village leadership and other groups. Other tensions exist in many villages between descendants of the first occupant of a village and latecomers. Access by latecomers to important incomes from cotton production or migrant remittances has often challenged the internal power balance. In the Koutiala area examples can be found of villages where it is accepted that economic power is directly convertible into political power, implying that a village chief has to step down if somebody else becomes considerably more wealthy than himself²⁸³. Despite this acceptance of shifting the village leadership among the lineages, the decision of course is not taken without a period of serious power struggles. These struggles seem to have been enforced by the social turbulence after 1991²⁸⁴. In other cases the political elite has

²⁸¹ L'Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali (U.N.F.M.)

²⁸² Loulouni village illustrates the problem. A village chief supported by the majority of the village population was forced by the former government administration to resign. His successor selected by the administration did not enjoy the same support, and in 1991 he was forced to step down and leave the office to the former village chief. However, the one selected by the administration in the meantime had built up a certain power base in the village, and, therefore, the village is now divided into two conflicting fractions (interviews carried out in October 1994). Molobala and Sincina are other examples of the problem. In Sincina the former government administration tried to divide the village in two, as it was considered too big. Although they never managed to divide the village, the conflict between those, who wanted the division (a large ward in the village), and those who were against (the supporters of the village chief), is very much felt in the village (Interviews carried out in December 1994).

²⁸³ Whereas the position of *chef de village* (administrative) can be shifted according to the economic power of the lineages, the same does not regard the position of *chef de terre* (*chef coutumier*) that is always held by a descendant of the first occupant of the village (N^o Golo Coulibaly, personal communication, August 1998).

²⁸⁴ Although situated in the southern part of the region, Woroni exemplifies a village with a certain tradition for shifting the village leadership according to the economic power of the lineages. At the time of the fieldwork the authority of the village chief was challenged by two men who owe their wealth and influence to sons in important positions in the government administration (interviews undertaken in October and November 1994).

managed to avoid sharing their power with better-off latecomers, but also in this situation social changes after 1991 have intensified power struggles²⁸⁵.

A wide range of disputes concerning women, land issues and religious issues are adding to the problems in the villages. Especially 'le problème des femmes' is frequently mentioned as a major reason for internal village conflicts, whereas land conflicts and religious matters seem to be less common problems²⁸⁶. Also these disputes of course have existed long before 1991, but the difference seems to be that in the Koutiala area the village leadership often no longer has the authority to solve them when they emerge. In Kadiolo all such conflicts are still managed by the village chief without the involvement of government authorities.

Finally, the role of political parties should be mentioned. In the villages introduction of multiparty politics has often been referred to as the major reason for internal conflicts. This was denied by virtually all resource persons interviewed during the fieldwork, who insisted that the only role of political parties have been to enforce the conflicts already there. Opposing fractions now typically organise in each their party to get outside support for their position in internal fights²⁸⁷. In support of this interpretation speaks the fact that it is only in the Koutiala area that several parties are represented in the same village. In Kadiolo, where village chiefs have maintained their authority, there is usually only one party represented in a village, namely the one supported by the village chief²⁸⁸. Party-related problems also existed in Koutiala before 1991, as elections of candidates proposed by the party were not based on secret ballots in the villages. At that time, however, conflicts were suppressed by the one-party system, whereas the various political parties now add fuel to the flames²⁸⁹ (personal communication by Demba Samaké, Oct.94; Thea Hilhorst, Sept. 1994; N'Golo Coulibaly, Sept. 1994; Souleymane Ouattara, Nov.1994; Chéibane Coulibaly, Oct.1994; Yaya Sidebé, Oct.1994; interviews in the villages in the autumn of 1994 and in Feb. 1996; interviews with representatives from various political parties, Feb. 1996).

Associations Villageoises

A particularly important aspect of village-level political changes is constituted by the power struggles in and around the village associations.

²⁸⁵ Although the AV remained undivided in February 1996, Dossorola exemplified this situation (interviews taken in December 1994 and February 1996).

²⁸⁶ Rumours about 'women problems' are many. One chef d'arrondissement interviewed in the Koutiala area claimed to be presented with complaints from deserted husbands at least once every week.

²⁸⁷ Kléla where three different political parties are represented is an example of this.

²⁸⁸ During a group interview taken N'Golokasso, villagers refused that political parties had any importance to their everyday life and to the future situation of the village. They regretted the abolishment of the one-party system but seemed to see a more or less direct link between UDPM and ADEMA, now supported by the entire village (interview carried out in February 1996).

²⁸⁹ The preparation during 1995 and 1996 of the new rural communes and the legislatives and presidential elections held in 1997 has significantly enforced the presence of political parties in the villages. After the elections in 1992 most parties lost the interest in rural areas, and for a few years their presence in the villages were not very much felt. In order to gain support in the 1997 elections, political parties after 1994 renewed their interest in village-level campaigning and became involved in a wide range of issues regarding both village-internal matters and conflicts between the village and external parties (interviews in the villages, with the various political parties and with resource persons carried out in February 1996).

The first village associations (associations villageoises -AV) were established in the area covered by CMDT in 1974. The background for the emergence of these new associations was a crisis in the relationship between CMDT and farmers, upset about the dishonest practices of CMDT agents responsible for the weighting and grading of cotton. Researchers have interpreted the character of AVs differently: while some seem to see a direct connection between AVs and the traditional organisation at village level, in particular the ton of young farmers (e.g. Rondeau, 1994 p. 187), others see them as an attempt by farmers to organise independently of the CMDT (e.g. Bingen, 1994 p. 59), and still others stress their character as 'a social construct' by CMDT (Fok, 1994 p. 81-84; Jonckers, 1994 p. 128). The truth is probably, as suggested by Gentil and Mercoiret, that it was both: it was the result of a compromise of interests between farmers and the CMDT (Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 880). Farmers *did* demand more influence on the weighting and grading of cotton, but CMDT was quick to see the AVs as a means to improve relations between extension staff and farmers and at the same time a means to reduce expenditures, when unpaid villagers took over some of the tasks of paid extension agents²⁹⁰.

An AV organises all cotton-producing male inhabitants in a village²⁹¹. A special technical team, mainly consisting of young farmers, is trained by CMDT to undertake a range of tasks in relation to production and marketing of cotton and cereals. In the beginning, the new AVs were mainly responsible for weighting and grading of cotton. Soon new tasks were added, and during the 1970s and 1980s AVs became involved in distribution of inputs, distribution and repayment of credits, marketing of cereals, organisation of adult literacy courses, accountancy courses and training courses for young farmers, investments in village-level infrastructure such as village pharmacies, class rooms, store rooms, millet mills and wells, organisation of women's activities and the running of an environment programme (Le Roy et al., 1991b p. 36-40; Guindo & van Campen, 1994 p. 49-53; Cissé, 1986 p. 126-136). Especially the literacy courses have attracted the attention of the outside world²⁹².

Already in the late 1970s it became clear that many AVs were facing serious problems with regard to bookkeeping and proper reporting on credits and village investments (Cissé, 1984 p.

²⁹⁰ The fact that a similar transfer of responsibilities from government agencies to village associations have taken place in neighbouring countries supports this interpretation. In Burkina Faso the involvement since 1979 of village associations in marketing of cotton is believed to have resulted in a cost reduction of 40% compared to the previous situation where marketing of cotton was the sole responsibility of the government extension agency and the cotton parastatal (Larsen, 1996 p. 24, p. 29).

²⁹¹ Before 1993 women did not participate in AV meetings, except in a few cases where CMDT had made it a condition for support that a few women were included (Zuidberg & Djiré, 1992 p. 35; Sissoko, 1994 p.24). In recent years women have become represented in many AVs in the Koutiala area, while in the Kadiolo area it is rare to see a woman at AV meetings. The real influence of women, even when they are represented, however, is still very limited. Thus, Jonckers criticises the attempts by CMDT to integrate women in the AVs for neglecting the strength of women's association and instead forcing women into a subordinate position in male-dominated AVs (Jonckers, 1994 p. 130-131).

²⁹² Many researchers have pointed to the literacy training as the main achievement of CMDT, e.g. Le Roy: "L'alphabétisation en Bambara est à mes yeux la réussite absolue de la CMDT dans sa zone d'intervention" (Le Roy, 1993 p. 155) and Chéibane Coulibaly: "Mais les paysans concernés voient dans cette alphabétisation un des fondements de la prise de conscience des points de revendication et surtout de l'audace de leur forme d'expression" (Coulibaly, 1994 p. 54).

158-161). A small group of ex-fighters²⁹³ and a few school leavers were selected as secretaries to the AVs, but being the only villagers speaking and writing French, they tended to exclude others from the management and frequently misused common funds (Cissé, 1986 p. 132-136). In 1978 CMDT, therefore, launched an extensive programme for functional literacy and accounting in Bambara. It was improved several times and resulted in a programme combining intensive literacy training, accounting courses and systematic training for specific tasks targeted towards villagers responsible for management of AVs (Cissé, 1986 p.139-216; Belloncle, 1990 p. 10-11). By 1989 an estimated 20-40% of all heads of households had participated in literacy training courses²⁹⁴ (Le Roy, 1993 p. 155).

The various training activities, however, could not prevent the existence of serious internal tensions in the AVs. First of all, the AV is hardly an institution combining the best of the traditional community organisation and of modern democratic organisation as sometimes indicated (see, e.g. Guindo & van Campen, 1994 p. 49). In the beginning the AV management was dominated by young literate farmers²⁹⁵ who had the privilege of occupying the important positions as secretary and treasurer to the AV. As the politically dominating groups (the lineage of the first occupants of the village, the larger families, the better-off farmers) have gradually realised the importance of AVs, they have significantly increased their involvement in the management (Sanogo, 1989 p.243; N'Golo Coulibaly, personal communication, August 1998).

In addition to tensions between, on the one hand, politically powerful groups and, on the other hand, the young, who benefit from their direct contact to CMDT, tensions between management and ordinary members often exist. Quite substantial amounts are controlled by the AV management, and temptation to abuse resources is obvious (Le Roy et al., 1991b p. 44). That abuses and mismanagement of funds have in fact been widespread is well documented. In an evaluation report that shocked CMDT and the donors, Guy Belloncle in 1990 characterised the activities in the cotton zones as a general failure²⁹⁶. After having studied files belonging to a number of AVs, he found that in most cases lack of competence of the secretaries, lack of democratic procedures for presenting accounts to the general assembly of the AV, and lack of support (and external control) from CMDT had resulted in complete financial chaos²⁹⁷ (Belloncle, 1990 p. 16-24). Many other sources mention mismanagement of AV funds as a serious threat to village-level social relations (e.g. Jonckers, 1994 p. 129; CMDT, 1994d p. 13-14; Bingen et al., 1995 p. 8; Le Roy et al., 1991b p. 45; Fok, 1994b p. 174-176).

²⁹³ 'Anciens combattants' are men who (often involuntarily) have participated on the French side in World War I and II, the Vietnam war and the war in Algeria in the 1950s. An estimated 41,000 men from French Soudan were incorporated into the French army during World War I, while more than 200,000 men from French colonies in Africa were recruited during World War II (de Benoist, 1989 p. 95; Warmes, 1992 p. 490). Being French speaking, 'anciens combattants' enjoy certain privileges among their fellow villagers.

²⁹⁴ Women made up a negligible share of those participating in literacy courses. Of the 1,278 village associations trained by 1989, only 122 included women in the training, and in these only 28% of course participant successfully trained were women (calculations based on Zuidberg & Djiré, 1994 p. 58 and Le Roy, 1993 p. 155).

²⁹⁵ 'Neo-alphabètes' is the local label for those who have successfully passed the literacy training in Bambara.

²⁹⁶ 'Mali-sud II: des résultats globalement négatifs' (Belloncle, 1990 p. 14-15).

²⁹⁷ According to Souleymane Ouattara, the lack of transparency of the AV management was still a serious problem in the mid-1990s. There were usually no procedures for presentation accounts to the AV general assembly, and abuse by the treasurer of his position was only revealed if the village was visited by the CMDT internal audit (personal communication, November 1994).

Already before 1991, tensions concerning the AV management lead to the breaking up of many AVs in the Koutiala area, and after the change of regime this phenomenon has become extremely widespread²⁹⁸. Opponents to those hitherto in power (often people who enjoy a certain status due to their economic power) are forming new associations, and in some cases up to nine different village associations can be found in one village²⁹⁹.

Sometimes conflicts in the AV relate to tensions regarding the village leadership, but in the majority of cases mismanagement of AV funds play a major role in the conflicts³⁰⁰. In certain cases management problems brought to light also seem to have triggered the eruption of much more fundamental conflicts, e.g. among different lineages and wards³⁰¹. When tensions arise in a village regarding e.g. the geographical location of village infrastructure such as wells and health clinics paid for by the AV, the real problem usually relates to power relations among the various wards which again may reflect competition among different lineages³⁰².

The phenomenon of breaking up AVs has so far mainly been confined to the northern part of the region, whereas in the southern part only few examples were found of villages with more than one AV. A major reason for this seems to be that cotton has been introduced much later in the southern area where production is still significantly lower than in the north, hence much smaller amounts are controlled by the AVs. In the north the AV management deals with quite substantial amounts, and the political interest in controlling the AVs is therefore considerable³⁰³. In addition to this (and as argued above, probably also related to the degree of integration into the cotton economy), the maintenance of authority by traditional political leaders in the south is an important factor. As long as the village chief is respected and obeyed, nobody dares to suggest the establishment of a new AV in addition to the one supported by him.

²⁹⁸ The literature on this phenomenon is still limited. For two of a few examples, see Bourgoing, 1994 p. 10 and Barrot, 1994 p. 19-20. The description in the following, therefore, is mainly based on my own village study and interviews with resource persons in the area of whom I am particularly in debt to Thea Hilhorst, Souleymane Ouattara, N'Golo Coulibaly, Yaya Sidebé and Demba Samaké.

²⁹⁹ When interviews were made in the area in November 1994, Sogoumba village with 4,000 inhabitants, situated in the eastern part of the Koutiala area close to the border of Burkina Faso, was reported to have no less than nine AVs.

³⁰⁰ Koloni village exemplifies a strong relation between power struggle concerning the election of a village chief and the breaking up of the AV. When the old and generally respected village chief died in 1994, his son refused to succeed him. Instead three brothers of the former village chief presented themselves as candidates, and this became a signal to breaking up the AV in three (interviews carried out in October and November 1994). Kléla, and Dossorola on the other hand, exemplify the lack of such a relation. In these villages the AVs, at least until February 1996, managed to remain undivided despite of conflicts regarding the village leadership (interviews carried out in February and March 1996). Thea Hilhorst confirms the highly mixed picture of power relations in the Koutiala area and stresses that the village chief is very often not in control of the AV management (personal communication, October 1994).

³⁰¹ Among the villages under study, mismanagement is part of the problem in at least Sinkolo, Koloni and Molobala. In Koloni there is an apparent underlying conflict among lineages.

³⁰² Sincina is an example of this. The observation is supported by Souleymane Ouattara (personal communication, November 1994).

³⁰³ As an example can be mentioned the case of a village in the Sikasso cercle where the single largest producer alone was able to sell 80 T cotton after the harvest, while the total number of 118 households in the village together sold 2,000 T. This can be compared to the case of N'golopene village in the Kadiolo cercle where the total sale of cotton the same year did not exceed 19 T (example given by N'Golo Coulibaly, personal communication, August 1998).

Consequences of village-level changes

In Koutiala conflicts in some cases have costed lives either in violent clashes between opposing parties or as a result of poisoning of some of the parties involved³⁰⁴. Usually, however, the major consequence is that it is no longer possible to unite the entire village for joint meetings or common village activities. Thus, in many villages activities such as construction work and tree planting have come to a virtual stand still. Government extension workers complain that it is no longer possible to undertake group extension sessions, as they now have to approach each of the conflicting parties separately³⁰⁵. In some villages conflicts are even said to have had implications for the school enrollment of children and for the access by certain groups to the various social infrastructure in the village³⁰⁶. Finally, internal social conflicts have had consequences for power relations between the village and the outside world, as it has become difficult to make common decisions, e.g. concerning relations to neighbouring villages, the attitude towards interventions by the government administration, the approach towards wood cutters from towns, and relations to transhumant pastoralists. All this has resulted in a general feeling of uncertainty, and many people in conflict-stricken villages express a deep frustration about the chaos prevailing after 1991³⁰⁷.

In the Kadiolo area the political changes described above have been much less pronounced. Thus, in a comparison of the northern and the southern part of the region, the development during the 1990s can be said to have added a very important political dimension to existing differences between the two areas regarding agro-ecological conditions, integration into the cotton economy and socio-cultural organisation.

8.4. Changes in inter-village organisations

Before the colonial period a wide range of inter-village organisations existed. Initiation societies and hunters' associations usually included the inhabitants from several neighbouring villages. Mutual ties were enforced through intermarriages among the villages and joint religious and other parties. Villages having suffered a war or a period of famine and managed due to their mutual assistance had particularly strong ties (Jonckers, 1987 p. 111-112).

³⁰⁴ In March 1994 two people died in internal village conflicts in Kléla (N'Golo Coulibaly, personal communication, September 1994 and interviews carried out in February and March 1996). Rumours about poisoning are widespread and are said to explain the death of a village chief in one of the other villages under study (interviews carried out October-December 1994).

³⁰⁵ During the study carried out in the autumn of 1994, many examples of the difficulties of uniting a village for a meeting were found. When I initially joined the government extension services in their village visits in the Koutiala area, it was obvious that only a limited fraction of the village population turned up for the meetings. In one village where the authority of the village chief was seriously challenged, he was running around in vain attempting to make his fellow villagers come, but they just continued their work in the fields.

³⁰⁶ The school enrollment is said to have been affected e.g. in Sincina, where some parents have denied their children access to a school constructed by those supporting the village chief, and in Koloni, where the general lack of authority at village level is said to have made parents send their children to the fields instead of enrolling them in school. Also in Sincina village-level infrastructure such as e.g. a health clinic where the staff is paid by village funds have become subject to fights (interviews carried out October-December 1994).

³⁰⁷ See chapter 11 for a further discussion of this.

Despite the attempts by the French to destroy all relations uniting two or more villages, some of these structures survived during the colonial period. The discrediting of the role of some traditional authorities resulting from interventions by the French, however, also had a negative impact on inter-village structures. The weakening of inter-village relations continued after independence and was further aggravated after 1968 when the party increased its attempts to control all local-level organisations (Coulibaly, 1994 p. 24; Jonckers, 1994 p. 127-128).

When in the late 1980s farmers' discontent with CMDT was growing, a number of AVs started to have joint meetings on a weekly basis to discuss possibilities for putting pressure on CMDT to adjust producer prices (Coulibaly, 1994 p. 17-18). Despite the fragility of many AVs, discussed above, and their apparent dependence on CMDT, the structures turned out to be sufficiently cohesive to constitute the basis of enhanced inter-village cooperation and later the basis of the farmers' movement. While the emergence of the farmers movement is discussed in further detail in the chapter 11, a brief mentioning should be made of some of the other organisations that have emerged or have been revived after 1991.

With the freedom of association, approved by the national conference held in July and August 1991, interest groups of various kind have formed legally acknowledged associations all over Mali. Although the majority are both urban-based and urban-oriented, quite a few are representing rural interests (Josserand & Bingen, 1995). In the Sikasso region the emergence of a wide range of producer associations³⁰⁸, small NGOs³⁰⁹ and saving and credit associations represent such small organisations that are limited and local in scope but fairly autonomous of both the state and donor organisations. Among the saving and credit associations, Kafo Jiginew deserves a particular mentioning. With initial financial support from a French NGO and advisory support from CMDT independent local saving and credit associations were established in the Sikasso region in 1988. Soon after the establishment the financial support from donors was limited to the funding of educational activities for local treasurers, and by the mid-1990s farmers were responsible themselves for the management of their local association and the payment of advisors³¹⁰ (Lasina Djabaté, personal communication, February 1996; De Groote et al., 1995a p. 58-59).

In addition to the many new organisations, some of the so-called traditional associations experienced a revival when the state gave up its strict control. The hunters' association operating on inter-village level is a prominent example of this. Although the importance of hunting has decreased significantly, hunters' associations have managed to survive both the colonial period

³⁰⁸ Producer organisations are e.g. 'L'association des producteurs des légumes', 'L'association des producteurs des pommes de terres' and 'L'association des mangues' (interview with the regional director of la Chambre d'Agriculture, Sikasso, February 1996).

³⁰⁹ NGOs are still relatively few in the Sikasso region, and local NGOs that are not branches of international NGOs are very few, indeed. However associations of young unemployed people with a certain educational background (jeunes diplômés) are beginning to emerge and now carry out tasks such as e.g. garbage collection in urban centres (interviews undertaken in the autumn of 1994 and in February 1996).

³¹⁰ Initial financial support was received from Crédit Coopérative de France which was later replaced by four European NGOs. There are no financial relations between Kafo Jiginew and CMDT, and the only connection consists in the employment by the association of two former CMDT agents. In addition to these advisors, only the treasurers of the 63 local associations (as of February 1996) receive a payment and in this case the salary depend on the surplus of the association. All members (approx. 30,000 in February 1996) have a share of 5,000 CFA and are allowed to obtain three types of credit 1) credit during the hunger period, 2) short-term credit and 3) credit for the purchase of agricultural equipment. The repayment rate is close to 100% (Lasina Djabaté, personal communication, February 1996; De Groote et al., 1995a p. 58-59).

and the two first regimes after independence (Jonckers, 1994 p. 127-128). In 1993 a national federation of the various local organisations was established, and the structure now includes five administrative levels (the village, the arrondissement, the cercle, the regional and the national level) (Fédération Nationale des Chasseurs du Mali, 1993 p. 1-8). Whereas the organisation does not seem to be very forceful in the Koutiala area, it has obtained a status almost similar to that of a police force in the Kadiolo area. Thus, in Kadiolo armed local units of the hunters' association are patrolling the villages at night, and according to their own statements, they shoot before they ask if they catch a thief³¹¹. The strength of the organisation in the southern part of the region is reflected by the fact that the incident of crime seems to be very modest in this area. The Koutiala area, on the other hand, has suffered from a crime wave after 1991 as neither government nor village authorities have had the power necessary to control the situation (Thea Hilhorst, personal communication October 1994, interviews carried out in the villages in the autumn of 1994 and February 1996).

Conclusion

The chapter has further elaborated on the north-south differences in the region by describing marked contrasts in village-level social and political relations between the northern Koutiala area and in the southern Kadiolo area.

First, in the Koutiala area the process of dissolving extended families into smaller family units seems to be rather fast, while the speed of the process is less rapid in Kadiolo. Second, the importance of lineage structures seems to be on the decline in Koutiala, whereas in Kadiolo lineage structures are still very important. Finally, and probably most important, village authorities in the north to a large extent are losing the power to make their fellow villagers comply with their decisions. At the same time village associations are breaking up, and the previous concentration of decision-making in one AV is being replaced by the coexistence of several different AVs in a village. In the south the village chief has usually maintained authority, and it is still very rare to find more than one AV in a village.

These processes have been ongoing for many years, but the change of regime in 1991 has made many conflicts erupt. Conflicts within AVs and the undermining of the authority of village chiefs in the Koutiala area have gradually increased, but during the former regime problems existed only beneath the surface due to the lack of freedom to form new organisations. The reduction of government control of local organisations has been accompanied by a decline in the general surveillance of the population that has further contributed to the differences between north and south. Thus, in the southern part of the region maintenance of law and order has been taken over by village and inter-village organisations, whereas in the northern area local organisations do not have this power, and consequently the security situation has deteriorated.

The chapter has shown that the tradition for far-reaching interventions by the state into village-level affairs dates back to colonialism and has been gradually enforced ever since. While the French colonial administration interfered in local political structures by selecting chefs de canton

³¹¹ As expressed by a member of the hunters associations in Nafegue: *"Je fais partie de l'équipe des chasseurs du village, nous assurons la sécurité du village. Nous organisons des patrouilles nocturnes. Si nous rencontrons une personne qui ne sait pas parler sénoufou, il aura des sérieux problèmes avec nous"* (Nafegue no. 4).

and village chiefs of their own choice, the Keita and Traoré regimes continued and enforced the intervention by imposing party structures upon existing organisations. Also the support by CMDT to the establishment of village associations can be considered a continuation of the tradition. In addition to this comes the wide range of more indirect but probably even more important interventions in the form of tax collections, forced cultivation, integration into the market economy, etc.

Like in the preceding chapter, however, it must be stressed that local social and political relations are not a mere product of the interaction with the state. Marked differences between the northern and the southern part of the region is a clear illustration of the importance of 'intra-societal dynamics' in the shaping of the social forces with which government structures interact.

CHAPTER 9. EXTENSION AGENCIES IN THE SIKASSO REGION

Introduction

The purpose of the present chapter is to analyse a series of organisational-specific factors that condition the performance of the four agencies under study. As defined in chapter 3, organisational performance is understood as *the ability of an organisation to satisfy the demands by its clients*. In case of extension agencies it was proposed to approach the issue of clients' satisfaction by considering factors such as frequency and reliability of services, usefulness of services and the context in which interaction between extension agents and farmers takes place. Answers from farmers to these questions are reported in chapter 10, while in the present chapter they just serve as points of reference to discussions about conditioning factors.

In chapter 5 and 6 the shared environment of the agencies in the form of the action environment and the institutional context of the public sector was analysed. It was concluded that the Malian action environment, although not favourable, cannot be described as completely dysfunctional to development. In the case of the institutional context of the public sector, the analysis pointed to a less promising conclusion: it was suggested that institutional constraints are so many and so serious that it may not only negatively influence the performance of government agencies but in some cases be detrimental to their basic functioning. The extent to which this is the case is assessed in the following.

For each of the agencies organisation-specific factors conditioning their performance are analysed according to the guidelines provided by the framework established in chapter 3. By combining contributions to the revised agency theory with more recent contributions inspired by theories about workers' motivation and the importance of demand pressure, the chapter suggested that an analysis should consider six issues, namely *authority, rewards, organisational identification, peer pressure, work satisfaction by staff and demand pressure*. It was argued that demand pressure is particularly important, because it is through the response from clients and the general public that an organisation maintains the legitimacy necessary to exist or, alternatively, becomes aware that it lacks legitimacy and therefore has to adjust. The particularity of government organisations was found to be that they depend not only on their own legitimacy but on the legitimacy of the state as such.

All the four agencies are involved in different aspects of natural resources management, and they all refer to the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment (MDRE). The chapter, therefore, opens by a brief portrait of the ministry and of what Grindle and Hilderbrand describe as their 'task network', i.e. relations of collaboration and coordination among the agencies.

While three of the agencies (viz. the forestry service, the livestock service and the cooperative service) are clearly defined as government agencies (i.e. departments) in MDRE, CMDT has a particular status as both a public agent of the ministry and a private sector actor with economic interests in cotton production, processing and marketing. It is a government agency in the sense that the Malian government holds 60% of the shares in the agency³¹², it represents the Department

³¹² As described in chapter 7, the Malian government holds 60% of the shares in CMDT, while 40% are owned by the French parastatal CFDT (Compagnie Française pour le Développement des Fibres Textiles) in which the French

of Agriculture in the Sikasso region, and it has the same status as other government agencies in regional and local development planning and coordination. Furthermore, it is considered a government agency in the eyes of the population and thereby, similar to the other agencies, depends on the overall legitimacy of the state³¹³. It is not a government agency in the sense that it does not share the dependency by the other agencies on the institutional context of the public sector, but has its own more plentiful resources and its own recruitment and employment procedures. The mixed status of CMDT is an illustration of the problem of empirically distinguishing between state and society, as discussed in chapter 2. In analyses and conclusions in the following, its particular status will be taken into account.

In addition to available written sources, analysis in this chapter mainly draws on a total of 64 interviews with staff of the four agencies made in late 1994. Emphasis was put on interviews with front-line staff, but also cercle level staff, regional and national directors (or deputy directors) have been interviewed. The information is supported by interviews with a total of 40 other government staff (chefs d'arrondissement, chefs de cercles, the governor of Sikasso and other staff in the regional administration, other MDRE staff at national level, and members of various government planning units) and 40 researchers, donor representatives, and other resource persons. Finally, the chapter draws on some of the many personal comments by the 312 respondents in the village survey reported in chapter 10 and chapter 11. For a further description of the methodology applied, see the section on 'field work methodology and literature study' in the annex.

9.1. Ministry of Rural Development and Environment (MDRE): the task network

In the mid-1990s the MDRE had about 7,000 staff corresponding to close to one fifth of the total number of government employees. Both before the change of regime in 1991 and during the 1990s, the ministry has been subject to constant reorganisations. Numerous times the various departments have been split up between different ministries before they a few years later - and sometimes only a few months later - have been rejoined again³¹⁴. Coordination units at the national level have been established and abolished, and often several competing coordination units have existed at the same time³¹⁵ (Diallo, 1995).

state holds 64% of the shares.

³¹³ As expressed by the president of the farmers' movement, SYCOV, Antoine Berthé: "*pour nous, l'État et la CMDT ne sont pas dissociables. Ils se confondent. Parlez de la CMDT à n'importe quel producteur, il vous dira que c'est l'État*" (*Courrier de la Planète*, 1994). The statement was confirmed by interviews with farmers in the Sikasso region in the autumn of 1994 and February 1996.

³¹⁴ At the time of the change of regime the agencies were divided between two ministries, viz. Ministère de l'Agriculture and Ministère de l'Environnement et de l'Élevage. In March 1991 they were joined in the Ministère du Développement Rural et de l'Environnement that a few months later changed its name to Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage et de l'Environnement. In April 1993 they were split up again, when the Ministère du Développement was separated from Ministère de l'Environnement. In February 1994 they were rejoined in the Ministère du Développement Rural et de l'Environnement, and the agencies remained united during the period when the fieldwork was done, but in late 1998 the forestry service was separated from the rest, when a new Ministère de l'Environnement was established (MDRE, 1992d p. 2; Dudeck, 1994 p. 5; interviews with members of the MDRE Cabinet, the autumn of 1994 and Feb. 1996; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, May 1999).

³¹⁵ A coordination unit named CPSP/PNLCD (later CSE/PNLCD) was established in 1989 with a view to coordinate all activities within the field of natural resource management. When in March 1991 the Ministry of Environment that it belonged to was merged with the Ministry of Rural Development, another coordination unit, la Cellule de Planification et de la Statistique, took over this task. The first unit, however, was not abolished and for years the two units competed and countered each others efforts. Adding to the confusion was the establishment in 1991 of a new coordination unit by the World Bank with the task of coordinating efforts related to the Projet National de Gestion

For each of the departments, referred to here as agencies, the various organisational changes have had limited implications for their actual activities. Since their establishment, they have existed as top-down parallel lines of command from the national to the arrondissement level, and mutual collaboration has been virtually nonexistent. Below the national level where the cabinet and the various competing units are supposed to coordinate activities - but are unable to do so - no formal structures of coordination exist. Regional and local development committees at regional, cercle and arrondissement level³¹⁶ rarely meet and when they do, any questioning by others of the activities of a particular agency is considered unwarrantable interference³¹⁷ (MDRE, 1992d p. 3-4; MAEE, 1991 p. 13-21).

In many parts of the country the existence of the so-called ODRs³¹⁸, parastatals with the objective of promoting a particular crop or the development of a particular geographical area, and the multitude of projects and programmes funded by bi- and multilateral donors and NGOs are adding to coordination problems³¹⁹. In Sikasso this is less of a problem because the role of CMDT in the region implies that actors other than government agencies are few. However, when cross-sectoral collaboration is sometimes described as farthest advanced in the Sikasso region (Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 17), it tells more about the complete lack of collaboration in other regions than about the situation in Sikasso. Indeed, activities in the region are characterised by overlaps and serious gaps in the coverage of the services provided, while farmers are confronted with a wide range of agents each of whom deals with a particular aspect of natural resource management. Initiatives to improve coordination and collaboration have been given up because of the general fear by all agencies to become involved in joint activities headed by another agency³²⁰ (MDRE, 1992g p. 10-28; interviews with the four regional directors of the agencies under study and other regional government staff, the autumn of 1994).

In late 1994, when the interview study with staff from the four agencies was made, the only regular contact among the four agencies under study was related to their involvement in a donor-funded natural resource management project, the 'Test Zones programme'. Although meant to support the preparation of land management plans ('schéma d'aménagement de terroir'), the

de Ressources Naturelles and the establishment in 1996 by a group of donors of a coordination unit for the Plan National d'Action Environnementale (PNAE)(Interviews with members of MDRE Cabinet, the autumn of 1994 and February 1996).

³¹⁶ The regional and local development committees are explained in chapter 6.2.

³¹⁷ In a speech held in March 1992 the then Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Environment, Maïmouna Ba Sy, expressed the problem of the ministry very precisely: "*Chaque Direction reste crispée sur ses prérogatives anciennes, dépense de grande énergie et des trésors d'imagination à défendre son territoire 'domaine de compétence', ses attributions telles que détaillées dans des textes alors que les exigences de l'action et parfois les mots eux-mêmes n'ont pas de sens*" (MDRE, 1992d p. 3).

³¹⁸ ODR stands for Opérations de Développement Rural. They include, e.g. Office du Niger (ON), Opération Riz-Ségou (ORS) and Opération Pêche-Mopti (OPM). About the objective and structure of ODRs, see Pierot, 1979 p. 44-48. In the early 1990s an estimated 15 ODRs were attached to what was then the Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage et de l'Environnement (MAEE, 1991 p. 20).

³¹⁹ The issue of donor coordination (or lack of it) is another story that will not be dealt with here apart from mentioning that the problem seems to be particularly grave in the field of natural resource management where relations among main donors such as the World Bank and the French Development Cooperation (la Caisse Française de Développement) are best described as hostile (Interviews with donor representatives and resource persons, the autumn of 1994).

³²⁰ At regional level, a 'Comité Technique de Coordination' was established in 1993 in Sikasso, but when the last fieldwork was done in February 1996, it still remained dormant.

major impact of the project was its provision of some much needed funding to the agencies because it made it possible for them to fund activities part of their regular programme by funds for the 'Test Zones programme' (a brief presentation of the project is found in the annex).

The above description of the institutional problems in the ministry was valid when the fieldwork was carried out and has been so until recently, but an ongoing reform, meant to integrate its compartmentalised activities, is changing the picture. The reform, referred to as 'the action plan for MDRE', aims at dismantling existing departments as juxtaposed government agencies and will replace them by three new departments for a unitary extension service, for natural resource management and for law enforcement, respectively. Integration of staff from existing agencies into a unitary extension service is meant to imply that in future farmers will meet only one multipurpose agent who is supported by subject-matter specialists at cercle and regional level³²¹ (Diallo, 1995; CAMOPA, 1994; *Le Républicain* no. 115 23 November 1994; MDRE, 1994i; MDRE, 1994j; MDR, 1993c; MDR, 1993e; MDR, 1993f).

As the specific outcome of the reform was still not known when the last fieldwork was carried out in February 1996, descriptions and analyses of the four agencies in the following all refer to the situation prevailing before the reform³²².

9.2. CMDT

Introduction

As explained above, CMDT (Compagnie Malienne de Développement de Textiles) differs from the other agencies by having a mixed role as both a public agent of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment and a private sector actor with economic interests in cotton production, processing and marketing. Its legal status is that of a parastatal commercial and industrial enterprise (Bingen, 1998 p. 272).

³²¹ The history of the reform dates back to the national conference in July and August 1991 when the rural population protested against the poor conditions of the rural sector. In December 1991 an institutional study of the then MAEE was carried out (MAEE, 1991), and a national conference on the rural sector was held. With la Caisse Française as the lead agency, donors funded a thorough analysis of the rural sector ('Le schéma directeur du secteur développement rural', MAEE, 1992e vol. I-II) that provided the basis for a national seminar on institutional problems in MDRE ('the Sélingué seminar') and the subsequent establishment of CAMOPA, a unit with the task to prepare and implement an institutional reform of the ministry. During the process the World Bank took over the role as the lead donor to CAMOPA and demanded that also the Sikasso region should be included in the process. While la Caisse Française had wanted to apply the experience of integrated rural development by CMDT to other regions in the country, it was never its intention, that the Sikasso region should be part of the reform, and CMDT thereby should adjust to a new structure of a unity service. In late 1998 implications of the reform was seriously diminished, when the transfer of the forestry service to a new Ministère de l'Environnement excluded this agency from being part of the reform (Interviews with CAMOPA staff, staff from La Mission de Décentralisation, staff from la Caisse Française and resource persons, the autumn of 1994 and February 1996; Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, May 1999).

³²² The reform was initiated in mid-1996, but available sources do not indicate if the status of the Sikasso region has been finally established. When the last fieldwork was carried out in February 1996, it was still the perception of CMDT that the Sikasso region was excluded from the reform. Staff in CAMOPA, however, suggested that the issue of exception was not yet clarified and stressed that they were aiming at a reform comprising the entire country (Interviews with the regional director of CMDT in Sikasso and with CAMOPA staff, February 1996).

In an area covering about 10% of the total surface of Mali - called 'Mali-sud'³²³ - the company has the double objective of promoting cotton production and undertaking an integrated rural development programme. In addition to cotton production, processing and marketing, CMDT is responsible for all extension activities oriented towards food production, and for two decades it has been involved in construction of rural roads, rural health centres, village boreholes, promotion of animal traction, environmental protection activities, organisation of the rural population, provision of credit facilities and literacy, bookkeeping and accounting courses for cotton producers. Part of the funding for its various activities comes from donors, including the French Development Cooperation, the Dutch Development Cooperation and the World Bank which are channelling a considerable amount of development assistance through the company (CMDT, 1994b p. 3-5; Bingen et al., 1995 p. 7-8; Marchant, 1991 p. 76-80; Guindo & van Campen, 1994 p. 48-50; Zuidberg & Djiré, 1992 p. 22).

Since the nationalisation of the company in 1974, CMDT has acted as the representative of the National Department of Agriculture (DNA) in Mali-sud³²⁴. The mandate of CMDT is negotiated in a contract between the agency and the government (and since 1994 also representatives of the farmers' movement) that lists the activities to be undertaken by CMDT on the behalf of the government and specifies the financial relations between the two parties³²⁵. CMDT refers to DNA which is informed about all activities, but given the close links of the former to donors and especially to the French Development Cooperation³²⁶, DNA often finds it difficult to control and influence CMDT³²⁷. During interviews with high-ranking DNA staff this was regretted, and a critical assessment was made of CMDT's approach, including the mixing of commercial and public service activities³²⁸ (Interview with MDRE cabinet staff, Nov. 1994; CMDT, 1994b; MDRE, 1992g annex 3). As an example of CMDT's semi-autonomous status it can be mentioned that the agency has managed to negotiate that the third region (the Sikasso region) is excepted from a large extension programme initiated in the mid-1990s and expected to cover the rest of the country³²⁹.

³²³ Mali-sud includes the entire Sikasso region (the 3rd region) and the cercles of San, Tominian, Baraoueli, Bla and Dioïla in the 2nd and the 4th regions (CMDT, 1994b p.5). Of about 4,200 villages in the 'Mali-sud region' only 329 were not yet covered by CMDT activities in 1995. In recent years the programme has expanded significantly, and many new villages have been included (CFDT, 1995; Giraudy, 1996 p. 6).

³²⁴ The few staff members delegated from DNA to the Sikasso region refers to the regional directors of CMDT (MDRE, 1992g annex 3).

³²⁵ The first contract (the so-called 'Contrat-Plan') between the government and CMDT was signed in 1989, while the second contract was signed in 1994 by the government, CMDT and SYCOV (CFDT, 1992b p. 7; CMDT, 1994b).

³²⁶ Given the majority shares of the French state in CFDT, the French Development Cooperation (la Caisse Française de Développement) has indirect economic interests in the company, and CMDT receives a considerable financial support from la Caisse Française (EIU 1996-97 p. 61; Jeune Afrique 10-23 Aug. 95 p. 53; Cauris 19-25 April, 1995).

³²⁷ A similar point is made by Campbell regarding CIDT in Côte d'Ivoire (Campbell, 1984 p. 149).

³²⁸ Other points of criticism mentioned by DNA staff included the top-down extension approach applied by CMDT and the lack of interest by CMDT in the promotion of vegetables. Considering the general top-down character of all government extension activities, the first-mentioned point seems somewhat surprising.

³²⁹ CMDT has managed to negotiate an exception of the Sikasso region from a national T&V-based World Bank-funded extension programme (PNVA) (Interview with the national coordinator of PNVA, Nov. 1994; interview with staff at the French Development Cooperation, Dec. 1994).

The picture of a powerful agency that it is difficult for the ministry to influence, however, is far from unequivocal. There are several examples of situations where the ministry has demonstrated a strong will to make CMDT comply with its policies. One example is the intervention by the Minister of Rural Development during a farmers' strike in the Sikasso region in May 1991. While CMDT initially refused to discuss farmers' demand, the minister forced CMDT to adopt a more accommodating position towards the farmers' movement. Other examples include the transfer in 1993 of livestock activities in Mali-sud from CMDT to the National Department of Livestock against the wishes of CMDT. And finally, the contract between CMDT, the government and farmers signed in 1994 forced CMDT to accept to concentrate on cotton production in the future and gradually give up its general rural development activities³³⁰ (CMDT, 1994b; interviews with CMDT staff at national and regional level; interviews with MDRE Cabinet staff, the autumn of 1994).

Formal structures and decisions, however, are probably not the best reflexion of the relationship. Informally, there are very close links between CMDT and the top executive layer of MDRE, and many issues are handled through informal discussions. Thus, there has been a certain tradition for Directors of CMDT to become Minister of Rural Development and Environment, and many other ministers and heads of departments are former CMDT employees³³¹ (Jeune Afrique no. 1917 1997 p. 101; Jeune Afrique no. 1805-1806, 1995 p. 53; interviews with MDRE Cabinet staff, the autumn of 1994). The close relations reflect the national economic importance of CMDT. With cotton accounting for half of export incomes, and an annual contribution by CMDT to the government budget of USD 37 mio, CMDT obviously represents a core interest of the MDRE³³² (L'Indépendant no. 54 22 February 1996).

As regards the relationship between CMDT and CFDT in France, it seems to be mainly financial and technical. As long as CMDT is able to present a stable high-quality production of cotton, the agency in France does not interfere in its policy. Issues such as personnel policy, transfer of extension tasks to farmers and the policy vis-à-vis the farmers' movement are handled solely by

³³⁰ The changed mandate of CMDT illustrates that the Malian government has many other interests to consider than those of CMDT. Thus, it is believed to result partly from pressure from the World Bank who is working for a privatisation of cotton production and marketing and, therefore, has opposed the mixture of public and private interests in CFDT-affiliated parastatals. In Benin and Cameroon such privation processes have already been initiated (Afrique Agriculture no. 194 June 1992 p. 26-29; interviews with MDRE Cabinet staff, the autumn of 1994).

³³¹ Former CMDT employees in the state apparatus are often referred to as the 'CMDT clan'. The CMDT director general until 1992, Ousmane Sy, left to become the minister of Rural Development and Environment, and the present director, Drissa Keita, has earlier been Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Jeune Afrique no. 1917 1997 p. 101; Jeune Afrique no. 1805-1806, 1995 p. 53; interviews with various resource persons). The French Development Cooperation actively participates in the informal exchanges. Close personal relations among the CMDT management, top-level government officials and staff from the Bamako representation of the French Development Cooperation have often facilitate the collaboration among the three parties (Interviews with staff from la Coopération Française and other resource persons in the autumn of 1994).

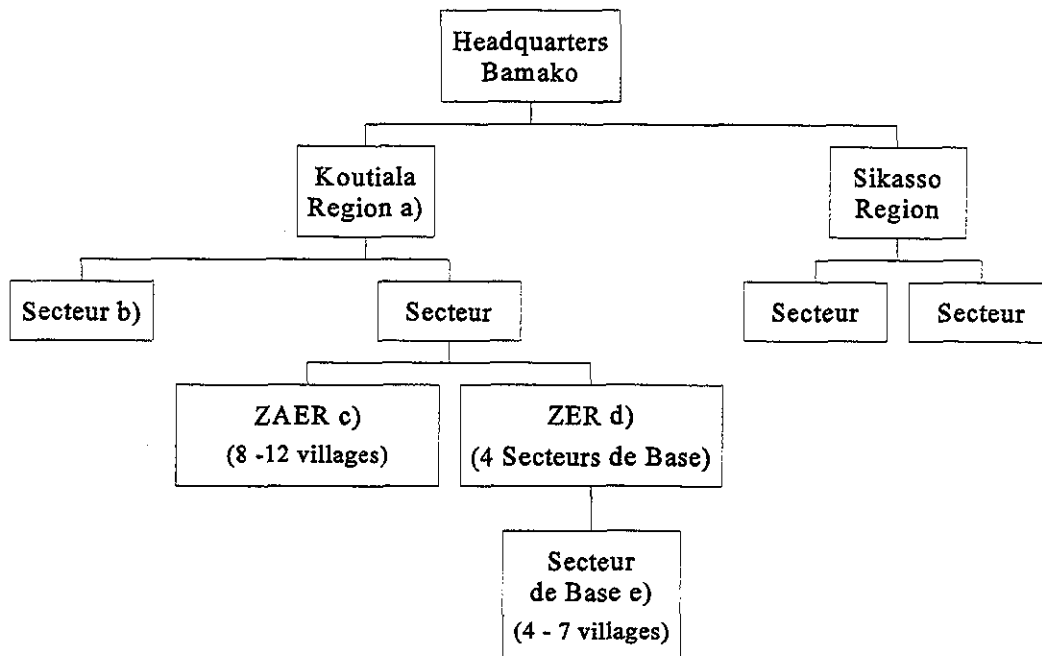
³³² The turnover in 1996 of CMDT of USD 357 mio, corresponded to about 60% of the entire state budget (Calculation based on data from Jeune Afrique no. 1917, 1997, Le Mali 19 October 1998 and EIU, 1996 p. 75). The same year the surplus of the agency amounted to more than USD 30 mio. (Jeune Afrique no. 1917, 1997). For a further analysis of the mutual interests of CMDT and the Malian government, see Bingen, 1998 p. 272-274).

the CMDT management³³³ (Interview with the regional director of CMDT in Sikasso, Feb. 1996; interview with M. Bérout, CFDT Paris, July 1996).

Organisational structure

The basic organisational structure of CMDT is based on the mechanical model. Management, authority and communication are structured according to a hierarchy ranging from the 'secteur de base', comprising 4-7 villages, to headquarters in Bamako. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and each staff member refers to his immediate superior in the hierarchy. All major decisions are taken at headquarters level and communicated downwards through the hierarchy.

Figure 5. Simple organisation chart of CMDT in the Sikasso region.



Notes:

- a) CMDT does not follow the administrative divisions in Mali but has regional offices in Sikasso, Koutiala, Bougouni, San, Fana and Kita.
- b) In a total of 25 'secteurs' the staff include i.a. heads of 'secteurs', secretaries, store keepers, educational staff, livestock agents and environmental specialists.
- c) A 'Zone d'Animation et d'Expansion Rurale' (ZAER) includes 8-12 villages able to maintain a considerable part of extension tasks themselves. Thus, a sole 'Chef de ZAER' together with a village technical team carry out all tasks related to extension, educational, input distribution, storing and collection of the harvest (Sanogo, 1989 p. 99).
- d) In a 'Zone d'Expansion Rurale' (ZER) a 'Chef ZER' is responsible for support to about 4 'secteurs de base'.
- e) In a 'secteur de base' an extension agent ('Chef SB') is responsible for 4-7 villages (on average 500 households), depending on the level of qualifications of farmers. He receives assistance from his superior, the 'chef ZER' and various educational staff from the 'secteur'. Source: Sanogo, 1989 p. 99.

³³³ According to M. Bérout, responsible for relations to CMDT in CFDT Paris, the management capacity of CMDT is high and there is no need for CFDT to have a close touch with the situation in the country. As an illustration of this, M. Bérout was not informed in any details about the relationship between CMDT and the farmers' movement after 1991 (Interview with M. Bérout, CFDT Paris, July 1996).

Of the approximately 2,500 permanently employees, about 1,000 are working at village-level, i.e. either at the level of 'secteur de base', ZER, ZAER or 'secteur'. Of these about 750 live in a village. In addition to the permanent staff, CMDT employs about 2,500 seasonal labourers (CFDT, 1995 p. 10; *le Monde Diplomatique* 27 Jan. 1994; Wentholt et al., 1998 p. 2).

The extension approach applied by CMDT is inspired by the T&V system. It basically aims at the distribution of a standard technological package to increase the production of high quality cotton. Multipurpose field agents are supported by a large team of subject-matter specialists at 'secteur' and regional level. All village-level agents follow a relatively tight six monthly work schedule that specifies the number of extension sessions to be held in each village, the number of days to be used for participation in staff training activities and visits by superiors, and the number of days to be used for internal CMDT meetings and report writing. Reports to superiors have to be provided within rather short intervals, such as e.g. every 10 days for reports from a 'chef secteur de base' to his 'chef ZER'. Although some time is set aside to supervise farmers in the field and see if they follow the instructions given, possibilities for village-based agents to improvise are limited (CFDT, 1995 p. 12; interviews with CMDT staff, the autumn of 1994).

The extension approach, however, is far from a 'pure' T&V approach. It has more in common with the 'modified T & V system' applied by the majority of African countries where several of the principles in the original version have been found inappropriate to local conditions (Hulme, 1992 p. 439, see also chapter 3). First, the agency does not concentrate on the communication of one simple and clear extension message only but rather executes what may be called an integrated rural development programme. Second, extension agents do not concentrate entirely on pilot farmers. Although it operates with the notion of 'paysans cibles', they are but one of several groups of farmers covered and are not expected to pass on the messages to other farmers. Thus, farmers are divided into four groups according to their level of mechanisation, and separate extension sessions are held with each of the groups³³⁴. And finally, as it will be explained below, the agency is in a process of moving beyond the mechanical stage and incorporating farmers in the organisation of its activities.

Authority

CMDT resembles other government agencies by its adherence to a traditional authority system where superiors decide and subordinate staff execute³³⁵.

Field staff generally need to be very sure that their superiors have approved of their activities before they dare to go ahead. During interviews with staff from the four agencies, CMDT staff were generally more worried than other staff about the risk of answering my questions. Thus, the only case encountered where a letter of introduction from headquarters was not enough to convince the staff to participate was found with CMDT. A 'chef secteur de base' did not want to

³³⁴ The system of dividing farmers into four groups (group a-d according to 'the DRSPR typology') has been described in chapter 7).

³³⁵ During a joint seminar for CMDT staff and representatives of the farmers' organisation SYCOV, held in Ségou in March 1993, the centralised and hierarchical structure of decision-making by CMDT was highlighted as a major problem for CMDT's extension activities (CMDT, 1993b p. 2-3).

answer any questions before it was documented that not only Bamako but also his immediate superior, the 'chef ZER' had given his consent.

The management system, however, cannot be described as a purely low-trust system. Field agents seem more ready to speak up in the presence of their superiors than subordinate staff e.g. from the forestry service. The feedback from extension workers during the regular training activities and internal meetings also implies that the dialogue is not entirely one-way.

It is worth noting, however, that the management of the agency had not been able to perceive the growing disaffection by farmers in the late 1980s when the ground for the later farmers' movement was laid. Field agents must have known of farmers' discontent, but when the strike broke out in May 1991, management was taken by surprise (Interviews with CMDT staff, the autumn of 1994).

Rewards

External funding and the surplus from cotton production allow CMDT to pay wages and allowances to its staff considerably above the general level in government agencies. Staff from other agencies are particularly envious of the provision of each CMDT field agent with a moped and a large budget for fuel (Interviews with CMDT staff and staff from other agencies, the autumn of 1994).

When in the late 1980s world market cotton prices declined, CMDT managed to restrain wage increases for some years. After the change of regime in March 1991 when all government staff was generously rewarded for the role played by public trade unions in the toppling of the Traoré regime, also CMDT staff got substantial wage increases³³⁶ (CFDT, 1992b p. 13).

While the linking of wage payment to performance is only indirect in the sense that wages are frozen in years with poor profits, promotions are directly tied to performance. Unlike other government agencies, CMDT undertakes career planning for individual staff members based on current evaluations of their performance, including assessments of their contact with farmers. High performance and good relations to farmers are rewarded by promotions, whereas poor performance may result in transfer to less prestigious positions (Interview with staff from CMDT Division Administrative et Sociale, Sikasso Dec.94).

Organisational identification

CMDT cultivates an image as the most popular and useful organisation of all government agencies. Its staff are constantly assured that they are something special and very different from the majority of government agents who are sitting idle in their offices and only work when forced to do so or motivated by allowances or bribes. Staff in CMDT offices arrive no later than 7.30 a.m. and often work long hours. Staff interviewed declared to have accepted that wages were frozen in the late 1980s in order to 'save the agency'.

³³⁶ In two years from 1989/90 to 1991/92 the total wage budget of CMDT went up by 50% (CFDT, 1992b p. 13).

It is part of the CMDT organisation culture to emphasize the outstanding qualifications of its staff. The extensive internal training programme is highlighted as a factor that significantly contributes to the good performance of the agency. During interviews, field agents often compared their qualifications to staff from other agencies and concluded that they know more about livestock raising than livestock staff, more about environmental protection than forestry staff and considerably more about organisation of the population than the cooperative service. While other government agents are believed to have much to learn from CMDT, the agency itself is considered 'simply the best' and therefore unable to gain much from closer cooperation with others.

Also in an international comparison, staff express confidence in the favourable position of CMDT. They refer to the difficulties of cotton agencies in neighbouring countries and are obviously aware of the high esteem by CFDT of their agency.

It is important to note, however, that the strong organisation culture has been somehow shaken in areas where farmers' anger in the early 1990s was turned against the staff. In parts of the Koutiala area it was necessary during a shorter period to evacuate field agents for security reasons. That experience gave many agents a shock, and in villages where farmers are still very critical towards the staff, serious tensions sometimes occur.

Implications for the organisation culture have been that a contradiction is emerging between, on the one hand, staff who blame the trouble on what they consider ungrateful and irresponsible farmers and, on the other hand, staff who sympathise with the farmers' movement. The latter are critical towards their own role as extension agents and stress the need for a much more direct involvement of farmers in all decisions regarding the choice of extension themes and activities (Interviews with CMDT staff, the autumn of 1994).

Peer pressure

CMDT field agents fulfill several of the conditions for the exerting of a strong peer pressure, mentioned by Leonard and Wade (Leonard, 1977; Wade, 1995, ref. chapter 3): within each 'secteur' they constitute a small and cohesive group who share common living and working conditions. Transfer of staff is not very frequent (staff usually stay 3-5 years in each position), and close relations to clients are encouraged.

Furthermore, many agents also share the same geographical and ethnic background, as there is an overweight of staff originating from the Sikasso region. Although in principle headquarters in Bamako is recruiting the agents from all over the country, in practice there is a bias towards recruitments from the Sikasso region. This may be explained partly by the fact that language capabilities are part of the criteria for recruitment. While it is possible for a field agent to communicate to most farmers in Bambara, it is considered an asset to master either Minyanka or Senoufo because it improves relations of trust to farmers (Interview with staff from CMDT Division Administrative et Sociale, Sikasso Dec.94).

Whereas the physical spread of agents may be a hindrance to the mutual monitoring of tasks, frequent training sessions and internal meetings where individual results are discussed provide the theoretical condition for a group to control its output (ref. chapter 3). When this does not seem

to result in a common definition of a (limited) 'fair day's work' but rather in a mutual encouragement to raise productivity, the general work satisfaction of employees appears to be the reason.

Work satisfaction

CMDT staff generally express a considerable work satisfaction. They appreciate their relatively high wages and benefits, but satisfaction is mainly derived from the positive feedback they get from farmers.

The general orientation towards cotton in the region constantly confirms their importance. Wherever they go, the main topics of talks among people are cotton prices, cotton yields, cotton inputs and cotton harvest, and the staff know that they play a key role in providing the results. The fact that the economically most powerful people in the region have derived their wealth from cotton production further contributes to the self-esteem of CMDT staff. Proudly staff tell that farmers sometimes refer to them as 'the saviours' ('les saveurs')³³⁷, and a young staff member expressed his view of their role as follows: "We want to do our best. It is our country and if changes are to be made, we have to make them!"

In addition to client relations, several other factors contribute to work satisfaction. Despite tight work schedules and close monitoring of their performance, village-based agents have a certain discretion because staff living far from their superiors cannot be controlled 24 hours per day. Work objectives are clearly spelled out, and close contact to superiors helps clarify all matters of doubt. Staff do not feel overqualified for their jobs, and neither do they feel incapable of meeting the challenges.

Frustration resulting from the farmers' movement seems to prevail mainly in the Koutiala area. Some field agents in the area where SYCOV emerged clearly stated that it has become more difficult and less satisfactory to work³³⁸. As one of them said: "earlier we were given a chicken when we visited a village, now we are asked what presents we bring!"

Other reasons for dissatisfaction mentioned - also by staff in the Kadiolo area - regarded the tight work schedule and what are considered limited possibilities to improvise. Some frustration was expressed over decisions about additional tasks coming 'from above' that made it difficult to find time to supervise farmers in the field. Finally, not all agents seem to unconditionally praise village life. For staff who have grown up in towns, it can be difficult to adjust, and the health risk for the

³³⁷ Statements by farmers during the village survey confirmed the particular status of CMDT: "*Nous vivons du fruit du coton. C'est grâce à la CMDT que nous gagnons de l'argent*" (Nafegue no. 4). "*La CMDT est notre soutien total. Elle a formé nos jeunes alphabétisés qui sont capable de beaucoup de choses*" (N'golokasso no. 17).

³³⁸ The critical attitude towards CMDT by many farmers in the Koutiala area was reflected in the following statements about the agency recorded during the village survey: "*Elle nous a appris les nouvelles techniques, maintenant que nous savons beaucoup, elle ne veut pas céder nous laisser travailler de nous même*" (Koloné no. 2). "*Le SYCOV peut bien nous donner des conseils techniques. Nous pouvons travailler sans la CMDT qui d'ailleurs n'est pas plus utile. S'il y avait un autre acheteur de coton je me rejoignais de cela car c'est l'achat seulement qui nous lié à la CMDT, elle ne sert à rien à part de cela. Tu as besoin de 10 sacs d'engrais, elle ne te donne que 5 sacs et elle vend le reste aux commerçants de Koutiala qui revendant très cher aux paysans. Cela n'est pas sérieux*" (Sincina no. 24). "*Le village à travers SYCOV est capable de fournir des conseils techniques sur le travail. Nous n'avons pas tellement besoin de la CMDT*" (Sincina no. 10)

family was mentioned by some as a serious inconvenience³³⁹ (Interviews with CMDT field staff, the autumn of 1994).

Demand pressure

Due to the economic importance of cotton production, demand pressure on CMDT is substantial. To a very large extent the pressure comes from government, donors and CFDT who monitor performance and constantly request the agency to do better. Investments by donors in research and development are important driving forces for achieving a high performance.

Equally important is the pressure from its direct clients and 'the general public' in the area where it works. The crucial role of cotton in local incomes ensures CMDT a clientele that is extremely interested in all the assistance it can provide them to increase the production of cotton. Thus, farmers have gradually become more explicit in their demands to the agency.

The development of trust between field agents and farmers is a significant aspect of relations. Because the agents live in the villages and share conditions with the population, farmers easier establish a face-to-face relations to them than they do to the majority of other government staff who visit the villagers as 'strangers from the towns'³⁴⁰.

The agency strongly encourages the enhancement of trust relations. In addition to the policy of basing field agents in the villages, the priority given to communication skills in local languages is an expression of this. As mentioned above, recruitment procedures consider language capabilities, and the agency also runs staff training courses in local languages. Moreover, the policy of avoiding frequent staff transfers form part of these efforts. It is attempted to let people stay a minimum of 3-5 years in each position, and superior staff who get along well with the local population can stay up to 5-8 years in the same position. Furthermore, relatively high wages for CMDT agents and their access to transport and fuel from the agency have tended to make them less inclined to ask farmers for contributions to travel expenditures, small equipment, etc. Finally, the attention paid to the importance of trust is reflected in the fact that environmental specialists are preferably recruited from the local area in which they are going to work. Due to the serious tensions between the population and forestry staff (to be discussed in the next section), environmental management is considered a particularly touchy issue, and it is believed that an agent with 'local roots' will better be able to explain himself to the population (Interviews with staff from CMDT Division Administrative et Sociale and other CMDT staff, the autumn of 1994).

Among advantages of having close relations to the farmers, field agents mention that they often discover problems which farmers would not necessarily have reported, had they been only at a brief visit to the village. They can monitor the work of farmers more closely than other agencies and thereby discover problems that would otherwise not have been raised, because farmers themselves are not aware that e.g. they apply equipment and pesticides wrongly.

³³⁹ During the time when interviews were conducted, a CMDT agent lost a child from malaria in a village cut off from the roads due to heavy rains. While this is not an uncommon tragedy for village populations, government staff living in towns are usually spared the experience of being unable to bring sick children to the hospital.

³⁴⁰ As expressed by a farmer in the village survey: "*C'est la CMDT qui nous aide et qu'on voit sous les yeux fréquemment par rapport aux autres services*" (Woroni no. 20).

The particular status of CMDT agents in the villages is reflected by their frequent role as mediators between farmers and other agencies. It is common, thus, that livestock owners address the CMDT agent first when they want assistance from the livestock service, because a letter from the CMDT agent will make it easier for them to convince the livestock agents to come. Also the establishment of contact to the forestry service by farmers interested in tree planting sometimes goes through the local CMDT agent (Interviews with CMDT field staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994).

As regards the responsiveness by the agency to a more organised demand pressure that goes beyond the wishes by individual farmers for assistance, CMDT seems to have become gradually more sensitive. As described in chapter 8, it responded already in 1974 to farmers' demand for more influence by initiating a policy of gradually transferring tasks from extension agents to village associations. The agency realised its own interest in satisfying farmers' demands while at the same time offloading some of its tasks on unpaid villagers. Over the years this policy has implied a substantial decrease in the number of field agents and a gradual building up local capacities, but it did not fundamentally change the relationship between an agency which set the agenda and farmers who responded accordingly³⁴¹ (Bingen, 1994 p. 59-60; Bingen et al, 1995 p. 7-8; Guindo & van Campen, 1994).

When in the late 1980s farmers discontent was growing again and they now wanted more involvement also in the overall management of the agency, CMDT was considerably slower to respond. For several reasons, relations between extension agents and local farmers were gradually deteriorating. First of all, farmers were angry because declining world market prices for cotton resulted in stagnating producer prices. Second, the wage freeze for CMDT staff resulted in a hitherto unknown pressure put on farmers to pay them bribes. And third, farmers felt that the process of disengagement should be speeded up as they now possessed the qualifications necessary for a complete replacement of CMDT staff (CFDT, 1992b p. 7; Bingen, 1996 p. 2-3).

Nothing significant happened until May 1991 when farmers threatened to go on strike just as the planting was to begin. They reckoned that a lost cotton harvest would be more harmful to CMDT than to themselves, as a diversified production structure would allow them to switch to other activities, while CMDT (and the government) depended on the cotton production. Although this was obviously the case, the regional CMDT management in Koutiala initially refused to talk to farmers' representatives, pleading that SYCOV was not a representative body for all cotton producers. Then the minister of rural development intervened, and remarkably soon the company adjusted to the new circumstances: the regional manager in Koutiala was replaced by somebody more willing to negotiate with the farmers, and SYCOV was recognised as the formal representative of cotton producers (Bingen, 1994 p. 61-62; Marchant, 1991 p. 82-85; SYCOV, 1994 p. 1-2; Coulibaly, 1994 p. 51-53).

Since then CMDT has accommodated a range of demands by farmers concerning price issues and conditions for collaboration, including improved accountability. This responsiveness to farmers' demands illustrates a considerably increased sensitivity to their wishes as compared to the

³⁴¹ As an example of the reduction of staff it can be mentioned that de 'secteur de Kadiolo' reduced the number of 'chefs secteur de base' by almost 50% in the ten year period, 1984-1994 from 38 to 20. During the same period the number of villages covered by each 'chef secteur de base' went up from 4-5 to around 7 villages (Interview with the CMDT Chef Secteur, Kadiolo Dec. 1994; see also Fok, 1994 p. 140).

situation when its agents were busily distributing a fixed 'extension package'. Still, there is a risk that the agency gradually co-opts the movement and thereby limits the de facto influence of farmers. This issue is further discussed in chapter 11.

Conclusion

CMDT exemplifies a mechanical model which has moved beyond the mechanical stage of systematically delivering extension messages and has incorporated a degree of learning from farmers and from the experience of its agents. As Gustafson has observed, such an agency may be able to induce real improvements in farmers' situation (Gustafson, 1990 p. 201; Gustafson, 1994 p. 131-133, ref. chapter 3).

It also illustrates the observation made by many researchers that seemingly unresponsive agencies have sometimes unintendedly increased the capacity of local farmers to put demands on the organisation.

The interaction between CMDT and farmers shows how fruitful it can be for an agency to work in close collaboration with its clients. The initial demand by farmers to become more involved in extension tasks was utilised by the agency to introduce a more cost-efficient organisation of the work. When the gradual building up of farmers' organisational capacities resulted in their more far-reaching demands for influence also on management issues, the agency responded by establishing a formal structure of collaboration allowing farmers an increased influence without threatening the objective of a stable and high-quality production of cotton.

That such a development has been possible, while other government agencies working in the same region have settled into a mechanical rut and have been unable to adjust to new challenges, is likely to be explained mainly by the particular character of the external pressure on CMDT. The fact that the agency has an economic imperative to produce cotton at low costs and provides a service requested by farmers has forced it to be more creative than agencies. These have been ensured a certain allocation of funds, regardless of their performance, and few other agencies provide a service considered economically useful by farmers. As consultations on management issues between CMDT and CFDT in France seem to have been limited, responsiveness to farmers' demands should probably rather be explained by the economic interests in services provided by the agency (both by the government, CFDT and farmers) than by its status as parastatal partially controlled by foreign capital.

The mixed character of CMDT is further reflected in the fact that the agency is less dependent on the institutional context of the public sector than the three others, but has access to resources that allow it a better staffing, higher wages and more mobility (transport).

Having stressed the advantages of the 'CMDT model', however, it is important to note that it has not been without serious problems also. The agency has not always been able to respond adequately to client wishes, and its hierarchical and centralised organisation has sometimes been fatal for management needs to be informed about the situation in the field. When in the late 1980s relations of trust between CMDT field agents and farmers were deteriorating, the agency was unable to perceive of the growing disaffection by farmers. Its initial rejection of the legitimacy

of farmers' movement was a fatal misjudgement of the situation, which could have had severe consequences, had there not been a political intervention.

The mechanically-oriented structures also constitute a hindrance to the flexibility of the agency in day-to-day activities in the villages. The tight and inflexible schedules of field-level agents make it difficult for them to respond to farmers' wishes and thereby counter the development of relations of trust.

The fact that these constraints have not been more detrimental to the performance of the agency must be explained by its strong organisation culture, a strong peer pressure, the system of rewards related to performance, a high work satisfaction of staff and not least the fact that field agents are village-based and thereby in a favourable position to develop relations of trust with farmers. Although very far from the 'platform approach' (Christoplos, 1996 p. 200, p. 208; Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996 p. 35-36, p. 41-42, see also chapter 3), the 'CMDT model' may be developing in that direction, depending on the strength of the farmers' movement. A development towards a more equal basis for interactions between extension agents and farmers first and foremost depends on the ability and willingness of farmers to move beyond their economic orientation towards price issues and put more emphasis on demands related to extension issues, too. Secondly, such a development depends on farmers' ability to avoid that CMDT co-opts their organisation.

While the future political relationship between the agency and farmers is open to many types of development, the economic consequences for the population of a mechanical extension model seem less open to changes. Many years of delivering extension messages in the form of standard packages have illustrated the difficulties of the agency in responding to differences in agro-ecological conditions and especially to socioeconomic differences. As described in chapter 7, socioeconomic differences in the region are marked and seem closely related to the integration into the cotton economy. As it will be shown in chapter 10, there is a very pronounced socioeconomic bias in CMDTs extension orientation favouring better-off farmers at the expense of the poor.

9.3. The Forestry service

Introduction

It is a common phenomenon in many countries that forestry services have developed a militarised tradition and emphasise repression rather than extension activities. Mali is believed to be the country in Francophone West Africa that has had the most militarised tradition of government-run natural resource management, and repression appears to have been particularly widespread in the Sikasso region (Freerk Wiersum, personal communication, Oct. 1996; interviews with PADREF staff and local resource persons, the autumn of 1994).

The history of the forestry service³⁴², at the time of the field study a department under MDRE, dates back to 1935, when it was created by the French and initially staffed with former military

³⁴² The official name of the forestry service was until 1995 Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts (DNEF) and after 1995 Direction Nationale des Forestières, Fauniques et Halieutiques (DNFFH).

personnel rather than foresters. Until the mid-1980s it had purely police functions, and its objectives were described as protection of all unregistered land, protection of forest areas against destruction by fire and protection of forest resources against overexploitation. The vast majority of its staff have undergone a paramilitary education of six months as part of their education which was only abolished in 1990³⁴³. From 1986 an extension objective was added to its mandate, but its major activities remained related to its broad but ill-defined police powers (Thomson, 1995 p. 1; Brinkerhoff, 1995 p. 205-206; Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 4-9; Lai & Khan, 1989 p. 5-12; McLain, 1992 p. 11-12).

Unlike many other countries where donors have tended to shun the unpopular forestry service, the Malian agency since the mid-1980s has enjoyed substantial support from donors³⁴⁴. In the Sikasso region the Swiss Development Cooperation, through PADREF, since 1984 has provided the forestry service with vehicles, allowances and fuel for tree planting activities³⁴⁵. According to local sources, the encouragement in the past by the Swiss project to change repressive practices has been rather modest, and the projects has often been accused of facilitating the repression rather than fighting against it³⁴⁶ (Interviews with PADREF staff and local resource persons, the autumn of 1994; see also Ribot, 1995a p. 32).

The change of regime in March 1991 exposed the agency to a fundamental shock. Farmers' reckoning with the forestry services was very violent. The immediate reaction was physical attacks on the most hated staff members, including in some cases the application of 'necklaces' of burning tyres³⁴⁷. When the physical persecution was beginning to ebb, forestry agents were forced to remain in their offices for fear of provoking new reactions. At the national conference held in July and August 1991 one of the major demands by participants was the closing down of the forestry service. The agency survived, but for several years it was completely paralysed, while a reform of its structure and a revision of forestry laws were prepared. In 1995 a new forestry law was approved by Parliament, and the agency gradually resumed its operations now with more focus on extension activities. During the first years after the change of regime a wide range of donor-sponsored studies were made to prepare a reform of the agency³⁴⁸. An emergency reform was made in 1995³⁴⁹, and the forestry service was meant to be part of the reorganisation of

³⁴³ Educational reforms started in 1989-90 but due to structural adjustment-related staff-freezing policies, many young foresters with a more appropriate education are unemployed (Interview with 'Equipe diagnostic sur la formation forestière', Sikasso, Sept. 1994).

³⁴⁴ In order to show foreign donors that Mali was serious about environmental protection, the Traoré regime in 1986 considerably raised fines for offences against forestry laws. In the late 1980s donor assistance to the forestry sector amounted to 10 times the contribution from national sources (Ribot, 1996 p. 42; Trouvé, 1995 p. 18).

³⁴⁵ PADREF stands for *Projet d'Appui à la Direction Régionale des Eaux et Forêts*.

³⁴⁶ Brinkerhoff and Gage have a different assessment of PADREF which they describe as instrumental in helping the regional office to operationalise social forestry practices (Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 16). This assessment has not been supported by information obtained during the fieldwork in the region.

³⁴⁷ The popular euphemism for this was 'article 320' which refers to the cost of petrol (300 CFA) and matches (20 CFA) (Fay, 1995 p. 24; interviews with forestry staff, the autumn of 1994).

³⁴⁸ The various studies include i.a. ME, 1993; MDRE, 1994b; Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993; McLain, 1992; Crowley, 1991; Hesselting & Coulibaly, 1991; Coulibaly et al, 1991; Coulibaly & Hesselting, 1992; Hesselting, 1992; Kintz et al., 1992.

³⁴⁹ The initial reform of the forestry service was started at the initiative of the forestry service itself to allow its agents to resume activities after they had been forced by the population to abandon them in 1991. It implied i.a. a formal separation of extension and enforcement activities (MDRE, 1994k; *Loi portant création de la Direction Nationale*

MDRE. In late 1998, however, the forestry service was separated from the other agencies when a new Ministère de l'Environnement was established, hence it seems that agency has now been excepted from the planned unity extension services (Hilhorst & Coulibaly, 1998 p. 6; interviews with forestry staff, CAMOPA staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994 and Feb. 1996, Thea Hilhorst, personal communication, May 1999).

In the mid-1990s when the interviews were conducted, activities of the forestry service in the Sikasso region had been cut down to a relatively limited Swiss-funded extension programme in about half of all villages plus the participation of forestry staff in 'Test Zones' activities in a total of 15 villages. Outside these villages the only activities of the forestry service were occasional visits to supervise and approve clearing of new land and an annual extension session held in each village to promote improved stoves and inform about cutting permits. Farmers rarely approached the forestry service themselves³⁵⁰ (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 11; N'Djim et al., 1993 p. 29, interviews with forestry staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994)

Hence, interviews were conducted at a time when the agency found itself in an impasse between a long and well-established tradition for repression and requests for fundamental changes of its structures and activities. Individual forestry agents were largely left to interpret the new situation themselves, and even at cercle and regional level, the policy to a very large extent seemed to depend on personal assessments by the people in charge. While expressions of self-criticism and willingness to change relations with the population were relatively sparse in some parts of the organisation, others seemed to be ready to take up the challenge of radically changing past practices³⁵¹.

Organisational structure

The structure of the forestry service until the initiation of reforms was an example of a fairly pure version of the mechanical model. It illustrates Mintzberg's point about a control agency that has adopted a structure that enforces its orientation towards both internal and external control (Mintzberg, 1989 p. 137-138, ref. chapter 3). As the old structure was still in force, when the field study was made in late 1994, the description of the organisation below refers to that.

All important decisions are taken by the management in Bamako. Even the transfer of individual forestry agents is decided personally by the National Director of forestry, based on reports received from the regional level. Relations among the various levels of the hierarchy have much in common with relations in an army: orders are sent downwards and reports are sent upwards the system, while information to subordinate staff are limited to the extent possible. This even

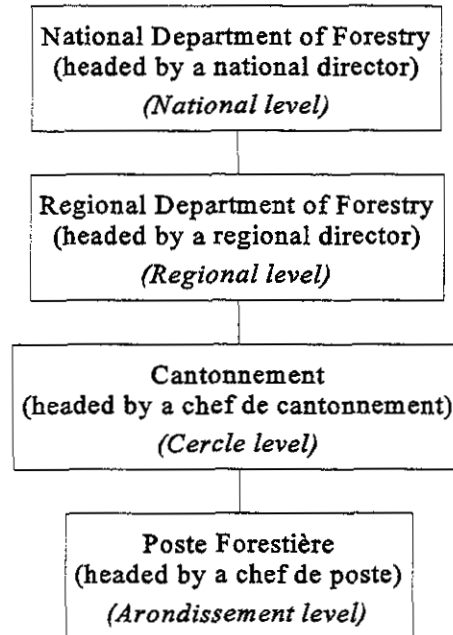
des Forêts, de la Chasse et de la Pêche, draft September 1994; interview with national director of forestry, Dec. 1994; interview with CAMOPA staff, Feb. 1996). In practice, however, this separation proved difficult to implement, as most arrondissement offices were only staffed with a few agents (Interviews with researchers, farmers and representatives of political parties in the Sikasso region, Feb. 1996).

³⁵⁰ The paralysis of the agency is reflected in declining number of officially registered offences against forestry laws in the Sikasso region: while it was about 1,200 per year during the period 1988-1990, only 32 offences were registered in 1992 (DRPS, 1994 p. 156).

³⁵¹ A seminar held by the regional management in Sikasso in 1992 represented a forthright attempt to confront the injustices committed in the past (PADREF, 1992). During the field study undertaken in the autumn of 1994 and in February 1996 examples of both fierce resistance and genuine interest in changing the role of the agency was found. For an example of the importance of attitudes held by individual forestry agents, see Hilhorst & Coulibaly, 1996.

goes for relations within the offices at the lowest levels of the hierarchy where deputy chefs de poste complained that they do not receive any information from the chef de poste³⁵² (Interview with the National Director of Forestry and other forestry staff, the autumn of 1994).

Figure 6. The four hierarchical levels of the forestry agency.



The organisational structure can best be described as completely insulated from external influence. There have been no means for the population to discuss or appeal the decisions taken by forestry agents, and at least until 1991 the agency fitted the portrait of a closed mechanical system given by Mintzberg (Mintzberg, 1989 p. 138-148).

The undertaking by the same agents of enforcement and extension activities, however, has made the model differ somewhat from the mechanical ideal of having clearly defined tasks. This has been further aggravated by a serious ambiguity of the legal framework which in practice has left it to field staff to interpret the character of an offence and thereby has provided them with substantial unintended discretion. As regards the limited extension activities, tasks have been considerably clearer as each staff member until 1991 was simply given a well-defined area to be planted (Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 7-8; Mclain, 1992 p. 16; MDRE, 1994b; interviews with forestry staff, the autumn of 1994).

In the mid-1990s there were about 800 agents of the agency of whom approx. 120 were working in the Sikasso region (MDRE, 1994f p. 11-12; MDRE, 1994n p. 11-12).

³⁵² In Kadiolo the only general information about activities of the forestry service received by arrondissement staff is the annual report from the cercle. Thus, they do not know if staff in neighbouring arrondissements struggle with the same difficulties. The chef de cantonnement in Koutiala calls a monthly meeting for all chefs de postes, but reports are not passed on to deputy chefs de poste.

Authority

The paramilitary character of the forestry service has reinforced the general tradition for low trust management in government agencies. Authority is based on position and operates through control and application of sanctions. Like in an army, absolute loyalty is demanded by all staff members. Any deviations from decisions taken by superiors are sanctioned by transfer to positions in remote areas of the northern part of the country³⁵³.

There are marked differences between the top and the bottom of the system. Differences relate both to the educational background, access to training courses and general privileges enjoyed (MDRE 1994n p. 92-105). The poorly educated field staff at *arrondissement* level are disregarded by their better educated superiors who consider them unable to reflect much about their tasks and hardly able to produce a written report. In my presence field staff were often treated by outright disdain by superiors who did not find it worth addressing them during joint meetings but were talking only to staff at their own level from other agencies³⁵⁴. *Arrondissement* staff on their side expressed a widespread fear for superiors and did not dare to speak at all in joint meetings with *cercle* staff³⁵⁵ (Interviews with forestry staff, the autumn of 1994).

The fear by *arrondissement* staff is aggravated by the lack of clarity of their tasks. Ambiguity of the legal framework and the general lack of information about what is in fact wanted by them often make sanctions by superiors appear to be arbitrary and unfair.

Control by superiors, however, is generally not very effective. They rarely visit the *arrondissement* level, let alone the villages, and do not receive any reports from the population. Assessments of performance, therefore, have to be based on reports written by staff members themselves. Given the distance between management and field staff and the low risk of detection, forestry staff has little encouragement to perform more than minimum tasks. Before 1991 this meant that in practice they spent most of their time chasing personal incomes (Wiersum & Deprez, 1995 p. 238; interviews with forestry staff, the autumn of 1994).

Rewards

Salaries are low in the forestry service, and there is no linking of salaries and promotions to performance. Whereas 'disobedient' behaviour is sanctioned (when detected), there are no

³⁵³ At the time when the interviews were undertaken (September- December 1994), positions in the North were not only considered humiliating and very inconvenient by forestry staff, because they were isolated and usually implied that the family of the agent could not join him but had to stay behind. Due to the Tuareg rebellion, it was directly life threatening for forestry agents to go there as in the eyes of the rebels they were associated with the police and the army.

³⁵⁴ In the presence of *arrondissement* level staff, a *chef de cantonnement* made it clear that he did not expect them to be able to write a satisfying report on the progress made by the 'Test Zones programme' (a brief description of this project is found in the annex): "*these people are good talkers but poor writers!*" as he said. While waiting for joint meetings to begin, it was several times observed that *cercle* level staff would rather read a news paper than spend the time talking to their subordinate colleagues at *arrondissement* level.

³⁵⁵ During a two hour meeting, the only comments from *arrondissement* staff were confined to affirm that they had understood the orders given ("*c'est compris*", "*c'est ca*", "*pas de problèmes*").

rewards for doing a special extension effort. Promotions in some cases seem to have less to do with performance than with personal links to superiors³⁵⁶.

Until 1991 the wage system strongly encouraged repressive efforts as the low basic salaries were supplemented by access for individual staff members to a share of revenues from permits and fines. The system not only encouraged issuance of legal and illegal fines and permits but also a widespread corruption, as the population often tried to avoid payment of exorbitant fines by bribing the forestry agent responsible for its collection³⁵⁷. Despite the low salaries, the system implied that forestry staff until 1991 had considerably higher real incomes than other government staff. After 1991 when agents were no longer able to issue fines and permits, incomes have fallen dramatically (Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 7-8; McLain, 1992 p.25-26; Ribot, 1995a p. 32-33; DRPS, 1994 p. 154; Bishop, 1988 p. 7-11; interviews with forestry staff, the autumn of 1994).

Organisational identification

Until 1991 a strong team spirit in the agency helped divert possible individual doubts about the legitimacy of its practices. Thus, the self-image cultivated by the staff emphasized its role as protector of the environment against the misbehaviour of ignorant and irresponsible farmers and herders who would immediately destroy everything if not kept under close supervision. The forestry service was well connected to top political leaders in the Traoré regime, and staff members considered themselves core pillars of the regime (McLain, 1992 p. 21-22; Thomson, 1995 p. 3; interviews with forestry staff, the autumn of 1994).

Forestry staff were socialised to the particular organisation culture already during their education where especially the paramilitary training influenced their perception of the agency as a police force. Although there has been a gradual development since the late 1980s towards more emphasis put on forestry and extension-related topics, the paramilitary orientation has not been countered by these modest attempts. Thus, the education in extension issues is generally described as highly insufficient, while also access to in-service training is limited, especially for field staff (MDRE 1994n; interview with 'Equipe diagnostic sur la formation forestière', Sikasso, Sept. 1994).

After 1991 this strong organisational culture has disintegrated. Internal cleavages, which probably existed long before the change of regime, have erupted, and the previous feeling of unity has been replaced by divisions and frustration. One such division relates to the divide between superior and lower-level staff. During the interviews arrondissement staff were surprisingly outspoken about their feeling of having been let down by superiors. They had received no information or training in how to tackle the difficult relationship to populations after 1991 and expressed frustration over the suspicion that superiors were just looking after themselves by complying with donor demands

³⁵⁶ The opposite situation was encountered during the field study when a chef de cantonnement, who had done a particular effort to promote the collaboration with other agencies in relation to the 'Test Zones programme', was transferred to an unattractive position in the north. It is said to be common that a new regional director brings a group of loyal people to become chefs de cantonnement in his area when he takes up the position.

³⁵⁷ As examples can be mentioned that fines for illegally clearing land for agricultural purposes and de-branching trees in the Sahel zone amounted to 500 to 1,500 FF and/or 1 month to 5 years in jail. For failure to obtain cutting and transporting permits the fine amounted to 600-2,000 FF and/or 1 month to five years in jail (Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 32).

for reforms. Attempts by the management to dissociate itself from the practices of the past were interpreted by some as a surrender to anarchic forces in power.

Another cleavage regards the difference between young staff and the old guard. Many young staff members have never participated or only been little involved in the repression before 1991. As donors believed them to be more susceptible to new methods, they used to be preferred by the various donor-funded projects and therefore have received more training than older staff members. The 'old guard', on the other hand, know of no other way to be a forestry agent than fining and issuing permits. Hence, they are very reluctant to take up new extension activities³⁵⁸ (Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 19, p. 27, interviews with forestry staff, PADREF staff and local resource persons, the autumn of 1994).

The internal cleavages are symbolically reflected in a highly diverse dress code. Some (mainly older) agents are still wearing the traditional green military uniform, salute superiors the military way and answer orders by "yes, sir!" Others wear casual dress and relate to superiors by civilian greetings (Observations made during the field study, the autumn of 1994).

Peer pressure

Until 1991 the peer pressure played an important role for the performance of the agency. Through the education and especially through the paramilitary training forestry agents were socialised to perceive of themselves as a closely knit group.

Performance monitoring by superiors was poor, but peer monitoring was rather well-developed. As forestry agents were rarely placed alone in an office (there was always at least one deputy chef de poste at arrondissement level), the behaviour by the individual agent would always be observed by colleagues. The paramilitary 'esprit de corps' meant that individual reflections and deviations from unwritten 'codes of conduct' were very badly viewed. It was difficult, therefore, to go against the tide and concentrate on extension, while all colleagues did nothing but collect taxes and fines (Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 7; interviews with forestry staff, the autumn of 1994).

After 1991 the peer pressure has almost disappeared. Immediately after the change of regime, management in Bamako decided to transfer all staff back to their home area, pleading that 'you do not abuse your relatives'³⁵⁹. This policy was soon abandoned, however, and instead the frequency of staff transfers was significantly increased. In late 1994 when most interviews were taken, the majority of field agents spent only about a year in each position. Limited horizontal contacts among field staff, frequent transfers and lack of guidelines about how to deal with the new situation, have more or less left each forestry agents to interpret the situation themselves. While some seem to have resumed the practice of fining and taxing after the new forestry law in

³⁵⁸ According to resource persons in the Sikasso region, the 'organisational schizophrenia' (Brinkerhoff, 1995 p. 206) was reinforced by the fact that older staff members profited more from the system before 1991, as they tended to have higher positions than younger staff members (Souleymane Ouattara, personal communication Nov. 1994).

³⁵⁹ Critical voices argued that the reason for this move was rather that 'you do not kill your relatives', i.e. the transfers were made mainly to protect the forestry staff against angry populations (Interviews with resource persons, the autumn of 1994).

1995, others are doing an effort to shift the focus to extension activities (PADREF, 1992 p. 6; interviews with forestry staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994 and Feb. 1996).

Work satisfaction

Previously, forestry staff have enjoyed a certain work satisfaction by being powerful, having a certain discretion, earning well, being part of an organisation with a strong organisation culture, and being appreciated by the government for maintaining law and order. For some field-level agents satisfaction may have been negatively affected by the extremely poor relationship to clients and the overt disdain by superiors, but in retrospect the majority of the staff interviewed referred to 'the good old days' before 1991 when they were pleased to work.

After 1991 the prevailing feeling is frustration. The situation of forestry field-staff is a very clear illustration of Christoplos' description of extension agents squeezed from two sides (Christoplos, 1997a): they feel let down by their management who has not given them any assistance in acquiring new skills and in interpreting the new situation, while at the same time they are hard pressed by the population. Subordinate staff are still treated in a top-down way by their superiors, and nobody has cared to listen to their frustration and fear after the radical change of conditions in 1991. At the same time they are constantly reprimanded for their activities in the past and their lack of adjustment to the new situation.

Not surprisingly, many farmers still harbour a grudge against them³⁶⁰. They are also disliked by other government staff who are reluctant to collaborate with them for fear of being negatively affected by the bad reputation of forestry staff. The agency has become the very symbol of all past injustice, and the overwhelmingly negative assessments of the agency obviously affect the work satisfaction by the staff.

To this should be added that for several years there has not been much work to be satisfied with. In the years 1991-1995 a strategy of disappearance was prevailing all over the country: for fear of angry populations forestry agents were forced to hide in their offices without being able to carry out neither extension activities nor enforcement activities. Needless to say, the population did not approach them in the offices either, and except for staff members involved in joint projects with other agencies, the work carried out has been very limited.

It is highly unsatisfying to do nothing, and forestry agents who believe that they in fact did a valuable effort to protect the environment in the past have found it difficult to watch while sometimes farmers have illegally burnt the forests³⁶¹.

³⁶⁰ As expressed by farmers during the village survey: *"Je ne peux pas avoir confiance en eux car j'ai été beaucoup victime dans le temps passé"* (Sinkolo no.13). *Je n'ai pas de confiance aux Eaux et Forêts cependant j'ai besoin d'eux pour faire une plantation. J'ai un peu peur d'eux"* (Woroni no. 4).

³⁶¹ As a forestry agent laconically remarked during a field trip when we passed a burned down area: *"Voilà c'est la démocratie!"*

While the majority of agents have reacted by not even doing the little they could do³⁶², some have perceived of an increased interest by farmers in planting fruit trees and eucalyptus as an interesting challenge³⁶³. In an area where farmers frequently address the forestry service to demand education in the establishment of tree nurseries, a forestry agent expressed an entirely new meaningfulness in his work (Interviews with forestry staff, the autumn of 1994).

Demand pressure

Before 1991 the only demand pressure on the agency derived from the demand by the government and donors that something was done to protect the environment. Mali has signed a number of international conventions and has accepted the implementation of a range of (overlapping) donor-sponsored national environmental plans and programmes³⁶⁴. Part of the donor funds have been allocated to projects and programmes undertaken by the forestry service, but genuine interest in the actual outcome of the work seems to have been limited. This may be partly explained by the intense competition among donors which has sometimes led them to concentrate more on the preparation of new programmes than on evaluation of already existing activities. Another reason may be that donors have often preferred to work through projects and programmes with dedicated staff which implies that the general forestry staff have been little involved³⁶⁵ (Interviews with Bamako-based representatives of the World Bank, la Caisse Française de Développement, USAID, GTZ, UNSO and with resource persons, the autumn of 1994).

As regards farmers' demands, the concentration by the agency on repression has made it difficult for people to see that they might possibly have any interest in the 'services' offered. The behaviour by forestry agents has resulted in extremely negative connotations of 'environmental activities' in the ears of many people. In the Sikasso region where the pressure on natural resources is still not very apparent to the majority of the population, the interest in the agency is further limited.

³⁶² Lack of meaningfulness combined with lack of supervision by superiors and low salaries in many cases lead to absenteeism and negligence. During the field study it was observed that people often use the occasion of the weekly market day to approach the arrondissement offices of the various extension agencies. Many offices, however, were empty on such days as the agents were on the market themselves.

³⁶³ After the privatisation of nursery activities in the early 1990s, the private production of nursery plans has been booming. This has led to a substantial demand by farmers for education in the establishment of nurseries for fruit tree and eucalyptus production.

³⁶⁴ The national environmental plans and programmes include le Plan d'Action Forestière Tropicale (PAFT) supported by FAO, le Programme National de Lutte Contre la Désertification (PNLCD) launched in 1987 with UNSO as the lead agency, le Projet Nationale de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (PGRN) launched in 1993 with the World Bank as the lead agency, and the National Action Program (CCD/NEPA) launched in 1996 with GTZ as the lead agency. In addition to this Mali has signed the International Convention to Combat Desertification in 1994 (MRNE, 1985; MRNE, 1987, MEE, 1989; MAEE, 1991; FAO, 1990, World Bank, 1992a; World Bank, 1992b; Club du Sahel Newsletter no. 15 1996; interviews with donor representatives and resource persons, the autumn of 1994 and Feb. 1996).

³⁶⁵ The establishment of a unified donor approach has been made difficult by a geographical division of labour among the major donors involved in natural resource management activities (the World Bank, France, Switzerland, Germany and the United States). Various attempts to establish a donor coordination has failed due to lack of interest, and in late 1994 when donor representatives were interviewed, only an informal group existed, including USAID, the Swiss Development Cooperation and some individual French experts but excluding major donors such as la Caisse Française, the World Bank and GTZ). Relations among representatives of the World Bank and la Caisse Française are described as particularly poor, which is reflected in a range of overlapping activities, notably in the field of land tenure studies (Lai & Khan, 1989 p. 13, interviews with donor representatives, Chéibane Coulibaly and other resource persons, the autumn of 1994).

While demand pressure from direct clients, thus, has been virtually nil, and the pressure from other external agents has been very limited, relations of trust have not existed at all. It is a widespread belief that the population in the Sikasso region due to the wealth generated by cotton production have been subject to a more severe repression by forestry staff than people in other regions. Many villages have been visited every single day of the year by agents with a license to send the inhabitants to prison for up to five years or issue a fine corresponding to their annual income even for relatively modest offences³⁶⁶. An intense feeling of hatred towards the staff has been the result.

Farmers have done everything possible to avoid contact with the disgusted agents, and in some cases mafia-like systems were developed by entire villages who preferred to pay protection fees for being left alone rather than living with the constant risks of arbitrary taxation. The dubious impact on the environment of these relations can be illustrated by a special variant of the protection fee system which consisted in the plantation of a certain number of trees by the village against the right to cut as much green and dead wood as they wanted. This allowed the forestry agent to report the fulfilment of objectives to his superiors, while villagers were pleased to be left alone (McLain, 1993 p. 17-19; Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 7-8; Lai & Khan, 1989 p. 7-8; interviews with forestry staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994).

The only reason that the agency has been able to continue its activities for so many years despite the hostile relations to clients is the almost total insulation of the forestry service from public reactions. Individual staff members of course knew the feelings of village populations but they never depended on farmers' assessment of their performance neither for their professional career nor for their social relations. Farmers had no means to complain about or influence the practices of the agency, and among its own staff nobody had an interest in initiating reforms (Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993 p. 7-8; interviews with forestry staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994).

After 1991 the unequivocal demand to the agency from government, donors and farmers have been to stop repression. In the Sikasso region the Swiss donor eventually seems to have become worried about the bad reputation of the agency and instead of increasing its support to the difficult transition to extension-oriented activities, it has decided to reduce the funding and channel the money through an NGO instead. The external interest in an agency considered too controversial and inflexible to deal with, thus, has been further limited (Interviews with PADREF staff, the autumn of 1994).

As regards demands from direct clients, the prevailing strategy of farmers is still to avoid any contact with the agency. It is generally recognised that the agency has changed, but with the exception of farmers interested in fruit tree production³⁶⁷, the majority of the population doubt

³⁶⁶ As reported by a farmer during the village survey: "*Les Eaux et Forêts ont pillé ce village dans le temps passé. C'était des taxes de 200.000 CFA à 400.000 CFA par accusation. Et le village s'associait pour payer ça*" (Nafegue no. 911).

³⁶⁷ Especially during the interviews taken in late 1994 several farmers interested in tree planting spoke positively about the assistance provided by the forestry service. Statements by farmers include the following: "*Les Eaux et Forêts ont changé, ils ne sont plus comme avant. Nous leur demandons des pépinières de plants pour des parcelles de reboisement, ils nous donnent des pépinières*" (Kléla no. 29). "*C'était avant qu'on n'avait pas confiance aux Eaux et Forêts, mais maintenant les Eaux et Forêts sont des bons conseillers aux plantations. Plus de moitié du village aime la plantation*" (Woroni no.16). "*Je suis beaucoup intéressé maintenant par les Eaux et Forêts. Je les vois très utile pour nous les villageois -ils nous donnent des conseils de plantations d'arbres, la nécessité de lutter contre*

the sincerity of the change³⁶⁸. Relations do not change overnight: forestry agents have not been forgiven, and relations of trust are unlikely to develop in a short and medium term perspective.

It has been contributing to the hesitation by the population to establish a new type of relations to the forestry service that agents themselves appear to be reluctant to take up a new role as advisors. Thus, farmers complain that assistance from the forestry service is difficult to obtain. This regards both assistance to establishment of nurseries³⁶⁹ and assistance to protect village land against woodcutters from outside the village, in particular commercial woodcutters from towns³⁷⁰. An attempt to involve the forestry service in Koutiala in the establishment of local firewood conventions has experienced serious difficulties and delays due to reluctance by the agency to formally delegate authority with regard to the management of tree resources to (inter) village authorities³⁷¹ (Joldersma et al., 1994; Hilhorst & Coulibaly, 1998; interviews with farmers, the autumn of 1994 and Feb. 1996).

The development of closer relations is also countered by many small and major signs that a substantial number of forestry agents have not regretted and are just waiting to strike back. In the Sikasso region a feeling of backlash was spreading in the villages around 1996 when the latest field study was made. After the approval of a new forestry code, some agents had resumed patrols in the villages, and examples were reported of backsliding to old practices such as requests for exorbitant fees³⁷². In several cases this had resulted in confrontations between the forestry service and farmers who were no longer willing to tolerate such behaviour but had contacted the new

la disparition des forêts. J'en ai profité. J'ai en verger qui me rapporte de l'argent aujourd'hui" (Woroni no. 29). "J'ai confiance aux Eaux et Forêts. J'ai une plantation d'eucalyptus que j'exploite" (Koloni no.16).

³⁶⁸ When asked to list the three most important changes after 1991, no less than 35% of the 312 respondents included in the village survey mentioned the suspension of repression by the forestry service (chapter 11). At the same time, however, only 1% of respondents declared to have more confidence in the forestry service than in other agencies (chapter 10).

³⁶⁹ Complaints that the forestry service is not willing to assist with tree planting include the following statement: *"Nous avons besoin des plantes en pépinières d'eucalyptus que nous avons demandé aux Eaux et Forêts. C'est pour faire une plantation privée. J'ai la promesse bientôt 2 ans, mais rien n'est réglé encore. Les Eaux et Forêts se méfient de nous, ne veulent plus travailler avec nous, car il y a plus des taxes donc pas d'intérêt avec nous" (Molobala no. 32)*

³⁷⁰ Many complaints that the forestry service is not willing to collaborate with villages suffering from problems with commercial woodcutters from Sikasso and Koutiala were recorded during the village survey: *"L'inconvénient après Moussa Traoré est que les Eaux et Forêts ne contrôlent plus l'exploitation des arbres sur le terroir. Les étrangers viennent de Sikasso et un peu partout dans l'alentour du village et exploitent librement sans permis ni aucun autre papier" (Molobala no. 13). "Avant les Eaux et Forêts venaient dans le village constamment. Ils taxaient les infractions. Maintenant les Eaux et Forêts ne viennent plus...Les Eaux et Forêts ne nous assistent plus. Il n'y a plus de contrôle de coupe de bois. Même le bois vert est coupé et vendu" (Molobala no. 16). "Nous avons regretté la disparition des agents Eaux et Forêts dans notre village. Les villageois n'ont plus peur. Ils sont sans contrôle car il n'y a plus des taxes. Les personnes viennent de partout pour exploiter notre terroir. Si les agents des Eaux et Forêts pouvaient reprendre le contrôle sur le peu de ressources que nous disposons présentement il serait bien" (Kiéla no.7).*

³⁷¹ In an area close to Koutiala town, 'the Siwaa area', the agency since 1992 has been involved in the preparation of a local firewood convention. In 1995 when the convention was ready to be signed, the agency, however, refused to sign it, and a final approval was only obtained in May 1997. According to Hilhorst and Coulibaly, the forestry service started to back away in the middle of the process because key persons in the agency had their doubts about transferring management responsibility to villagers (Hilhorst & Coulibaly, 1998 p. 16-17).

³⁷² Already during the village survey in late 1994 cases of excessive fining were reported: *"Je n'ai pas de confiance aux Eaux et Forêts. Même au cas d'erreur de la part de nos enfants en feux de brousse, ils viennent taxer fort même maintenant" (Sinkolo no. 12) "J'ai peur d'étendre ma surface cultivable, si les Eaux et Forêts me voient couper un arbre je serais taxé fort. Ils ne sont pas tout à fait crédibles à nos yeux à présent. Ils viennent de temps en temps" (Nafegue no. 22).*

political parties for assistance³⁷³ (Interviews with farmers and representatives of political parties, Feb. 1996).

At the policy level, strong forces within the agency seem to work for a rewinding of the situation to the time before the change of regime. The process of preparing the new forestry code was characterised by many attempts to avoid a radical change of existing laws. According to its critics, the draft code at every revision became more and more similar to the existing forestry code from 1986, and the final version approved by Parliament in 1995 ended up with a number of provisions that go even further than the existing law³⁷⁴. (Interview with Chéibane Coulibaly and representatives of political parties, Feb. 1996).

Finally, the reaction by the agency to the reorganisation of MDRE can be mentioned. During the time of the field study when the plans were still under preparation, forestry staff at all levels expressed a strong opposition to the idea of integrating the forestry service into a unity extension service. Although the management was forced to approve of the action plan in late 1995, statements given during informal interviews in late 1994 suggested that many were willing to combat the implementation by all means. With the transfer in late 1998 of the forestry service to a separate ministry, these forces seem to have achieved their objective (Interviews with forestry staff and resource persons, the autumn of 1994).

Conclusion

The forestry service exemplifies an agency where the lack of demand pressure over many years has resulted in extremely poor performance. The development of the agency illustrates how otherwise positive features such as a strong organisation culture, a strong peer pressure and a relatively high level of work satisfaction can be detrimental to the performance of an organisation when they do not coexist with sensitivity to external demands.

Relations between the forestry service and farmers illustrate Lipsky's point that public service workers who do not have relations of trust with clients are likely to relapse into the issuing of sanctions and the provision of minimum services only (Lipsky, 1980 p. 60-65, p. 90-94, p. 102-104, ref. chapter 3). The agency managed to survive the complete lack of legitimacy only so long as the government sanctioned its use of coercion. When this support disappeared, the agency collapsed.

The forestry service is an extreme example of a mechanical model that has developed into a closed system (ref. chapter 3). The complete insensitivity to external demands and notably to demands by clients has made it unable to adjust to changing circumstances. It missed the possibility of gradually taking up new challenges such as farmers' growing anger in the late

³⁷³ The example of Dossorola illustrates this: in late 1995 villagers from Dossorola were requested by forestry agents to pay 125,000 CFA for an offence they claimed that they had not committed. Instead of paying they contacted the local representatives of UDD who managed to ensure that they did not have to pay (Interviews carried out in Feb. 1996).

³⁷⁴ In the new law on forestry resources (Loi No. 95-004) the price of permits and maximum fines are higher than in the law from 1986 (Loi No.86-42/AN-RM). In addition to the forestry law the new legal framework for natural resource management includes the following laws; wild life resources (Loi No. 95-031); tree resources (Loi No. 95-003) and fishery resources (Loi No. 95-032). Also a tenure reform is being prepared.

1980s, farmers' increased capacity to learn new techniques (due to the education by CMDT), and donors' increased interests in environmental activities. Instead, it settled into a rut, until outside changes were so fundamental that it could no longer protect itself from their influence.

At the time of the field study, when the initial shock of being physically attacked had gradually passed off, the agency still seemed unable to perceive of and adjust to the new demands. Its major endeavours seemed to be to reestablish the past situation to the extent possible without risking to provoke a renewed anger by government, donors and populations. There had been no fundamental changes in the way the agency operated, and it seemed unlikely that such changes would occur unless external pressures made it possible to initiate internal changing processes.

In the mid-1990s the lack of reconciliation activities made it impossible for the population to believe in a sudden switch of roles of its agents from policemen to flexible and responsive extension agents. Furthermore, the lack of extensive training activities for forestry staff made them unable to take up the new role even if the population accepted it. The hierarchical organisation and the patronizing treatment of field level staff gave them limited discretion to respond to farmers' possible demand for extension services. And finally, the organisation still did not consider relations of trust an issue of importance to its performance. On the contrary, the policy of keeping a distance to the population had been further enforced by the increased frequency of staff transfers³⁷⁵. It is still too early to assess whether the reorganisation of MDRE initiated in 1996 will be able to initiate major changes to this picture.

The experience of the forestry service shows that a government agency will never be fully independent of other government agencies and of the overall legitimacy of the state as such (ref. discussions in chapter 3). Even the forestry service which for many years managed to remain isolated from external pressures was eventually overtaken by a development partly initiated by reactions to other parts of the state. Thus, protests by public trade unions and the student movement against the lack of democratic rights and the Tuareg rebellion in the north triggered a deeply felt dissatisfaction with the state by the majority of the population. When the Traoré regime fell, the forestry service fell with it. The attitude of the population in the Sikasso region no longer to accept any encroachment on their civil rights (the renewed imposition of excessive fines) partly derive from their experience of being able to force CMDT to make concessions.

The forestry service in other words clearly illustrates that performance of a government agency results from pressures being exerted upon it both by its status as being part of the state, by a set of organisation-specific factors and by the social forces with which it interacts.

³⁷⁵ Brinkerhoff compares the Malian forestry service to an ocean liner which once headed in one direction has a limited ability to shift its course quickly: "internally, the mass of the agency's structure, standard operating procedures, and staffing patterns, set in motion by the original policy mandate, makes turning difficult. Externally, the agency's clientele develops a backlog of experience and expectations of dealing with the agency in a particular way, which also contributes to the forces of inertia to keep going as before" (Brinkerhoff, 1995 p. 221).

9.4. The livestock service

Introduction

Since Independence the ministerial affiliation of the National Department of Livestock has changed no less than 12 times. It has been part of joint ministries with the Department of Forestry, with the Department of Agriculture and with both departments at the same time. Since 1994 it has been placed under the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment (MDRE Cabinet staff, personal communication, May 1996)³⁷⁶.

It is the mandate of the agency to support and control livestock production and marketing by activities focussing on animal health, animal production, pastures and water supply facilities. In practice there has been a clear tendency for livestock agents to concentrate on the more remunerative activities related to animal health, i.e. vaccinations and treatment of sick animals (MAEE, 1991 p. 15; MDRE, 1992g annex 4; interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

During the 1990s a shift of emphasis towards animal production and water supply has been encouraged by the management. These attempts had limited success until more firm measures were applied. Thus, in 1994 privatisation of vaccinations was initiated in the Ségou and Sikasso regions as an experiment preceding a planned total privatisation of animal health activities. Although this has forced the livestock agents to concentrate on other activities, their generally poor educational background constitutes a serious constraint³⁷⁷. A considerable number of staff members do not have the required knowledge to advise livestock owners on cultivation of fodder crops, compost with manure, milk production, etc. Given the influx of a large number of cattle to the Sikasso region from Côte d'Ivoire, a particular challenge consists in mediating between transhumant pastoralists and sedentarised livestock owners claiming the right to the same pastures³⁷⁸. It has been made a task of the livestock service to set up and assist 'reception committees' in the villages concerned, but many livestock agents are uncertain about their new role as mediators³⁷⁹ (MDRE, 1992g annex 4; interview with the deputy national director of livestock and other livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

In the Sikasso region, CMDT was in charge of all livestock activities until 1992. In 1990 a livestock project partly funded by the French Development Cooperation (PAAP³⁸⁰) was initiated,

³⁷⁶ The organisation of 'La Direction Nationale de l'Élevage' at the time of the field study was defined by ordonnance No 81-38/PMR dated 8 November 1981 (MDRE, 1992g annex 4).

³⁷⁷ Compared to other agencies in MDRE there is an overweight of technicians in the livestock service and relatively few agents with a more advanced educational background. So far it has been difficult for the agency to get rid of these usually older staff members, as it does not have the necessary means to pay their retirement (MAEE, 1991; interviews with the deputy national director of livestock, the autumn of 1994).

³⁷⁸ About the return of Malian pastoralists from Côte d'Ivoire, see chapter 7.

³⁷⁹ A 'Comité d'accueil' in villages with a large influx of herds from Côte d'Ivoire consists of the village chief, an advisor to the village chief, a member of the hunters' association and two sedentarised livestock owner. Their tasks include counting the total number of cattle in the village, allocation of pastures, encouragement of herders to show consideration for the agricultural calendar, and mediation in case of conflicts among livestock owners or between livestock owners and farmers (Interviews with arrondissement-based livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

³⁸⁰ With the objective of enabling livestock owners to let their herds stay in Mali instead of moving to Côte d'Ivoire, PAAP (Projet Aménagement Agro-Pastoral de la 3^e Région) supports investments in water supply and other infrastructural facilities in initially 21 villages in the Sikasso region (3-4 villages in each cercle). The project was

and when the agreement with CMDT expired in the end of 1992, the livestock service decided to take over all livestock activities, including the French-funded project³⁸¹ (Interview with the regional director of livestock, Dec.1994).

The transfer of activities to the livestock service has resulted in a rather complex institutional set-up in the region. Some CMDT staff were transferred to the livestock service, and new offices were established at regional, cercle and arrondissement level. Part of the staff, however, were maintained by CMDT as so-called 'zoo-technicians' with a particular responsibility for draught oxen purchased on credits from CMDT. Despite limitations of their formal mandate, the 117 zoo-technicians in the Mali-sud area often intervene in other domains, in particular treatment of sick animals (CFDT, 1995 p. 10; interviews with livestock staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994).

With the privatisation of vaccinations the situation has been further complicated. By the end of 1994 20 private veterinarians had established pharmacies, and of these 15 were also involved in vaccinations. While in 1994 private veterinarians covered 2/3 of all vaccinations in the region (the remaining being covered by the livestock service), vaccinations were expected to be fully privatised by 1995 (Interviews with the regional director of livestock and other livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

In addition to livestock staff, CMDT zoo-technicians, and private veterinarians, a growing number of village-based 'barefoot veterinarians' ('secouristes') are operating in the field of animal health. Whereas private veterinarians usually hold a university degree and have received postgraduate training by staff from the livestock service, barefoot veterinarians are farmers, who have received two months of training by CMDT in vaccination of poultry, castration and treatment of the most common animal diseases.

Since 1992 resources for transport, office equipment and investment in infrastructure such as cattle dips and wells have been down to a minimum. The PAAP project in the Sikasso region initially concentrated its activities in only 21 villages, usually situated close to the arrondissement offices, whereas activities in other villages were negligible. At the time of the field study in late 1994, activities were few even in villages covered by PAAP. Several years had been used for preparations, and when physical activities (such as the construction of wells) were about to take off, the project ran into serious funding problems (Interview with the regional director of livestock, Dec. 1994).

In addition to the very limited PAAP-funded activities, the livestock service is involved in the 'Test Zones programme' in about 10 villages in the region (N'Djim et al., 1993 p. 29).

formally initiated in 1990, but it was not operative until 1994 as the French Development Cooperation made it a funding condition that counterpart funds were provided by the population in participating villages and by the TDRL (about the TDRL, see chapter 6). A widespread unwillingness by the population to contribute financially and the general refusal to pay taxes have seriously delayed the implementation. Depending on the provision of counterpart funds, it is the intention to extend the programme to all villages in the region (Interview with the regional director of livestock, Dec. 1994).

³⁸¹ According to CMDT staff, the transfer from CMDT to the livestock service took place due to jealousy of the livestock service aroused by the access by CMDT to donor funds. Livestock staff, on the other hand, stress that dissatisfaction with CMDT agents' concentration on treatment of draught oxen at the expense of other animals was the reason (Interviews with CMDT and livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

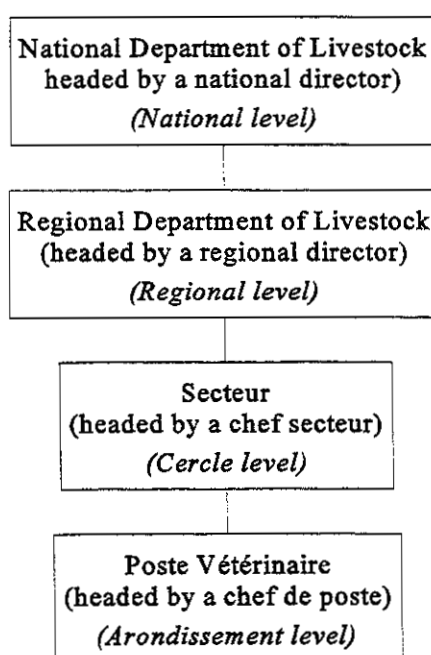
During the interviews many livestock agents bitterly complained that resources had been more readily available during the time when CMDT was running the service. However, others stressed that while resources at that time were plenty, they were all concentrated on animal health and particularly on treatment of draught oxen.

Organisational structure

Like other government agencies the organisational structure of the livestock service follows the mechanical model. It shares with other agencies a clear-cut hierarchy where all major decisions are taken by headquarters in Bamako and communicated downwards through the hierarchy to field staff. Authority is based on position, and like the forestry service hierarchical roles are maintained even at the arrondissement level, where deputy chefs de poste receive only limited information from the chef de poste and are not allowed to challenge his decisions³⁸².

Virtually all activities by the agency are project funded. The centralisation of the organisation implies that headquarters has to assess all suggestions for activities in the field and approve of the funding. This often makes funding procedures extremely cumbersome and slow³⁸³.

Figure 7. The four hierarchical levels of the livestock service.



³⁸² As expressed by a deputy chef de poste who was sharing a small office with the chef de poste and another deputy: "if I want anything changed, I have to wait for my boss to take the initiative" (Interview carried out the autumn of 1994).

³⁸³ Examples were given of budgets forwarded to headquarters in December and receiving funding only the next year in June (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

In the mid-1990s the total number of staff in the livestock service was about 1,000 of which 212 agents were working in the Sikasso region. It is a widespread belief among field staff in Sikasso that the total number of livestock agents available to assist livestock owners has been cut down after the transfer from CMDT. This, however, is contradicted by the regional management who argues that the sum of livestock staff, CMDT zoo technicians, private veterinarians, and barefoot veterinarians by far exceeds earlier staff numbers (MAEE, 1991; Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. annex 1 p. 9-10; interviews with the regional director and other livestock staff).

After the transfer of agents from CMDT, former village-based staff were concentrated in arrondissement offices that are usually staffed with three agents. While Kadiolo cercle follows the general picture, Koutiala cercle makes an exception as all village-based positions have been maintained after the transfer.

Authority

Despite the adherence by the livestock service to a low-trust and authoritarian management system, the discipline in the agency is far less strict than in the forestry service. Subordinate staff seem more willing than both CMDT and forestry staff to speak up in the presence of their superiors, and during interviews agents did nothing to conceal their dissatisfaction without worrying about the possible disapproval by superiors of their outspokenness.

In Koutiala cercle field agents in the bottom of the hierarchical system have a very limited say in the preparation and execution of work programmes. In Kadiolo cercle, on the other hand, arrondissement staff prepare their own programmes which are approved by the cercle level with some additions. While the involvement of field staff in the preparation of programmes means a lot to their work satisfaction, it is a common experience by all staff that rigid work schedules seriously limit their ability to respond to livestock owners' demands. As exemplified by an arrondissement-based livestock agent in Koutiala cercle, it may take much longer than expected to explain farmers how to grow fodder crops. If somebody has not understood during the extension session scheduled in the programme, he has to wait for the next visit by the livestock agent after a month, and at that time it may be too late to sow. It should be stressed, though, that working schedules are not at all as tight as those of CMDT staff: of 10 PAAP-funded days for field visits per month, only 2-3 days are allocated to particular activities, whereas 7-8 days are open for requests from livestock owners (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

In addition to the limited influence on preparation of work programmes, it is a source of considerable frustration for arrondissement staff that they receive very little information from their superiors at cercle level, who constantly make changes in the work programme. In Koutiala staff complained that meetings are often called with only a few hours notice, evaluation missions suddenly show up and take up their time, new tasks are added to their programme without prior consultation, etc³⁸⁴. In Kadiolo the problem seems to be less pronounced and here arrondissement staff receive copies of the monthly reports prepared by their colleagues in other arrondissements.

³⁸⁴ As expressed by an arrondissement-based agent in the Koutiala cercle: "we are sick and tired of being told by the cercle level to carry out this and that in village a,b,c,d without being involved in decisions. We never know what comes from above!".

Relations between field staff and cercle staff are often rather tense, because arrondissement staff for lack of contact to the regional and national level blame their difficulties on their direct superiors. Cercle level staff, themselves being hard pressed by the regional and national level, complain that field agents are unwilling to do an effort. During the field study, tensions were sometimes openly expressed when in joint meetings field agents bitterly complained that working conditions were unacceptable. When interviewed individually, all staff willingly and without reservations explained their perception of the situation.

The lack of fear of superiors may partly be explained by the non-application of sanctions for offences against internal rules and regulations. Staff transfers do not seem to be used neither as promotions nor as sanctions, and inefficient work monitoring by superiors makes it difficult to detect offences (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

Rewards

Salaries are low in the livestock service, and there is no linking of salaries and promotions to performance.

The majority of livestock staff in the Sikasso region have experienced a decline both in salaries and in fringe benefits after the transfer of activities from CMDT. During interviews, all questions about working conditions, therefore, were answered by comparing the situation before and after the transfer. First, CMDT used to pay a quite substantial monthly hardship allowance for field-based agents, but after 1992 there have been no allowances for field visits³⁸⁵. Second, access to staff training has been substantially reduced³⁸⁶. Third, CMDT gave credits to the purchase of new mopeds, and although credits are also available from the livestock service, staff members complain that the mopeds provided are old worn-out vehicles which the agency gets rid off by selling them to the staff. Fourth, all repair costs now have to be paid by staff members themselves, whereas earlier CMDT paid for repairs. And fifth, a limited budget for fuel covering a total of 10 days of field visits per month does not compare favourably with the previous CMDT's budget which allowed field visits every day in the month.

Although the reduced incomes and fringe benefits are not tied to individual performances, many staff members expressed a feeling of having been degraded and not being appreciated as much as they previously were (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

Organisational identification

In the Sikasso region the livestock service has experienced two major recent transitions first from being integrated into CMDT to be a proper agency, and second from being oriented towards animal health to the challenges of becoming involved in a wide range of new and demanding activities.

³⁸⁵ The hardship allowance paid by CMDT amounted to 20,000 CFA per month (it should be noticed that this was before the devaluation) (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

³⁸⁶ Although training activities have been reduced as compared to the situation when agents were attached to CMDT, livestock staff in the Sikasso region receive considerably more training than forestry staff and CAC staff. Thus, most livestock staff reported to have participated in approx. 2-3 courses during the two years preceding the interviews (Interviews with livestock staff, forestry staff and CAC staff, the autumn of 1994).

Among the many internal cleavages resulting from the far-reaching changes is a very apparent difference between the approach of younger and older staff. Whereas older staff members lack the technical competence to take up the new tasks and feel nostalgia for the time when as employees of CMDT they could concentrate on animal health, many younger staff members find it interesting and challenging to advise on animal production and water supply. Another difference regards the contrast between village-based and arrondissement-based staff. Whereas village-based staff have maintained a close contact to livestock owners, town-based staff have strongly felt the change in the form of a much more distant relationship to livestock owners (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

A unifying organisation culture has not yet emerged to bridge these various cleavages. Little is done by the agency itself to encourage organisational identification as even higher levels of the organisation blame all difficulties encountered on lack of funds. Contributing to the problems of finding a 'mission-focussed mystique' (ref. the discussion in chapter 3) is the perceived competition from the many agents outside the agency. Whereas livestock agents previously found an identity in their role as the only knowledgeable people on issues relating to the much appreciated draught oxen, the many zoo-technicians, barefoot veterinarians, and private veterinarians are now challenging this position. Especially the latter are perceived as a threat by many livestock agents, who feel overshadowed by the better educated and better paid private veterinarians sometimes preferred by farmers³⁸⁷. Finally, agents' self-confidence has been negatively affected by the spread during several years of a severe animal disease which the agency apparently has been unable to prevent and control³⁸⁸ (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

Whereas forestry agents until 1991 and CMDT agents still are socialised to a particular team spirit, village-based livestock agents without much contact to the agency seem to be 'lonely wolfs' whose tasks are defined more by clients' demands than by the policy of the agency. Office-based staff lack both a close contact to clients and an organisation culture which could give their activities a direction. In other words: each livestock agent similar to forestry agents after 1991 is very much left to interpret the situation himself. Whereas the forestry service has been subject to changes imposed on the agency from outside, the disintegration of livestock service results from internal restructuring (the transfer from CMDT to the Department of Livestock).

Peer pressure

In order to encourage trust between livestock owners and extension agents, the agency is trying to limit staff transfers as much as possible. No agents have been transferred since their shift of organisational affiliation in 1993, and most livestock agents know each other rather well.

Another factor potentially contributing to the feeling by livestock agents of being a group with common interests is their sharing of a background as former employees of CMDT and in many

³⁸⁷ That also higher levels of the agency consider private veterinarians a threat is illustrated by the attempts by the cercle level in Koutiala to boycott the transfer of vaccination activities to private veterinarians. In consequence, privatisations in Koutiala did not reach very far during 1994, whereas the transfer in Kadiolo took place according to schedule (Interviews with the regional director and other livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

³⁸⁸ An epidemic of trypanosomiasis broke out in the region in 1993, and by 1996 it was still not under control (L'Indépendant 7 March 1996).

cases also their origin in the Sikasso region. The latter is probably explained by the fact that they were originally recruited by CMDT which considers language capabilities in recruitments.

Despite all this, the general uncertainty about the work seems to have lessened peer pressure considerably. Differences between young and old and village-based and office-based staff have made it difficult to reach a common understanding of the situation, and in practice the various agents interpret their tasks rather differently. While some are ready to pay for fuel for their mopeds by private means to visit livestock owners, others during up to five months use the excuse of a broken-down moped to avoid going on field visits (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

Work satisfaction

Despite considerable discretion in their work, many livestock agents express deep frustration about working conditions and describe their work satisfaction as much reduced as compared to the situation a few years ago (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

First of all, they often feel insufficient when they have to turn down requests for assistance from livestock owners. In addition to lack of resources for travel, the situation should probably be explained by an inadequate organisation of the work rather than lack of staff. Thus, the concentration of livestock agents in arrondissement offices (in Kadiolo) have increased the distance to livestock owners and thereby made travels more expensive. Negative reactions by farmers who prefer to contact private veterinarians, zoo-technicians, and 'barefoot veterinarians' undermine work satisfaction of livestock agents.

The changed orientation of the agency constitutes a second important source of frustration. Inability especially by older staff members to carry out the many new tasks due to lack of training creates a feeling of not being worth one's salt. Contrary to the point made by Leonard, Grindle and Hilderbrand that over-qualifications may be a serious hindrance to job satisfaction, the problem in the livestock service has more to do with lack of qualifications (Leonard, 1977 p. 102-128; Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 459-460). Hence, livestock staff exemplify Lipsky's description of staff who are facing too many conflicting objectives and react by concentrating on clients who are easy to reach, i.e. clients who request assistance themselves, while they blame the lack of contact to others on clients themselves (Lipsky, 1980 p. 143, p. 151-153, see also discussions in chapter 3).

Conflicting relations between management and field agents have become more pronounced with the reduction of resources. It seems likely that the influence by field staff on their work programme was even more limited, when they were integrated into CMDT, but tight budgets now make agents react against what was previously accepted, when the work was considered more rewarding.

And finally, general uncertainty with regard to the future limits the work satisfaction of many agents. They fear that their tasks will gradually be passed on to private veterinarians, and that remaining activities will depend on funding by local communities which they seriously doubt. Some also express concern about the situation of livestock owners, if privatisations are taken too far. Thus, they question the social responsibility of private veterinarians to ensure that all cattle

even in remote and inaccessible villages will be vaccinated (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

To this general portrait of frustration and lack of work satisfaction it should be noted, that the picture mainly fits the experience of office-based agents. It is mainly staff based in arrondissement offices, who tend to give up and adopt a mental exit option in the form of absenteeism, slowdowns, etc. They do not seem to care to do even the little they could do, do not request assistance from superiors when faced with problems they cannot solve themselves, and concentrate on financial requests for fuel, repairs of mopeds, etc.

Many village-based staff, on the other hand, receive a constant feedback from farmers who are pleased with their services. They seem to experience a basic work satisfaction and to struggle to do a decent job even though also they work under the constraints of a tight budget. While office-based staff seem to use the lack of close supervision and the considerable discretion they have to do as little as possible, village-based staff sometimes use it to do an additional effort³⁸⁹ (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

Demand pressure

After the transfer of livestock activities from CMDT to the livestock service, external demands from others than direct clients have been reduced. When the livestock service was an integrated part of CMDT, government, donors and CFDT considered the work of the agents part of general efforts to ensure a large production of cotton. The detachment of the livestock service from the specific responsibility for draught oxen has lowered the attention paid to its activities and also lowered its resources.

Also the privatisation of animal health activities has reduced the external interest in the agency. Although the livestock service is still responsible for coordinating efforts of private veterinarians, it no longer has an unequivocal responsibility for preventing and controlling epidemics but can blame their outbreak on negligence by private veterinarians.

The main interest by the government in the activities of the agency in the Sikasso region now seems to be that of controlling potential conflicts among livestock owners and between livestock owners and farmers. The various activities within the field of animal production and water supply and the establishment of 'reception committees' are meant to increase the capacity of the region to receive a substantially increased number of cattle. This political objective may well be considered important by the government, but it is unlikely to result in the allocation of the same amount of funds as the previous economic objective of ensuring the raising of draught oxen for cotton production.

As regards demands by its direct clients, these also have been reduced by the emergence of a range of alternatives to cover the most pressing needs related to animal health. It has become more cumbersome and expensive for livestock owners to contact the livestock service for

³⁸⁹ As expressed by a young village-based livestock agent: *"Nobody can blame me for not having tried. Despite the conditions I do what I can"*. During stays in the villages it was sometimes witnessed how livestock agents were called out late at night to attend sick animals. Also statements recorded during the village survey confirm this, e.g. *"L'agent de l'élevage est prêt à répondre n'importe quand"* (Koloni no.18).

treatment of sick animals and therefore they often prefer to go to the private veterinarians instead. Thus, CMDT used to distribute vaccines free of charge, whereas the livestock service now ask owners to pay. Livestock owners also have to pay for the agent's transport, whereas CMDT agents had mopeds and large budgets for fuel. While CMDT staff used to bring the drugs, livestock staff have nothing to bring, hence owners have to make (and pay for) several travels, first to collect the livestock agent and then to buy drugs from pharmacies in town. Private veterinarians often give credit, and either they just issue a prescription based on the description of symptoms by the livestock owner or they bring with them drugs from their private pharmacies. While the general frequency of contact to livestock owners has been much reduced, office-based staff have almost entirely lost contact to others than livestock owners in project villages³⁹⁰ (Interviews with livestock staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994).

Contributing to increasingly difficult relations to clients is a serious loss of trust between livestock agents and owners, otherwise strongly encouraged by the agency. While the low frequency of staff transfers still constitutes a supporting factor, other factors have recently worked against the development of trust. The most detrimental change has been the withdrawal of many agents from village-based positions to arrondissement offices. The increased physical distance seems to have been accompanied by an increased psychological distance. Reduced travel resources, declining incomes for livestock staff, and their reduced work satisfaction are other factors. Thus, it has become common for agents not only to ask livestock owners to pay travel expenditures but also to request a 'field allowance' for visits to sick animals³⁹¹. This 'privately contracted extension' (Christoplos & Nitsch, 1996 p. 8-10) coexists with other individual solutions by livestock owners to get the assistance needed. The so-called 'squark factor' (Leonard, 1977 p.188-190) is obviously also at work and ensures the most powerful livestock owners a certain assistance, while less influential and poorer owners lose out (see discussions in chapter 3 and findings from the village survey presented in chapter 10).

Finally, the general political development in the region (and in the country as such) has affected the relationship between livestock agents and their clients. The livestock service has not escaped the general loss of authority by government organisations, and some staff now complain that livestock owners have become more demanding in recent years. Clients no longer accept that the agency imposes a programme on them, and often they present their own wishes to the content of extension sessions. While this may be seen as an expression of interest in the services provided, it corresponds badly to the maintenance of traditional hierarchical structures of the agency where all decisions concerning extension messages are made at headquarters level.

Some livestock agents seem to be aware that the agency may seriously undermine it in the competition with private veterinarians, if relations of trust with livestock owners are not maintained. During the interviews it was often stressed that trust is decisive to the work of

³⁹⁰ A chef de poste in an arrondissement office in Kadiolo cercle mentioned that he received about 1-2 requests from livestock owners per month, whereas the year before people came every day. An office-based chef de poste in Koutaiala cercle reported that several months could pass without receiving any requests from clients (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

³⁹¹ The 'privately contracted extension' by the livestock service provoked the following critical statements during the village survey: *"Le service de l'élevage ne cherche que de l'argent. Si tu les appelles et acceptes les frais de déplacement, en général ils viennent sans tarder"* (Nafegue no. 4). *"L'agent vétérinaire ne respecte pas ses rendez-vous. Son déplacement est aussi cher"* (Dossorola no. 8).

livestock agents, and that loss of trust will make people go elsewhere. People prefer agents they know, until they are disappointed by their lack of willingness and ability to assist³⁹² (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

Conclusion

The livestock service shares with the forestry service the experience of a profound organisational change which has fundamentally shaken the agency. Whereas in the case of the forestry service pressures have come from outside the agency, the livestock service has experienced an internal reorganisation in the form of its transfer from CMDT to the Department of Livestock. The reorganisation has significantly changed working conditions and has coincided with a changed definition of the agency's mandate.

The livestock service differs from the other agencies by a rather substantial discretion held by its field agents. The lack of strict internal discipline and a limited working load compared to the number of staff make it possible for field staff to improvise and respond to livestock owners' wishes to a larger extent than field staff from other agencies.

The agency, on the other hand, also illustrates that discretion is not enough to ensure high performance if not combined with a certain external pressure and work satisfaction of the staff. For office-based staff, who do not have close contacts to clients, the discretion tends to be used to do as little as possible. For village-based staff, the satisfaction of working in close collaboration with clients makes agents perform much better but only with regard to animal health which they are supposed to gradually abandon in order to concentrate on new tasks.

Having been subject to only one type of pressure for very many years, namely the pressure to vaccinate and care for sick animals, the agency has been allowed to take root in a fairly confined role. Thus, absence of an organised pressure from livestock owners similar to the pressure from farmers faced by CMDT, has made it possible for livestock agents to respond only to individual demands for treatment and vaccination of animals. The coincidence of livestock owners' and government's economic interests in assistance to raising draught oxen for cotton production has relieved the agency of pressures to adjust to other types of challenges.

Now when these other challenges are presenting themselves in the form of a considerably increased number of animals having to share the same natural resources, the agency lacks the flexibility to adjust. Its staff do not possess the qualifications needed and the experience of taking up new tasks, and the management does not understand that new ways of organising the work may be necessary.

The perplexity of the agency and its inability to respond to new situations are clearly illustrated by its lack of capacity to handle even a new challenge within its traditional field of intervention. Unlike the example reported by Tendler from Brazil where a threatening crop disease made a mediocre extension organisation raise its performance to excellence (Tendler, 1993a, see also

³⁹² In one arrondissement office other staff members willingly admitted that the agent most requested by livestock owners was the one who had been in the same position for 10 years (Interviews with livestock staff, the autumn of 1994).

chapter 3), the spread of a serious cattle disease in the Sikasso region only seems to have increased the uncertainty of the livestock agency.

9.5. The cooperative service (CAC).

Introduction

The National Department of the Cooperative Service was established in August 1967 with the double objective of providing technical and legal support to the cooperative movement and ensuring its control by the state³⁹³. Since the establishment the agency has changed its ministerial affiliation nine times of which four changes have taken place after the toppling of the Traoré regime in 1991³⁹⁴. Since 1994 it has been a department of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment (Pierot, 1979 p. 53; MDRE Cabinet staff, personal communication, May 1996).

The cooperative movement dates back to the early years of colonialism when in 1910 the French created 'indigenous associations' for marketing of agricultural produce and purchase of consumer goods. After independence the attempts by the new government to introduce a 'socialist' organisation of the rural population led to reorganisation of the cooperatives under the name of COOPAC³⁹⁵. These organisations were established at village level with the main objective of ensuring state monopoly on purchase and sale of cereals (Diallo, 1995 p. 37; Diallo, 1990 p. 22-25).

After the failure of the socialist experiment³⁹⁶, the establishment in 1967 of the Department of the Cooperative Service was an attempt to revitalise the cooperative movement. The idea was to improve the technical and organisational support by the government, while at the same time allow farmers more influence on village-level activities. In practice, however, existing structures were further centralised as village-based COOPAC units were forced to join larger arrondissement-based organisations. COOPAC was just renamed CAC³⁹⁷, and government-employed CAC agents based at arrondissement level maintained an upper hand in all decision-making and a monopoly on the financial management (Diallo, 1990 p. 22-25).

The establishment after 1972 of a wide range of integrated development agencies (ODRs)³⁹⁸ implied a significant increase in the number of government agencies intervening in the fields of production, marketing and transport. The overlap of activities was further aggravated when in

³⁹³ The Department of the Cooperative Service - 'La Direction Nationale de l'Action Coopérative' (DNA-COOP) - was established by government decree 126/PC dated 23 August 1967 (Pierot 1979 p. 53).

³⁹⁴ Most of the time the Department of the Cooperative Service has belonged to the various ministries of agriculture, livestock production, rural development and rural economy, but it has also been placed in the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Ministry of Employment and under the Prime Minister's Office.

³⁹⁵ Coopérative Agricole et Commerciale (COOPAC).

³⁹⁶ In relation to the cooperative movement the failure consisted in the purchase by COOPAC of grain from local producers at very low prices decided by the state and the resale of large quantities of the grain to civil servants and private traders. Thus, despite official intentions, grain was unavailable for resale to producers (Bishop, 1988 p. 13-16).

³⁹⁷ Centres d'Assistance et de Contrôle pour le Développement du Mouvement Coopérative (CAC). In 1989 the name was changed to Centre d'Action Coopérative, while the abbreviation was maintained (Tag, 1994 p. 55-56).

³⁹⁸ For a description of these agencies, see section 9.1.

1989 the mandate of the cooperative service was extended to include also promotion of village associations and 'village tons'. CAC agents were now made responsible for training of village leaders, credit management in collaboration with the various financial institutions, organisation of literacy courses and provision of agricultural equipment. All these tasks were core elements of the mandate of ODRs (Bishop, 1988 p. 13-16; Gentil, 1986 p. 61-73; Tag, 1994 p. 55-57; Diallo, 1990 p. 22-25; Diallo, 1995 p. 37).

The problem of overlap with other agencies is particularly pronounced in the Sikasso region where CMDT for more than two decades has undertaken exactly the tasks included in the mandate of the cooperative service. Until the late 1980s CAC had a certain financial basis for taking up the competition with CMDT, but after a financial restructuring of the agency in 1988, the support by CAC to the organisation of the population has been virtually nonexistent. Unlike other agencies, the majority of the staff are contractual workers. Before 1988 cooperative members paid salaries for contractual workers and all running costs such as transport and office equipment, but after the restructuring, these expenditures are supposed to be paid by the population through the local development tax³⁹⁹. In some regions NGOs and bi- and multilateral donors working through CAC structures have ensured the agency a certain level of funding, but in the Sikasso region all donors channel their funds through CMDT⁴⁰⁰ (MAEE, 1991 p. 58; Diallo, 1995 p. 37; interview with the deputy regional director, Sikasso Dec. 1994).

With the general refusal to pay taxes after 1991, activities in the Sikasso region have come to a virtual stand still⁴⁰¹. Many staff members have not been paid for months and even for years⁴⁰², and the only CAC activities at village level are funded by a tiny support from the 'Test Zones programme' used for off-season gardening and sheep-fattening activities for women in a mere eight villages in the region⁴⁰³. Apart from the role of the cooperative service as the body for legal improvements of all new associations, the agency in the Sikasso region can best be described as an empty shell⁴⁰⁴ (Interviews with CAC staff, the autumn of 1994).

³⁹⁹ More than half of all CAC employees are contractual workers, the so-called 'conventionnaires' who work as field agents at arrondissement level and at higher levels as secretaries, accountants, drivers, watchmen, etc. (MAEE, 1991 p. 15; Pierot 1979 p. 56-57).

⁴⁰⁰ In the Mopti region CAC activities are funded by BENSO and GTZ, and in the Ségou region CAC activities are funded by FIDA and BENSO (Interview with the deputy regional director, Sikasso Dec. 1994).

⁴⁰¹ In the years 1991-1994 tax payment in the Sikasso region was down to 30-40% of government claims (consultation of budgets for various arrondissements and the two cercles of Koutiala and Kadiolo).

⁴⁰² In late 1994 when interviews were carried out, only three staff members in Kadiolo cercle (le directeur, his deputy and one more staff member) received salaries, while five contractual workers had not been paid for 3 months. In Bougouni and Yanfolila arrears for contractual workers were said to be more than two years (Interview with the deputy director of CAC, Kadiolo Dec. 1994).

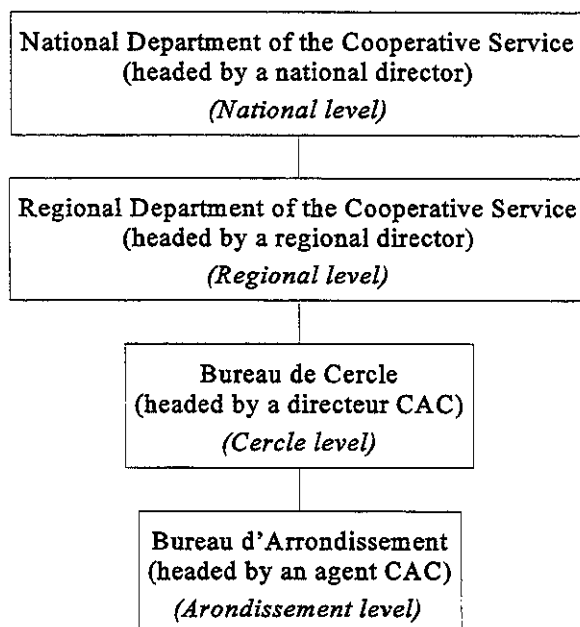
⁴⁰³ Of the 15 villages included in the 'Test Zones programme' in Koutiala and Kadiolo, only 8 has CAC executed gardening activities (N'Djim et al., 1993 p. 29).

⁴⁰⁴ After freedom of association was established by the new constitution, it has become a condition for obtaining legal status for the various new associations such as e.g. pastoral associations, rabbit breeders' associations and nurserymen's associations that they are approved by the cooperative service. Organisations which fall outside the mandate of CAC are political parties, GIEs (Groupements d'Intérêts Economiques which fall under Chambre de Commerce), trade unions and NGOs. In addition to these tasks, the cooperative service in a short period from 1990 to the establishment of the Mission de Décentralisation in 1993 was made formally responsible for the implementation of national decentralisation policies (Tag, 1994 p. 56; Sall, 1993; interview with the president of Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture, Sikasso Dec. 1994).

Organisational structure

Like the other government agencies under study, the mechanical model provides the core structure of CAC. Limited resources and dependency on local development budgets and donors, however, make the agency a very 'loose' structure which functions highly differently in different regions.

Figure 8. The four hierarchical levels of the cooperative service.



In the early 1990s the total number of staff was about 1,000 of which only about 400 were permanent staff paid by the general state budget ('fonctionnaires'). The remaining 600 including the majority of field agents were contractual workers paid by local development budgets or donors (MAEE, 1991 p. 16).

In 1994 only 25 of the total staff of 108 the Sikasso region were permanent, while the rest were contractual workers. According to the law, there should be at least one CAC agent per 15 villages, but in practice there is usually only one agent per arrondissement. In some arrondissements the position is even vacant (Interview with the deputy regional director, Dec. 1994).

Authority

Like all government agencies the internal organisation of the cooperative service is formally characterised by a strongly centralised hierarchy with vertical lines of command from the central administration over the region and cercle to the arrondissement level. Lines of authority, however, are less clear-cut than in other agencies because resources are so few that in practice field-level staff are left to make the most of their means. Working programmes leave plenty of discretion to

field-level staff but rarely do they have the resources necessary to undertake the activities they would like to carry out.

CAC field staff share with other government staff in the bottom of the hierarchy a general lack of information about policy decisions and strategies by their agency. In the cases of CAC, the level of information for arrondissement-based agents is virtually nil: they write monthly reports to the cercle but do never receive anything in return, nor do they meet with cercle staff very often.

Apart from the monthly reports, there is no monitoring of the work of arrondissement staff, and the agency is in a bad position to sanction staff who may have worked without payment for months or who receive their salaries at highly irregular intervals (Interviews with CAC staff, the autumn of 1994).

Rewards

Whereas CAC staff previously had both stable salaries and access to illegal incomes from abuse of cooperative funds, the agency now exemplifies the situation, mentioned by Grindle and Hilderbrand, where salaries are so low and so irregularly paid that employees are not ensured enough money to live on (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995 p. 452-453, ref. chapter 3). This situation would be a serious constraint to the performance of the staff, even if compensatory factors in the form of a high work satisfaction and a close contact to clients had existed. As neither factors are present in the Sikasso region, the performance of the agency is the lowest imaginable.

In a career perspective it is a dead end to be a CAC contractual worker. At the time when interviews were taken, quite a few staff members were only in their mid-30s, as they had been employed by the agency in the years immediately before 1988. The only reason why young field agents cling to their positions is the lack of alternative occupations which make even the remotest hope for a future donor funding more attractive than the decision to resign from the agency (Interviews with CAC staff, the autumn of 1994).

Organisational identification

One would not expect to find very many signs of organisational identification by field agents placed alone in poor office premises made at their disposal by the arrondissement administration⁴⁰⁵, deprived of virtually all means of work, irregularly paid or not paid at all - and last but not least - surrounded by CMDT agents with a similar mandate and plenty of funds to carry out activities.

Surprisingly, several of the agents interviewed expressed a certain pride in their agency. Referring to what was described as the glorious past of the cooperative service, they seemed to perceive of the agency as a potentially powerful organisation with a lot to offer the population. Thus, some CAC staff expressed a view of their role as protectors of the farmers against the exploitation by CMDT. According to them, CMDT only supports farmers' organisations with a view to increase cotton production, whereas CAC assists the rural population in order to strengthen their

⁴⁰⁵ Offices of CAC agents working at arrondissement level were the poorest of all offices visited: rarely furniture exceeded an unstable table, a chair and a set of ramshackle shelves leaned against the unpainted walls.

management capacity and thereby their autonomy. While CMDT is privileging better-off farmers, CAC is addressing all farmers regardless of their level of mechanisation. Following this line of reasoning, some staff members concluded that the sometimes tense relations between the two agencies are mainly explained by fear of CMDT of the revolutionary potential of the work carried out by the cooperative service⁴⁰⁶ (Interviews with CAC staff, the autumn of 1994).

While this may seem to be a considerable exaggeration of the present potential of the agency and very much beside the role played by the agency in its great period in the 1970s and 1980s, it is interesting to note that a previous strong organisation culture can survive several years of uninterrupted economic decline.

Peer pressure

A peer pressure does not exist at all. All field agents work in splendid isolation and have only (limited) contact to colleagues from other agencies.

Work satisfaction

The work satisfaction of CAC staff is generally extremely low. Being forced to stay in their uninspiring offices for lack of resources to carry out any activities, CAC staff expressed a deep frustration about not being employed according to their skills.

Dependency on local budgets implies that all proposals for activities made by the staff are turned down. Furthermore, it constantly brings the field agents in the humiliating situation of having to beg the local administrator for even the most basic working tools such as paper and pencils.

More than anything the total lack of contact to clients is discouraging the agents. While they used to be actively involved in economically important transactions related to purchase and sale of cereals and organisation of cooperatives, the population now hardly know who they are.

The experience of belonging to a previously powerful and financially privileged agency that has been degraded to a poor and generally ignored structure has created anger among staff members who often turn it against other agencies. In the Sikasso region, thus, there is a widespread agreement among CAC staff that CMDT is the main culprit of the situation given its usurpation of tasks rightfully belonging to CAC.

The few examples found of a certain work satisfaction by staff members were all related to the participation in the 'Test Zones programme'. Field agents who had taken part in a close work collaboration with staff from other agencies expressed enthusiasm about the new experience of having colleagues and a sincere joy about going to the field, rarely found among staff from other agencies (Interviews with CAC staff, the autumn of 1994).

⁴⁰⁶ In an interview given to a government-controlled magazine, the national director of DNA-COOP expresses a similar view of the agency. According to him ORDs such as CMDT have produced nothing but failures, whereas the history of the cooperative service has proven its role as the leading agency for support to the rural population (Diallo, 1995 p. 37).

Demand pressure

There is no demand pressure whatsoever on the cooperative service. At the national level the political uncertainty about the role of the agency is reflected in its constantly changed ministerial affiliation and in the alternating enlargement and reduction of its mandate.

Apart from donors who in other regions than Sikasso find it appropriate to implement their projects through the structures of the agency, no external parties have any interest in the services provided by the cooperative service.

The major reaction by the population towards the agency is indifference. CAC agents are rarely seen in the villages, and if they come they have usually nothing to offer⁴⁰⁷. Whereas people until the political changes in 1991 may have put up with meetings without an apparent purpose, they no longer accept this. In some villages, thus, CAC staff have been asked to stay away as farmers do not want to waste their time on meetings where a (material) outcome cannot be ensured (Interviews with CAC staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994).

Needless to say in such a situation trust does not exist. As expressed by the deputy regional director: "trust depends on the usefulness of the service, and if you have nothing to offer, you cannot expect people to trust you" (Interview, Dec. 1994).

To the extent that people are familiar with the agency, its past history is not always considered as glorious as reported by the staff. Some people remember that the agency used to be responsible for organisation of village cooperatives and training of cooperative leaders and refer to the many cases of mismanagement and abuse of cooperative funds.

The only positive assessments of the agency were given either by women involved in the 'Test Zones'-funded gardening activities⁴⁰⁸ or by people who appreciated the fact that CAC agents usually stay longer in each position than other government staff. Given the low frequency of transfers, it is not uncommon to find CAC agents who have been in the same position for up to ten years. Some field staff have obtained an understanding of village-level living conditions which in some cases have made them defend the interests of a village vis-à-vis the government administration (Interviews with CAC staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994).

Conclusion

The cooperative service exemplifies a situation where the public sector institutional context is so constraining for its performance that it would be extremely difficult to increase it by

⁴⁰⁷ The majority of respondents in the village survey did not bother to comment on CAC. Among the few who did, assessments were highly critical: "*Je n'ai pas confiance au CAC. Je ne vois pas encore leur utilité. Avant le CAC donnait des informations sur la commercialisation de nos produits, maintenant je ne sais pas ce qu'ils font*" (Woroni no.19). "*Avant, le CAC nous donnait des graines de semences (maïs, arachides, soja etc.). Maintenant, il ne fait plus d'actions*" (Kléla no.26).

⁴⁰⁸ Statements by the few women included in the village survey were generally highly positive: "*Grâce au CAC nous les femmes du village nous produisons des piments, salades, oignons, du gombo, du chou que nous voudrions*" (Nafegue no. 21). "*Notre association tient le toute grâce au soutien du CAC qui nous a donné les premières semences de haricot et d'arachide*" (Sincina no. 26). "*Grâce au CAC je me réjouis de la cueillette du fruit du jardin qui fait une récolte*" (Woroni no.7).

improvements made at any other level. Discouraged and irregularly paid staff deprived of even the smallest budget, without contacts to clients and without any prospects for future improvements of their situation make the worst possible point of departure for attempts to improve the service rendered by the agency.

Despite overwhelming constraints, however, it is worth noticing the survival of the previously strong organisational identification by the staff. It is interesting to compare the reaction by CAC and forestry staff to fundamental changes in their mandate and in the general position of their agency. While forestry staff have been virtually paralysed, and the organisation culture has quickly disintegrated, many CAC staff have maintained a faith in the (potential) usefulness of their agency. One important reason may be that in the case of CAC it has not been the cause of the agency itself that has come under attack. Its mandate has been taken over by other agencies and funding sources have dried up, but staff members have not been through a period of severe criticism and even traumatic physical attacks as those experienced by their colleagues in the forestry service. In case of the forestry service it was its core idea of repression as a means to protect the environment which came under attack.

It is interesting also to note how this dormant trust in the organisation can be converted into renewed work satisfaction the moment modest funding makes it possible for field staff to reestablish some relations to clients. It may seem a rather limited achievement to assist women to grow vegetables and feed sheep in a mere eight villages in the region⁴⁰⁹, but for CAC staff involved in the activities together with colleagues in other agencies, it was enough to give them back their work satisfaction.

Despite this example of (limited) reactivation of the agency, its potential must be described as extremely low. It is notable, thus, that the farmers' movement at no stage has benefited from support from this agency supposed to support rural organisation.

Finally, it must be mentioned that the continued existence of a CAC structure, complete with field agents, cercle level and regional staff, even in a region where another government agency is doing exactly what CAC is supposed to do, sadly illustrates the waste of resources deriving from the compartmental structure of government organisations and the consequent competition among agencies.

⁴⁰⁹ The achievement seems especially limited when considering that in many cases CMDT are running gardening activities in exactly the same villages.

Table 9.1. Overview of findings from the analysis of the four agencies.

	CMDT	Forestry service	Livestock service	Cooperative service
Organisational structure	Mechanical model which has become less mechanical by incorporating learning from farmers and front-line staff.	Extreme example of mechanical model which has not developed during many years.	Mechanical model which has become less mechanical due to lack of resources.	Mechanical model which has become less mechanical (even fragmented) due to lack of resources.
Authority	Low-trust system. Close supervision. A certain discretion of front-line staff. Structured flow of information to front-line staff. Structured feed-back from front-line staff.	Low-trust system. Poor supervision. A certain discretion of front-line staff. No information to front-line staff. No feed-back from front-line staff.	Low-trust system. Poor supervision. Large discretion of front-line staff. No information to front-line staff. No feed-back from front-line staff.	Low-trust system. No supervision. Large discretion to front-line staff. No information to front-line staff. No feed-back from front-line staff.
Rewards	High salaries. Incomes have increased. Performance-oriented rewards and sanctions.	Low salaries. Incomes have declined. No performance-oriented rewards. Arbitrary sanctions.	Low salaries. Incomes have declined. No performance-oriented rewards. Sanctions not commonly used.	Low salaries and irregular payment. No performance-oriented rewards. Sanctions not commonly used.
Organisation identification	Very high. Staff consider the agency superior to all other agencies.	Until 1991 very high, but now it has disintegrated.	Low.	Modest (kept up because of past role of the agency).
Peer pressure	High.	Until 1991 high, but now it has disappeared.	Low.	Non-existent.
Work satisfaction	Very high because of positive feed-back from farmers. However, recently challenged.	Until 1991 high, but now extremely low.	Low for office-based staff. High for village-based staff.	Extremely low.
Demand pressure	Very high demand by government. Very high demand by farmers. Trust-based relations between agents and farmers.	Non-existent until 1991. Now slightly increasing demand by government and farmers. No trust-based relations between agents and farmers.	Low demand by government. Reduced demand by farmers. Trust-based relations between village-based staff and farmers.	Non-existent. No trust-based relations between agents and farmers.

Conclusion

Findings from the analysis of organisation-specific characteristics of each of the agencies are summarised in table 9.1.

The analysis of the four agencies draws a picture of the Malian state as resource-poor, weakened by an institutional set-up based on the mechanical model and characterised by a very poor task network reflected in the virtual absence of collaboration among the agencies, gaps and overlaps in services provided.

The institutional context of the public sector is seriously constraining the performance of two of the agencies, the forestry service and the livestock service, while it must be described as detrimental to the performance of the cooperative service. The latter illustrates a case where a government agency is so crippled by lack of resources and staff that it is unable to perform at all.

Given its mixed status, CMDT is less dependent than the other agencies on the institutional context of the public sector, and its access to more plentiful resources and possibility to define its own performance-enhancing employment conditions are important reasons for its better performance.

CMDT, however, shares with the other agencies the dependency on the overall legitimacy of the state. To a varying extent all agencies have been affected by the change of regime in 1991 and the subsequent challenge of state authority. The forestry service obviously represents the most outstanding case, as it virtually collapsed when the regime which protected it was toppled. The general upsurge in popular manifestations and the countrywide prosecution of forestry staff contributed to inspire confrontations between farmers and CMDT a few months after 'les événements' in March 1991. Less spectacular expressions of the dependency of agencies on the overall legitimacy of the state are the complaints by all agencies that it has become more difficult to make farmers attend extension sessions and comply with their advice.

Also positive examples were found of the mutual influence of agencies' legitimacy in the eyes of the population. When farmers in Sikasso are interested in getting assistance from the livestock service to grow fodder crops and from the forestry service to plant fruit trees, it relates to their experience of having received a much appreciated assistance from CMDT. Whereas in other parts of the country, farmers have learned not to expect anything useful from government agencies, the experience in the Sikasso region is that their assistance may, indeed, be useful.

While these findings relate to the characteristics of government agencies as part of the abstract state that depends on a certain amount of legitimacy in the eyes of societal groups, the analysis also confirms the understanding of the state as a complex structure composed of many different parts all pulling in different directions. It illustrates how different strategies are pursued by different parts of the state not just with regard to their day-to-day activities but with regard also to their more fundamental relation to societal forces. While CMDT is pursuing an engagement strategy aiming to influence virtually every possible aspect of rural life, the strategy of the cooperative service exemplifies a form of state withdrawal. Even within the same agency different strategies may be pursued. Livestock agents based in villages actively address the population and are available for requests any time, day or night. Office-based agents, on the other hand, have

given up and have to be given 'incentives' to work. According to Bratton, the latter must be described as a disengagement strategy because acceptance of bribes reduces state authority rather than extending it (Bratton, 1994a, see also chapter 2).

A comparison of the four agencies shows that a core organisational structure based on the mechanical model may develop in many different directions, depending on available resources and the demand pressure faced. CMDT illustrates a mechanical model that has gradually become less mechanical by incorporating some learning from farmers and experience of field agents.

While the gradual change of CMDT's structure to accommodate clients' wishes has been a controlled and deliberate process, the livestock service and CAC represent organisations that have become less mechanical mainly by default. Field agents in these agencies have relatively large discretion because the management level does not have the resources necessary to maintain authority. The experience of these agencies, however, makes it evident that discretion without demand pressure does not necessarily result in increased performance.

The forestry service represents an extreme example of a mechanical organisation that has not developed at all during very many years. The total absence of external pressure has allowed it to settle into a mechanical rut and left it completely unprepared for any demands to adjust. After years of isolation the forestry service has been unable to find a new *modus operandi* after 1991. Thereby, the recent experience of the forestry service bears witness to the difficulties government agencies with a limited capacity may face when requested to make sudden changes. The experience attests that if other conditions for good performance are absent, a sudden demand pressure will result in little more than perplexity.

When trying to understand why CMDT has been so much more influenced than the other agencies by demand pressures, the reason again seems to be its particular status as a parastatal partially driven by private and public commercial interests. As management issues are handled solely by CMDT, the existence of French interests as such does not explain its sensitivity to farmers' demands. It is rather the economic imperative to produce cotton at low costs and the request from farmers for assistance that have forced CMDT to become more creative and experimenting than the other agencies until recently ensured a certain allocation of funds regardless of their performance. It is possible, thus, that also the forestry service could have experienced a development similar to that of CMDT, if it had been under a similar pressure to support e.g. commercial tree production in which the government and farmers had considerable economic interests. In such a situation it seems highly unlikely that the agency would have been able to disregard the demands by farmers supposed to produce the trees. Whereas part of the CMDT success story is explained by its access to resources which the other agencies do not have due to their dependency on a poor state, the other part of the story relates to the particular character of demand pressures on the agency.

The analysis of the 'CMDT model', however, reveals that it has not been unconditionally appropriate in all situations. Its mechanically oriented structures have sometimes constituted a hindrance to its ability to respond both to individual clients' demand and to organised demands by farmers. When, nevertheless, constraints related to its structure have not been more detrimental to its performance, the reason seems to be the existence of a range of performance-enhancing

conditions, such as a strong organisational culture, a strong peer pressure, a performance-oriented reward system, high work satisfaction by staff and close relations between staff and clients.

Some of these performance-enhancing conditions are also found in the other agencies and explain that these are sometimes able to perform well against otherwise hard odds. The most notable example is the cooperative service where a previously strong organisational identification by staff has survived the comedown of the organisation and has the potential of being converted into new work satisfaction for the staff once they obtain financial means to reestablish relations to clients. Also work satisfaction of livestock agents based in villages demonstrates this. Despite the absence of a performance-related reward system, organisational identification and peer pressure, village-based livestock agents often find a basic work satisfaction in having close relations to clients, and apparently they are able to accommodate farmers' demands.

The argument by Tandler that agencies are rarely performing consistently well or consistently bad finds limited support in the above conclusions (Tandler, 1993a; Tandler, 1993b, see also chapter 3). Contrary to her findings, there seems in fact to be a close relationship between organisational structure and performance of agencies. Radical changes in performance, thus, appear to be more related to structural changes than to sudden external shocks and challenges. The much reduced performance of the livestock service and the cooperative service following institutional changes are but two examples, while also the inability of the livestock service to raise performance when faced by a threatening animal disease counters the hypothesis.

The analysis, thus, confirms the appropriateness of analysing performance of government agencies as a result of pressures exerted upon them both by their status as being part of an abstract symbolic totality, by a range of organisation-specific factors and by societal forces. Their dependency on the overall legitimacy of the state and on the institutional context of the public sector confirms that it is little appropriate to treat government agencies only as individual organisations. Organisation theory takes the analysis a good part of the way but has to be supplemented by theories about overall relations between state and society in order to understand the particularities of government agencies. The marked differences among organisations sharing the same environment, on the other hand, illustrate the usefulness of considering also organisation-internal factors and the particular demand pressure from clients, hence the need for moving beyond general theories about state and society.

As regards pressures exerted upon the agencies by the particular character of the social forces with which they interact, the analysis has so far dealt only with a general 'demand pressure from clients'. The difference between the experience of CMDT and the forestry service clearly illustrates that existence of a demand pressure is decisive to the performance. Based on the analysis in this chapter, however, all that can be said is whether the demand is there or not, whereas the particular character of social forces in the region has not been dealt with. This analysis is attempted in chapter 11.

Finally, the understanding of performance guiding the analysis in the present chapter has been a very broad understanding of the notion as a measure of the ability by agencies to satisfy general client demands. There has been no differentiation of the ability to satisfy demands by particular groups. The issue of inequality in relations between agencies and their clients is taken up in chapter 10.

CHAPTER 10. INTERACTION BETWEEN FARMERS AND EXTENSION AGENCIES IN THE SIKASSO REGION

Introduction

It is the purpose of the present chapter to present a picture of the interaction between farmers and extension agencies in Sikasso, i.e. a picture of what is happening when farmers meet representatives of the state. The perspective is that of farmers' as it was reflected in a village survey undertaken in the region in late 1994 and early 1996.

In the first chapters of the theoretical section (chapter 1-2) the notion of 'interaction' was used to designate any exchange between the abstract categories of 'state' and 'society'. In chapter 3 the perspective was narrowed down to concentrate on the specific interplay between government agencies and their clients, and the notion of performance by the agencies, defined as their ability to accommodate clients' demands, was introduced as an entrance point to study the interaction.

In chapter 5, 6 and 9 conditioning factors for the performance of the agencies have been discussed. Chapter 5 dealt with the Malian action environment, chapter 6 with the institutional context of the public sector, and in chapter 9 a thorough assessment was made of organisation-specific factors conditioning the performance of each of the four agencies under study.

In this chapter *farmers' assessment of the services provided by the agencies is presented*. As performance is defined as the ability to accommodate farmers' demands, the assessment by farmers can be considered a 'test' of conclusions reached in chapter 9 concerning the expected performance of each of the agencies

The village survey which constitutes the basis for the chapter has addressed both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the services provided. As discussed in chapter 3, the degree of satisfaction by clients can be difficult to measure because needs tend to be indefinite and therefore never properly satisfied. The issue of demand satisfaction, therefore, has been approached by asking a series of more specific questions concerning the *frequency* of contact between agencies and their clients, the *reliability* of the services, i.e. whether the services are available when they are needed, the *perceived usefulness* of the assistance, and *the character of personal relations* between extension agents and farmers.

It should be noted that questions asked in the survey concern three more government agencies in addition to the four under study, namely the health service, the educational system, and the government administration represented by 'chefs d'arrondissement' and 'commandants de cercle'. This was decided partly because information on interaction with these agencies are useful for comparative reasons, and partly because these agencies through their activities in the region influence the overall perception held by the population of the state.

The survey includes a total of 312 respondents in ten villages in the Koutiala, Kadiolo and Sikasso cercles in the Sikasso region. For a presentation and discussion of the fieldwork methodology applied, see the section 'Fieldwork methodology and literature study' and for additional information on villages and respondents, see the sections on 'Characteristics of the ten

villages under study' and 'Characteristics of respondents in the village survey' in the annex. Maps indicating the location of villages are found in the beginning of the dissertation.

It must be stressed that all figures presented in the following should be considered rough indications of tendencies rather than exact measures of 'real' phenomena.

10.1. Frequency and distribution of contacts

The first issue investigated during the survey was how much in fact farmers and extension agents see of each other. In a context such as the Malian where letters to farmers and television broadcasting of extension messages are not among the options, physical contact between extension workers and farmers is a first precondition for being able to describe their relation as interaction. This may be in the form of participation by farmers in extension sessions, visits by farmers to government offices, or visits by extension agents to individual farmers. It is relevant to know also who among the two parties typically initiates the interaction: if extension agencies primarily address farmers, or if it is mainly farmers who solicit the assistance of the agencies. Although this cannot be directly translated into the theoretical notions of engagement and disengagement discussed in chapter 2, it contributes to an overall picture of whether government agencies are actively trying to relate to the population or whether they are rather in the process of retracting. Similarly, the frequency of contacts on farmers' initiative gives an indication of whether the population tend to shun representatives of the state or they are instead trying to address them.

The survey confirms that the four agencies under study account for a considerable share of total contacts between government agencies and population in the region (table 10.1). Measured as a simple average of frequency of contacts reported by all respondents, only the health service has a higher frequency of contacts to inhabitants than CMDT and the livestock service. Even the forestry service has more frequent face-to-face contact to the (adult) population than the educational system.

The overall frequency of contacts reflected in table 10.1 must be described as relatively high. Respondents included in the survey have an average of about 33 annual contacts to government agencies, corresponding to close to three contacts every month. Contacts to agencies involved in natural resource management (i.e. the four agencies under study) amount to about 18 annual contacts which is substantially above the level of contacts reported in studies from other parts of Africa⁴¹⁰.

Considering CMDT's extensive programme in the region, it is not surprising that this agency is placed on top of the scale of contacts. Less predictable is the information in table 10.1 that the

⁴¹⁰ In his thorough study of an extension agency in Kenya, Leonard found an average of 2.91 visits per year to progressive farmers, 0.44 visits to middle farmers and only 0.07 visits to so-called 'non-innovative farmers'. Although his study seems to count only visits by extension agents to individual farmers, the level of contact still appears to be considerably below the level found in Sikasso (Leonard, 1977 p. 173-177). Also my own discussions with agricultural extension workers from six African countries (Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Eritrea, Malawi and Mozambique) and subsequent visits to Uganda, Malawi and Mozambique have confirmed that the frequency of contact between extension agencies and farmers in the Sikasso region is far above the frequency in other countries (information obtained through my participation as a trainer in an 'Agricultural Extension Coordination Course' funded by Danida, 1999).

livestock service has about the same number of contacts. While general activities of the latter were extremely limited at the time when interviews were undertaken, the many contacts reflected in table 10.1 are believed to be explained mainly by the inclusion in the survey of a number of villages benefiting from specific project activities (see section 10.1.2 below). The low frequency of contacts to the forestry service and the very limited contact between farmers and CAC fit the general picture of two agencies seriously constrained in their ability to carry out any activities.

Table 10.1. Average annual number of contacts for all respondents to each of the agencies during a year (n=312)

HEALTH	CMDT	LIVESTOCK	ADMIN.	FORESTRY	EDUCATION	CAC
9.7	7.4	7.3	4.0	2.1	1.4	1

Note: contacts include both individual and group contacts (participation by respondents in extension activities that address a larger group or the entire village). Respondents have stated the number of contacts during the rainy season and the dry season, respectively, and these have been added to arrive at an annual average. The rainy season from May to November is the cultivation period where assistance from extension agencies is most needed

Table 10.2 reflects the mode of operation by the various agencies (emphasis put on outreach activities vs. reception of clients in offices) as well as their perceived usefulness to farmers. Thus, the health service that runs only a limited outreach service is very much solicited by the population⁴¹¹. That the livestock service appears to be the one agency among the four under study which receives most requests from farmers is probably explained by the fact that livestock agents use the occasion of project-funded extension sessions to respond to individual requests. Assistance from the forestry service and the cooperative service is not much in demand, and staff from these agencies, therefore, are less solicited when they come in relation to project-funded activities. The rather substantial extension activities by the livestock service in the ten villages can be seen from table 10.3.

Table 10.2. Average number of contacts on the initiative of farmers for all respondents during a year (n=312)

HEALTH	LIVESTOCK	CMDT	ADMIN.	EDUCATION	FORESTRY	CAC
6.9	3.3	2.2	1.9	1.3	0.2	0

Evidently, outreach activities by CMDT are more extensive than activities by any other agency in the region (table 10.3). The relatively few contacts to CMDT on farmers' initiative should be seen in relation to the policy of gradually replacing extension agents by village technical teams. In many of the villages included in the survey, the village technical team has the capacity to assist farmers without involving CMDT agents.

⁴¹¹ Regarding the two other agencies included in the survey, the administration only addresses the population once a year when taxes are collected, while farmers contact the administration concerning birth certificates, identity cards, tax problems, etc. The school system rarely approaches the (adult) population, but parents contact the nearby school to enroll their children.

Table 10.3. Average number of contacts on the initiative of agencies for all respondents during a year (n=312)

CMDT	LIVESTOCK	HEALTH	FORESTRY	ADMIN.	CAC	EDUCA.
5.2	4.0	2.8	1.9	1.1	1	0.1

Directly comparable studies from the same region are not available. A survey undertaken in 1993 by researchers from DRSPR on frequency of contacts and quality of extension messages by CMDT, the forestry service and livestock service took up some of the same issues but applied a different methodology⁴¹² (Coulibaly et al, 1993). Despite slightly different specific results, the two surveys indicate a fairly similar pattern of interaction between farmers and extension agencies⁴¹³.

So far only average figures for all farmers have been dealt with. It is necessary, however, to 'disaggregate' the group of farmers in order to find out if all farmers have the same frequency of contact, and if this is not the case, to assess factors decisive to the frequency. In accordance with the description in chapter 7 and 8 of two main lines of division of the population, the survey has concentrated on assessing the importance of socioeconomic and geographical factors, i.e. the possible difference in contacts according to the position of farmers in the classification a- d (see definition in chapter 7) and the possible difference in contacts to farmers living in different villages.

10.1.1. Concentration of services on better-off farmers

Average figures conceal a heavy concentration of all services on a limited number of farmers. In the rainy season about half of all contacts to CMDT on farmers' initiative are taken by only 6% of respondents, whereas 62% of respondents declare never to contact the agency during this period. For the livestock service, it appears that 40% of contacts on farmers' initiative are taken by only 10% of respondents. About half of those interviewed never contact the livestock service. For the forestry service the concentration is even more pronounced: 5% of respondents, namely those interested in nursery activities, account for all annual contacts to the forestry service, while the remaining 95% never contact the agency.

For all agencies without exception there is a tendency to concentrate extension efforts on better-off farmers in group-a and group-b at the expense of poorer farmers in group-c and group-d. It appears from table 10.4 that an average group-a household has substantially more contacts to

⁴¹² The survey comprised a total of 55 men and 44 women in seven villages in the Sikasso region. As it turned out that the team was unable to obtain answers from women concerning contacts to government agencies, the total sample of 55 respondents was considerably smaller than that of the present survey. The villages were selected according to criteria emphasizing their position in the classification by CMDT (i.e. SB, ZER, ZAER, non-AV). In each of the villages a stratified sample of households was selected by use of the DRSPR-typology (i.e. by grouping households in the categories a-d). Like in the present survey, questions distinguished between the rainy and the dry season, but instead of stating the specific number of contacts, respondents were asked to indicate whether contacts take place 'rarely', 'constantly', 'in-between' or 'never' (Coulibaly et al., 1993).

⁴¹³ The DRSPR-survey found that CMDT has an average of about 11 annual contacts to each farmer, the livestock service sees each farmer 4 times per year, while the forestry service is in touch with farmers about 6 times per year (the number of contacts has been calculated based on data presented in Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 33 table 2.5.) Data on the forestry service are questionable, as only 9 respondents account for 90% of reported contacts to this agency.

government agencies than group-b and group-c households and 50% more contacts than group-d household.

Considering the ‘modified T&V’ approach applied by CMDT, the skewed distributions of contacts to this agency may seem rather surprising. It is the official policy of CMDT not to concentrate on pilot farmers, but to undertake separate extension activities for each of the four groups based on identification of the particular constraints they are facing (Fomba & Joldersma, 1991 p. 2). Nevertheless, information in table 10.4 is confirmed by the DRSPR- survey mentioned above. Based on interviews with CMDT agents, this survey found that mechanised farmers, who make up only 1% of all households in the region, were subject to 5-50% of all contacts to farmers taken by CMDT staff. Several staff members explained the concentration of attention on mechanised and group-a farmers by a deliberate strategy to optimise results of extension activities⁴¹⁴ (Coulibaly et al, 1993 p. 23-24).

Table 10.4. Average number of contacts to each agency during a year, according to socioeconomic background (n=312)

	CMDT	LIVESTOCK	FORESTRY	CAC	ADMIN	HEALTH	EDUCA.	TOTAL
group-a	9.2	8.8	3.1	1.3	5.1	11.9	1.8	41.2
group-b	7.5	7.4	2	1.1	3.5	10.1	1.7	33.3
group-c	6.5	5.8	1.9	0.8	3.7	8.7	1.6	29
group-d	6.2	7.0	1.5	0.8	3.5	8	0.3	27.3

Note: the average of 7 contacts between group-d farmers and the livestock service reflects the answer of only 3 people who had about 16 annual contacts each.

While a personal interpretation by field agents of official CMDT policies may partly explain the bias, the close monitoring of their work and the many staff training courses make it unlikely that their discretion is wide enough to provide the full explanation. It seems more plausible that the so-called ‘squark factor’ and the power advantage of better-off farmers are among the main reasons (ref. chapter 3). Poorer farmers who cannot obtain credit to buy equipment and draught oxen often hesitate to contact extension agents for assistance to manual cultivation, whereas large-scale producers (‘gros producteurs’) feel that they have a clear right to demand immediate attention⁴¹⁵. Interestingly, the more limited tradition for CMDT agents to accept bribes may further aggravate the problem of poorer farmers. As discussed in chapter 3, the possibility for poorer farmers of paying for services otherwise concentrated on better-off farmers may mitigate the unequal distribution of extension benefits.

This hypothesis is supported by the fact that although unequal, the distribution of contacts to the livestock service is less skewed than what may have been expected. As per definition, group-c

⁴¹⁴ Information on contacts to mechanised farmers were obtained only by asking extension agents to assess the frequency of contact. Unfortunately the DRSPR-survey do not apply the a-d-typology to the presentation of data on frequency of contacts, and it is therefore not possible to know the distribution of contacts on all social groups. It appears from the survey that a very large group of respondents have no contact to the three agencies at all: during the rainy season 37% have no contact to CMDT, 48% have no contact to the livestock service and 53% have no contact to the forestry service (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 33).

⁴¹⁵ For a further discussion of this phenomena, see section 10.4, below.

and group-d households have less draught oxen and cattle than group-a and -b farmers⁴¹⁶, and, therefore, need the assistance of the livestock service less often. Nevertheless, when these households report a relatively high number of contacts to the agency, it may be explained by the widespread application of so-called 'privately contracted extension' by the livestock service⁴¹⁷.

In case of the forestry service, the most obvious explanation for the socioeconomic bias is that only better-off farmers have means to invest in nursery activities.

Finally, the gardening and sheep fattening activities run by CAC in 'Test-Zones villages' are likely to appeal mainly to women from better-off households who can afford the time to participate⁴¹⁸.

10.1.2. Concentration of services on certain villages

Also the distribution of contacts on villages is highly uneven. As can be seen from table 10.5, inhabitants in Woroni on average have more than 2.5 times as many contacts to government agencies as inhabitants in Molobala.

It is of interest to note that all agencies tend to favour and disfavour the same villages: few villages have close contact to one agency but limited contact to others. While six villages (Molobala, Kléla, Chiémé, N'golokasso, Dossorola, and Sincina) have relatively few contacts, two villages (Koloni and Nafegue) have fairly many contacts, and two villages (Sinkolo and Woroni) have exceptionally frequent contacts to virtually all extension agencies.

Geographical factors⁴¹⁹ and factors related to extension strategies⁴²⁰ may contribute to explain the similarities of the extension pattern by the various agencies, but the single most important factor seems to be the existence of project-funded activities in some of the villages. Thus, the four villages with most contacts (Woroni, Sinkolo, Nafegue and Koloni) are all included in the 'Test

⁴¹⁶ According to the definitions presented in chapter 7, group-d households have no experience with manual traction, while group-c households possess a maximum of one pair of oxen.

⁴¹⁷ Also in relation to the health service and the administration, payment of extralegal fees plays a considerable role. The higher frequency of contacts of group-a and -b households to these agencies may be explained by the generally larger size of the households, hence their more frequent need for health services, birth certificates, etc. For the school system the limited contact to poorer farmers is likely to be explained mainly by the importance of children as a work force in these households.

⁴¹⁸ For a brief presentation of the 'Test Zones programme', see the annex.

⁴¹⁹ Geographical factors may contribute to explain the pattern of contacts in some of villages but not in other. While the geographical isolation of Dossorola and N'golokasso may be part of the reason for their low frequency of contact, distance to government agencies cannot explain limited contacts in Molobala and Kléla that are both arrondissement headquarters. Easy access to an all-weather road may explain the frequent contact to Woroni and Sinkolo both situated near to the main road from Côte d'Ivoire to Koutiala. It does not explain, however, why inhabitants in Sincina and Kléla have relatively few contacts. Sincina is situated as a suburb to Koutiala, and Kléla has about the same distance as Sinkolo to the main road and a larger town (see also the maps in the beginning of the dissertation and the section on 'Characteristics of the ten villages under study' in the annex).

⁴²⁰ In case of CMDT, the different intensity of support, depending on the capacity of the village, may explain part of the pattern but not all of it. CMDT is represented by a 'chef secteur de base' in Sinkolo, Woroni and Chiémé which implies a relatively close direct contact to farmers. In Kléla, Koloni, Molobala, N'golokasso and Sincina, on the other hand, CMDT is represented by a 'Chef ZAER' who mainly work through the village association and has limited direct contact to farmers. Chiémé is supported by a 'chef secteur de base' based in the village, but respondents have limited contact to the agent, whereas respondents in Koloni assisted by a 'Chef ZAER' have very frequent contact to CMDT staff (see also table B in the annex).

Zones programme' which implies that agents from the livestock service, the forestry service, CMDT and CAC receive transport and allowances for visits to the villages. Additional funds by the project may mean little to the possibilities of CMDT agents to visit the villages, but it makes a big difference for the three other poorly-funded agencies.

Table 10.5. Average number of contacts during a year, according to village background (n=312)

	CMDT	LIVESTOCK	FOREST	CAC	ADMIN	HEALTH	EDUCA.	TOTAL
Moloba.	4.4	4.6	0.4	0	2.9	7.9	1.8	22
Kléla	4.9	3.9	1.1	0	3.3	7.8	1.7	22.7
Chième	5.4	5.1	1.4	0.2	1.8	9.6	1.3	24.8
N'golo.	6.7	5.8	0.3	0	3.6	8.7	1.6	26.7
Dossoro.	5.6	4.6	0.5	0	5.9	9.8	0.7	27.1
Sincina	4.2	5	2.4	2	4.1	9	2.4	29.1
Koloni	8.1	9.1	3.6	1.7	3.6	5.6	1.8	33.5
Nafegue	6.8	7	4.6	1	6.3	13.2	0.2	39.1
Sinkolo	12.7	13.8	3.4	3.4	4.9	10.6	1.4	50.2
Woroni	16.8	13.4	4.4	2.7	5.7	13.5	1.7	58.2

A 'village power advantage' similar to the power advantage of certain better-off households may also influence the distribution of extension contacts. Unofficial criteria for selection of villages to be included in the 'Test Zones programme' seem to have emphasized the existence of good relations between the administration and the village⁴²¹. To the extent such good relations still exist, which seems to be the case for at least Sinkolo and Woroni, this may further reinforce the tendency to concentrate assistance on these villages⁴²² (Interviews made in relation to review of the Test Zones programme, Aug. 1993, and interviews with resource persons, the autumn of 1994).

10.2 Reliability of services

Table 10.6 shows answers given by respondents when they were asked to assess the reliability of the services provided by indicating for each of the agencies if it 'always', 'sometimes' or 'never' satisfies their needs, when requested to assist them

It appears from the table that the livestock service is the agency which the largest share of respondents consider able to provide a satisfactory service, when it is needed. CMDT is ranked rather low, the forestry service is considered reliable only by a minority of respondents, and so

⁴²¹ See also the brief description of the project in the annex.

⁴²² See also the section on 'Characteristics of the ten villages under study' in the annex.

few respondents have bothered commenting on the reliability of CAC that it has not been possible to include it in the table.

Table 10.6. Share of all respondents who declare 'always' to be satisfied with the service provided by each of the agencies (n=305)

LIVESTOCK	HEALTH	CMDT	EDUCAT.	ADMIN.	FORESTRY
58%	52%	42%	39%	31%	16%

note: the table does not include CAC as only a negligible part of respondents has commented on its reliability.

A possible explanation for the assessment of the livestock service and the health service as more reliable than CMDT may be that CMDT provides a more well-defined service than the other agencies, hence it is easier for farmers to know what to expect and to identify situations where demands have not been satisfied.

A reflection of the generally low reliability of agencies is given in table 10.7 showing respondents' answers when asked to list main reasons for unsatisfactory services. It is notable that nearly half of all respondents find that lack of commitment by government agents is a factor contributing to explain insufficient assistance, and that about one fifth mention lack of understanding by agents of the peasant way of life among the reasons. Staff shortage figuring prominently in explanations given by government agents themselves is only mentioned by 17%, whereas 44% of respondents agree with government staff that lack of resources is a core problem.

Table 10.7. Reasons given for insufficient assistance by government agencies - share of all respondents (n=309)

LACK OF COMMITMENT	LACK OF RESOURCES	LACK OF TRANSPORT	LACK OF UNDER- STANDING*)	LACK OF STAFF	LACK OF QUALIFICA- TIONS
47%	44%	27%	23%	17%	7%

note: the question was phrased as a closed question where a range of possible answers were mentioned. Respondents decided themselves how many - if any - of the reasons they found valid.

*) the proposed answer was phrased 'lack of understanding of the peasant way of life'

10.3. Qualitative dimensions of demand satisfaction

During the survey it was attempted to get an impression also of qualitative dimensions of demand satisfaction by obtaining an assessment by respondents of the usefulness of the services provided. This issue was approached by asking about respondents' trust in the various agencies (respondents were asked to mention the agency they trust least and most) and by encouraging respondents to qualify answers by personal comments.

It turned out that many respondents commented both on the *usefulness of the services* and on the *character of personal relations* between extension agents and farmers. The latter suggests that factors such as extension agents' regard for the dignity of clients, a friendly attitude by extension staff, and familiarity with village conditions play a considerable role for the assessment of the services.

It is hardly surprising that CMDT appears to be the agency which the majority of respondents trust most (table 10.8). Also the health service, the livestock service and the educational system seem to enjoy a certain trust, while only a tiny minority of respondents consider the cooperative service and the forestry service most trustworthy. The fact that administration has not been mentioned by any respondents at all reflects the prevailing view that it is an extractor of taxes providing few services in return.

Table 10.8. Agency most trusted by respondents (share of all respondents)(n=311)

CMDT	HEALTH	LIVEST.	EDUCA.	CAC	FORESTRY	ADMIN	OTHER*)	TOTAL
40%	18%	11%	11%	3%	1%	0%	16%	100%=311

note *) other= 9% of respondents who declare not to trust any of the government agencies, 3% who declare to trust all agencies and 4% who trust most in BNDA.

A comparison of table 10.8 to table 10.6 suggests a distinction by respondents between usefulness and reliability of services. Whereas CMDT receives only an average score when people are asked to assess the reliability of its services (table 10.6), it is mentioned by no less than 40% of respondents as the agency which they trust most. It seems, thus, that services provided by the health service and the livestock service are considered less crucial but more reliable than the assistance by CMDT.

Regarding personal relations between extension agents and farmers, the core issue seems to be whether the meeting takes place *on equal terms*. Condescending behaviour by government agents and requests for bribes are frequently mentioned as factors detrimental to a positive assessment of the services. The fact that extension workers live and work in the villages, on the other hand, is stressed as a factor considerably strengthening personal relations and increasing the usefulness of services.

As Lipsky has discussed in relation to American social workers, condescending behaviour is often found in situations where trust between government staff and clients does not exist (Lipsky, 1980, ref. chapter 3). Village populations in Sikasso often experience to be talked down to by better educated government staff who consider themselves superior to ignorant farmers. Clients are being requested to wait for hours outside offices, government agents do not respect appointments made, and they often address clients in a language that these do not understand⁴²³.

The phenomenon of 'privately contracted extension' may ensure a certain assistance to farmers who would otherwise not be served, but comments by respondents suggest that the other side of the picture is a serious undermining of the legitimacy of agencies⁴²⁴. When farmers are forced to

⁴²³ "Tous les services sont les mêmes. C'est eux qui connaissent tout, ils ont été à l'école et pensent que nous ne connaissons rien" (Chième no. 8). "Tous les agents sont les mêmes. Ils sont les patrons, car ils sont instruits..." (Kléla no.20). "Il faut que le villageois soit accompagné d'un jeune alphabétisé pour que l'administration règle les besoins" (Nafegue no. 5). "Les agents de l'arrondissement nous prennent trop de notre temps. Pour une mission il faut 3 à 4 jours de déplacement" (Sincina no.15). "Ils ne font que nous embêter à Koutiala" (Sincina no.14).

⁴²⁴ "C'est par méchanceté et mauvaise volonté que les services n'arrivent pas à nous assister. Ils ont tous les moyens mais ils veulent que le villageois donne toujours de l'argent" (Sincina no. 25). "Quand nous avons besoins des services nous les rejoignons. Si non, ils ne viennent pas à nous comme ça. S'ils viennent directement à nous, cela veut dire qu'ils ont un besoin à notre niveau. Nous sommes obligés de les satisfaire dans la mesure possible, cela nous prépare notre besoin futur en eux" (Kléla no. 31). "Il est rare de voir le paysan aller vers l'agent sans argent

extralegal payment for services supposed to be free of charge, relations between extension agents and farmers become pure business relations with the sole purpose for farmers of obtaining certain services and the sole purpose for extension agents of making a private profit. The result is that farmers turn their back to the agencies the moment they can do without their service⁴²⁵. As defined in chapter 3, trust is an expression of relations where the parties are collaborating because of normative obligations rather than for purely utilitarian reasons.

Similar to the findings of other studies (Wade, 1995; Tandler & Freedheim, 1994, see also chapter 3), the survey has found that relations of trust are positively influenced by extension agents being village-based. According to table 10.9, no less than 71% of all respondents prefer village-based agents. In personal comments respondents mention among advantages of village-based agents that they understand the village way of life, that agents and farmers become friends, and that they are more easily accessible than agents based in a distant arrondissement office⁴²⁶.

Table 10.9. Government staff preferred by respondents - share of all respondents (n= 311)

VILLAGE-BASED *)	HAVE STAYED FOR A LONGER PERIOD	YOUNG**)	SPEAK A LOCAL LANGUAGE ***)
71%	31%	17%	14%

notes: *) Respondents were asked to indicate whether they prefer village-based, arrondissement-based or cercle-based agents or whether the base of agents is considered unimportant.

***) 13% of respondents prefer older agents and 70% consider the age of agents unimportant. The question was asked to see if differences between young and old staff in the forestry service and the livestock services were reflected in assessments by farmers.

***) a local language is understood as a language different from Bambara (i.e. Senoufo or Minyanka)

Also the duration of the stay in the same position by government agents is important to the development of trust: 31% of respondents prefer staff who have remained in their position for a relatively longer period and explain it, similarly to the explanations given for preference of village-based agents, by the development of closer relations⁴²⁷.

Individual characteristics of the agents, e.g. their age and language capabilities, appear to matter less to farmers⁴²⁸.

en poche" (Woroni no. 9). "Les service ne veulent pas faire de déplacement gratuit ni de geste gratuit" (Nafegue no.10).

⁴²⁵ The view of relations to government agencies as business relations only is reflected in the following statements: "La confiance n'est pas facile. Nous travaillons avec tous les services, mais la confiance c'est autre chose. J'ai plutôt confiance à mes capacités, mes matériels de travail" (Kléla no. 4). "Je n'ai confiance à aucun services...j'ai confiance plutôt à ma daba" (Sincina no.1).

⁴²⁶ "Les agents basés au village sont comme nos parents, ils nous comprennent bien, on fait moins de déplacement pour les avoir par rapport à ceux basés à Koutiala" (Sincina no. 11). "Notre jeune agent basé au village peut être réveillé à n'importe quand pour travailler" (Sinkolo no.1). "Ceux qui sont basés au village sont nos amis. Tous les agents basés au village ont une portion de terre dans notre plaine rizicole. Ils sont bien" (Kléla no. 5). Respondents in villages served from arrondissement offices, on the other hand, regret the lack of village-based agents: "C'est malheureux que nous n'avons pas d'agents basés dans notre village. Un agent basé dans notre village nous comprendrait bien" (Dossorola no.15)

⁴²⁷ "Les agents qui ont duré chez nous ici... sont presque devenus nos parents, nos fils, ils nous comprennent" (Molobala no.14).

⁴²⁸ The only exceptions to this picture were found in Nafegue and Molobala where 73% and 35% of respondents, respectively, prefer Senoufo-speaking and Minyanka-speaking agents. As inhabitants in these villages are less

10.4. Level of demand satisfaction conditioned by socioeconomic background

Generally speaking, the better-off a household is, the more assistance it receives, and the more it is satisfied with the assistance received from government agencies.

As it appears from table 10.10, no less than 55% of respondents belonging to the poor manually-cultivating group-d households declare to have no trust in any of the government agencies, whereas only 4% of the privileged group-a respondents give this answer. Group-c respondents are less critical towards the agencies than respondents belonging to group-d but more critical than group-b respondents.

Table 10.10. Share of respondents from each socioeconomic group who declare to have no trust in any of the agencies (when asked to mention the agency in which they trust the least) (n= 301).

group-a	group-b	group-c	group-d	Total
4%	10%	25%	55%	17%

As seen from table 10.11, the difference of assessments is particularly pronounced in the case of CMDT where more than half of group-a respondents but only one fourth of group-d respondents declare 'always' to be satisfied with the assistance provided by the agency. The tendency is clear also in the case of the livestock service, the forestry service and the educational system, but less clear for answers regarding the health service and the administration.

Table 10.11. Share of respondents from each socioeconomic group who declare 'always' to be satisfied with the service provided by each of the agencies (n=305)

	CMDT	LIVESTOCK	FOREST.	HEALTH	EDUCAT.	ADMIN.	TOTAL
group-a	55%	71%	26%	62%	42%	43%	100%=69
group-b	45%	63%	13%	53%	41%	22%	100%=112
group-c	30%	45%	10%	43%	38%	28%	100%=104
group-d	25%	40%	10%	60%	10%	40%	100%=20

note: the table does not include CAC as only a limited group of respondents are in touch with this agency, hence the majority of respondents are unable to assess its assistance.

Personal comments by respondents confirm that differential treatment by agencies of farmers according to their socioeconomic position is a main reason for highly different assessments. Both group-c and group-d respondents feel discriminated by government agencies whom they accuse of being interested in assisting only better-off farmers. As the main key to economic prosperity is a large production of cotton, poor farmers naturally turn their anger against CMDT which is

familiar with Bambara, some have basic language difficulties in communicating with agents who do not speak either Senoufo or Minyanka. Had it been possible to include more women in the survey, findings on language preferences would probably have been quite different, as many women are unable to communicate in Bambara.

believed to obstruct their possibilities of becoming rich by application of a strict credit policy and due to lack of attention by extension agents to manually-producing households⁴²⁹.

The importance of the so-called 'squark factor' for access to assistance by government agencies is illustrated by the view of many poorer farmers that they do not have the right to request anything and therefore receive very little⁴³⁰. Better-off farmers and notably persons with a high social status, e.g. religious leaders and village chiefs, on the other hand, experience that their words carry weight when they approach government agencies⁴³¹. Many farmers believe that civil servants have a much easier access to government agencies than they have themselves⁴³².

The practice by many agencies of demanding extralegal payment for assistance may also contribute to the negative assessment by poorer farmers. As already mentioned, this practice may actually improve the access by poor farmers to assistance by mitigating the inequality in the distribution of benefits deriving from the squark factor, but it is perceived of as unfair and discriminating against those who find it difficult to pay⁴³³. Better-off farmers, on the other hand, do not face the same problems of finding money to pay - and maybe even pay less often⁴³⁴ - and seem to accept the phenomenon of 'privately contracted extension' without major reservations⁴³⁵.

⁴²⁹ "La CMDT ne donne pas de crédit aux paysans pauvres. Si non j'ai besoin d'un crédit de bœufs de trait pour étendre ma superficie cultivée...Je n'ai confiance à aucun service. Les services ne donnent pas cadeau au paysan. Nous n'avons pas de facilités à gagner de l'argent...Dans la vie si tu n'as rien, tu n'as pas de parents qui ont des moyens, tu travaille avec peine. Souvent je n'ai même pas de matériels à prêter pour travailler mes champs. La CMDT ne donne pas de crédit aux paysans diminués" (group-d respondent, Molobala no.18). "Maintenant on trouve plus le crédit avec la CMDT, surtout nous les pauvres. Ça me fait 2 ans que je cherche un crédit de charrue à la CMDT. Je n'arrive pas à l'avoir. Je ne comprends pas. Pourtant il y en a qui l'ont facilement" (group-c respondent, Chième no.9). "Je n'ai pas de confiance aux services techniques. J'ai plutôt confiance aux voisins exploitants qui ont plus d'une paire de bœufs qui peuvent me prêter pour que je puisse travailler et me faire quelques chose...Je constate que les agents de services d'encadrement s'intéressent qu'aux paysans ayant des équipements et négligent nous les cultivateurs manuels sur 1 ha ou 1/2 ha de terres. Cet état de chose ne me met pas à l'aise... Après 1991 les pauvres sont devenus très pauvres. Les riches continuent à s'enrichir" (group-d respondent, Woroni no15).

⁴³⁰ E.g. "Le pauvre paysan a toujours tort. Il ne peut rien dire, rien faire et n'a rien" (group-c respondent, Koloni no. 20).

⁴³¹ E.g. "Quand je vais en tout cas pour mes services, j'ai pas de problèmes. Par contre d'autres villageois ont des difficultés avec l'administration et avec autres agents des services... peut-être que ma personne d'Imam influe les services techniques, si non les voisins villageois ont des problèmes à l'arrondissement pour la confection des cartes d'identité et d'autres papiers administratifs" (group-a respondent, Woroni no. 28).

⁴³² E.g. "Au dispensaire de Misseni, il n'y a pas de médicaments. Quand tu vas on te donne de l'ordonnance que tu cherche les produits sont à Kadiolo ou au Côte d'Ivoire. C'est grave un grand centre de santé comme celui de Misseni. Nous avons constaté que les médicaments disponibles sont donnés aux familles de fonctionnaires du village" (group-c respondent, Chième no. 10).

⁴³³ E.g. "Seulement quand tu n'as pas d'argent tes besoins ne sont pas satisfaits. Partout si tu n'as rien, tu n'auras rien aussi" (group-c respondent, N'golokasso no.15).

⁴³⁴ An investigation of payment for extension services was not part of the present study, but it is likely that Leonard's finding from the study on an extension agency in Kenya (that elite farmers pay less often than non-elite farmers) applies also to the Sikasso region (Leonard, 1977 p. 188).

⁴³⁵ E.g. "Je n'ai pas encore rencontré de problèmes avec un service seulement le centre de santé est loin du village... quand tu as à faire avec les services il faudra les motiver, c'est donner quelques chose peut-être de l'argent ou autre chose" (group-a respondent, Woroni no. 16).

10.5. Level of demand satisfaction conditioned by village background

Also the village background of respondents was found to clearly influence their satisfaction with government agencies.

Among the ten villages included in the survey, variations in answers to questions regarding trust in the agencies are substantial, and again it is interesting to note that differences in answers given by respondents belonging to the same village are often quite limited. Table 10.12 shows that in most cases the share of respondents in each village declaring to trust in none of the government agencies is either insignificant (0-3%) or rather high (23-28%).

Table 10.12. Share of respondents from each village who declare to have no trust in any of the agencies (when asked to mention the agency in which they trust the most) and share of respondents who mention lack of commitment as an explanation for insufficient assistance (n=311)

	TRUST IN NO AGENCIES	LACK OF COMMITMENT
Sincina	28%	93%
Dossorola	23%	83%
Molobala	12%	68%
Kiéla	9%	54%
Nafegue	0%	59%
Chième	3%	59%
N'golokasso	0%	27%
Koloni	0%	17%
Woroni	7%	3%
Sinkolo	0%	3%
total	9% *)	47%

note: *) it should be noted that there is a difference between the information in table 10.10 that 17% of all respondents declare to have no trust in any of the agencies and the information in this table that the share is only 9%. This is explained by the different way of phrasing the questions, as answers in table 10.10 relate to a question about agencies which respondents trust *the least*, whereas here they are asked to mention the agency that they trust *the most*.

The same table also indicates the share of respondents in each village who find that lack of commitment is a reason for inability of government agencies to satisfy their needs. Differences in answers are substantial: whereas in Sincina no less than 93% of respondents mention lack of commitment by government agents as a factor contributing to insufficient service, the same answer is given only by 3% of respondents in Woroni and Sinkolo.

Together with respondents in Dossorola, inhabitants in Sincina appear to be particularly negative towards government agencies. In the other end of the spectrum, respondents in Sinkolo and Woroni express an overwhelmingly favourable attitude towards government agencies.

Access to service is likely to be one of the reasons for the different views. As showed by table 10.5, inhabitants in Sinkolo and Woroni receive considerably more assistance from government agencies than inhabitants in other villages⁴³⁶.

The fact that Dossorola and Sincina are not among the villages receiving least assistance, however, confirms that qualitative dimensions of demand satisfaction are as important as quantitative dimensions (the frequency of contact). Dossorola, thus, exemplifies a village situated far from main roads and far from arrondissement offices. In addition to difficult access, government agents are discouraged from going there by an internal conflict in the village which has given it a reputation for being difficult to work in. Personal comments by respondents show that the widespread perception by government staff that the village is 'conflict-ridden and uninteresting' negatively influences the view of agencies by the inhabitants⁴³⁷. As regards Sincina, the village where the farmers' movement originated, confrontations with CMDT in 1991, and an ongoing conflict with the administration have considerably sharpened the negative attitude of many inhabitants to government agencies.

Conclusion

Findings from the survey on interaction between extension agencies and farmers in Sikasso have painted an overall picture of a relatively close contact between the two parties. Drawing on theoretical discussions in chapter 2, the relation could be described as that of an engaging state interacting with farmers eager to obtain its assistance.

Thus, the immediate conclusion seems to be that the situation in the Sikasso region is very different from the mainstream description of a disengaging African state forced by structural adjustment reforms to retract and unable to do very much, while farmers turn their back to all its representatives and concentrate on subsistence production, 'informal activities', migration, etc. All agencies undertake outreach activities to a certain extent, and it is telling that complaints from farmers about government agencies regard lack of assistance rather than the kind of assistance provided. Farmers consider extension assistance, and notably the assistance provided by CMDT, as a means to economic progress, and poor farmers deplore the situation when they are unable to get it.

The differentiation of strategies by both extension agencies and farmers, however, modifies this conclusion.

To begin by *strategies pursued by the four agencies*, an engagement strategy by CMDT coexists with a strategy by CAC best described as a disengagement strategy. Without CMDT the situation in the Sikasso region would not be much different from that found in other parts of the country, as the livestock service, the forestry service and CAC all suffer from cutbacks of resources. Thus,

⁴³⁶ A particularly contented respondent in Sinkolo expresses his feelings for government agencies as follows: "J'ai confiance à tous les services car chaque service jouent son rôle indispensable" (Sinkolo no. 21)

⁴³⁷ A respondent summarises the feeling of being written off by government agencies as follows: "Notre village ne plaît pas aux agents. Il y en a qui disent que c'est un village qui ne s'entend pas, qui est très loin et n'est pas intéressant. Le chef d'arrondissement n'est dans le village que pour chercher dl'argent de l'impôt" (Dossorola no. 7).

the analysis of the performance of each of the agencies made in chapter 9 has largely been confirmed by findings of the survey. According to farmers, CMDT is clearly the agency that provides the most extensive and most useful service, while the ability of the livestock service to accommodate farmers' demands seems somehow more varying. The performance of the forestry service must be described as very low, as it accommodates the demands only by a small group of farmers. And finally, the extremely poor performance by CAC has been confirmed by answers from farmers.

While differences in performance by the four agencies correspond to what could be expected from the analysis in chapter 9, the *level* of service provided seems to be considerably higher. This particularly regards the livestock service, the forestry service and CAC which all appear to be able to undertake outreach activities to an extent that seems surprisingly large, considering their limited financial means.

As suggested in comments on findings, the reason for this and for marked differences in the frequency of contact to the various villages appears to be the inclusion in the survey of four villages benefiting from 'Test Zones'-funded activities. Extensive activities in each of these villages lead to a somehow distorted overall impression of the level of assistance in the region. The finding is interesting, though, because it draws the attention to the importance of project and programme-funded activities even in a privileged region such as Sikasso. It may seem surprising that a relatively modest donor-funded programme can make such a big difference to the assistance received in project and non-project villages. In other regions, almost entirely dependant on project-funded activities, the distribution of services between villages can be expected to be even more skewed.

Also farmers simultaneously pursue many different strategies and are obviously very selective regarding the agencies with which they wish to collaborate. Services offered by the forestry service and the cooperative service are considered useful only by a small minority of farmers, and it seems fair to describe the strategy by most farmers vis-à-vis these agencies as disengagement strategies. The majority of farmers, on the other hand, are extremely interested in contacts to CMDT, and many are interested also in the assistance offered by the livestock service.

The most important finding from the survey, however, is that there is a marked social inequality in the distribution of services, and that assessments of performance by the agencies, accordingly, depend on who among the clients are being asked.

The survey shows that without exception extension agencies in Sikasso, similar to findings from studies undertaken elsewhere, tend to concentrate on better-off farmers at the expense of the poor. It thereby suggests that the agencies under study contribute to increase the marked social inequalities in the region, described in chapter 7, rather than countering them.

Findings also indicate that different farmers pursue different strategies. When extension agencies are providing services to farmers, they do not meet a group of people equally willing and able to collaborate. Farmers constitute a very heterogeneous group both with regard to socioeconomic conditions and with regards to the strategies pursued vis-à-vis government representatives. In one end of the spectrum, agencies relate to better-off farmers eager to take their advice and able to apply it to the problems they have. These farmers meet extension staff with a firm belief in their

right to receive assistance and their possibility of paying for it if necessary. And in the other end of the spectrum, agencies are dealing with poor farmers who lack the equipment necessary to make use of their advice, who are reluctant to ask for assistance for fear of being turned away, and who are less able to pay for services. Apart from CMDT none of the agencies appear to have taken this heterogeneity into account in their extension strategies, and in the case of CMDT the declared policy to reach all farmers by providing four different messages to farmers in different situations seems not to work.

The important aspects of socioeconomic and geographical inequality in the interaction between extension agencies and farmers are issues that are considered neither by the interactive approach nor by organisation theories discussed in chapter 3.

As pointed out in chapter 2, it is a general weakness of contributions to the interactive approach that they tend to invite purely political interpretations of interaction between state representatives and societal forces, whereas they lack reflections about influence of structural conditions on social actors. The ultimate consequence of this may be that political forces are analysed as completely autonomous from socioeconomic and geographical conditions. The problem may seem somehow surprising, given the emphasis put on the need to disaggregate not only the state but also societal forces. The reason appears to be that the majority of researchers have followed the mainstream move away from analyses of class and ethnicity towards studies of 'civil society' defined by its actions rather than by its structural position (ref. discussions in chapter 4). Findings from the village survey show that structural conditions cannot be neglected when one wants to understand the interaction between state representatives and societal forces.

Similarly, in contributions to organisation theory which have inspired the analysis of factors conditioning performance by the agencies, clients' structurally different position is a 'blind spot'. The farthest they reach is a distinction between demand pressure generated by clients as opposed to demand pressure deriving from other actors such as the central government, donors, etc. The group of clients is not differentiated to allow a distinction of performance regarding services provided to e.g. poorer and better-off clients. The focus by some of the researchers on the issue of trust is particularly illustrative of the problem. Although the survey confirms that personal relations between extension staff and farmers are a very important element in the assessment by farmers of the services provided, it does not confirm that personal relations - or trust - can bridge otherwise unequal relations. Thus, condescending behaviour by government agents and requests for bribes are mentioned as problems mainly by poorer farmers, whereas better-off farmers seem to find it easier to develop trust in relations to extension staff. Thus, the concept of trust may constitute an important contribution to analysis of relations between extension agents and farmers. Still, the difficulties of applying the concept are that it deals so explicitly with person-to-person relations that one may tend to forget that these persons have structural positions. Such positions may strongly affect what on the face of it appears to be individual strategies.

CHAPTER 11. ENGAGING THE STATE: SOCIETAL FORCES WITH A PARTICULAR POLITICAL POTENTIAL

Introduction

It is part of the empirical objective of the dissertation to put the analysis of performance by the four extension agencies in perspective by an analysis of the character of social forces which interact with and influence the agencies.

After the assessment in chapter 5, 6 and 9 of factors conditioning the performance of the agencies, and the presentation in chapter 10 of farmers' assessment of their ability to accommodate demands, the present chapter deals with some of the societal forces present in the Sikasso region. It is not the ambition to assess the direct impact on each of the agencies of particular social forces identified. Instead, the chapter aims at identifying societal forces in the region that may have a particular political potential, i.e. a potential for influencing the fundamental relationship between state representatives and the population.

Analyses in the chapter are guided by the conceptual framework established in chapter 4. This chapter suggested three entrance points to the identification of societal forces with a particular political potential, namely

- to look for *civil associations*, defined as organisations independent of the state that tend to engage the state,
- to look for a particular set of '*civil norms*' expressing a perceived ability to influence public policy (engage the state) and
- to look for a *class or ethnically-based* political potential.

As will be recalled from discussions in chapter 4, the three approaches are considered complementary rather than mutually exclusive, and it is stressed that they are not fully covering the analysis of all potentially important social forces. Together the approaches form a conceptual framework generating a series of relevant questions to an empirical investigation, but they do not capture the multiplicity of identities that are at play in the Sikasso region. Rather than an exhaustive analysis of societal forces in Sikasso, therefore, the chapter should be considered an illustration and further exploration of theoretical points made in chapter 4.

While the choice of the three approaches is primarily theoretically motivated, the application of them to an empirical investigation of social forces in the Sikasso region is supported by descriptions in chapter 7 and 8 of marked socioeconomic differences and a geographical north-south division of the population, and of the indication in chapter 9 of demands put on CMDT by the farmers' movement.

Thus, *SYCOV, the farmers' movement*, established in the Sikasso region in 1991, presents itself as the most conspicuous candidate to the designation of 'civil association'. Drawing both on various attempts by researchers to summarise the experience of rural organisations and on studies made of specific organisations elsewhere, the first section contains an analysis of achievements by the SYCOV movement, conditions which favoured its emergence, and possible threats to its successful engagement of the state.

The *north-south division* with regard to social and political organisation is expected to be reflected in different views on the state held by the population in different parts of the region. These have been investigated in the village survey with a view to identify a particular set of 'civil norms'.

Finally, it seems reasonable to expect that the *socioeconomic differentiation*, expressed in markedly different living conditions for large-scale mechanised cotton producers and small-scale producers, constitutes particular identities forming the basis for putting demands on the state.

In addition to written sources, the analysis of the farmers movement (section 11.1) draws on interviews with representatives of SYCOV, political parties, other associations and resource persons in the Sikasso region carried out in late 1994 and early 1996. These are supplemented by interviews with CMDT staff in Mali undertaken in the autumn of 1994 and in February 1996 and with CFDT staff in Paris in July 1996.

Analyses of 'civil norms' among farmers (section 11.2) and of a class or ethnically-based political potential (section 11.3) are based on the village survey comprising a total of 312 respondents in ten villages. For a further description of fieldwork methodology, see the section on 'fieldwork methodology and literature study' in the annex.

11.1. SYCOV as a civil association

Achievements by the movement

SYCOV, the farmers' movement, emerged from the inter-village collaboration among AVs which in the late 1980s started to meet on a weekly basis to discuss possibilities for putting pressure on CMDT. It had no role in the overturn of the military regime in March 1991 but became visible in May 1991 when a group of about 1,000 farmers presented a list of 12 demands⁴³⁸ to the regional CMDT management in Koutiala. The initial failure of the CMDT management to grasp the extent of the dissatisfaction (discussed in chapter 9) led to a crisis in which farmers threatened to go on strike just as the planting was to begin (Bingen, 1996 p. 2-3; SYCOV, 1994; Marchant, 1991 p. 82-85; Bader, 1992).

In the turbulent days until the minister of rural development intervened and calmed down the immediate tension, a widespread mobilisation of farmers took place. When eventually CMDT was ready to negotiate, a movement had been formed throughout the region, and CMDT had to recognise SYCOV as the formal representative of cotton producers⁴³⁹. This happened at a roundtable held in September 1991 where CMDT had invited farmers' representatives together with representatives of CFDT and donors to discuss the establishment of a structure of consultation. At the meeting it was accepted to give SYCOV cosignatory power to the agreement between the government and CMDT with the right to influence both producer prices and a wide

⁴³⁸ A "Cahier de doléances" included 12 demands concerning both specific and long-standing issues regarding farmers' conditions of production, marketing and credit (Coulibaly, 1994 p. 51-52; Marchant, 1991 p. 84).

⁴³⁹ During confrontations with CMDT and during the process of establishing the union, SYCOV received practical assistance and advice from local representatives of Chambre de l'Agriculture (Interview with El Hadj Noumpounon Diarra, President of Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture, Sikasso, Dec. 1994 and Feb. 1996; Jossierand & Bingen, 1995 p. 80).

range of issues of relevance to cotton production and marketing. It was agreed that SYCOV should be represented in all decision-making units such as the CMDT Management Board, and that farmers' representatives should be allowed to participate as observers in the classification of cotton (Bingen, 1994 p. 62-63; Bingen, 1995 p. 5; SYCOV, 1994 p.1-2; Coulibaly, 1994 p. 17-18; Josserand & Bingen, 1995 p. 67-75; interviews with the regional director of CMDT Sikasso and with SYCOV leaders, Feb. 1996).

Since then, CMDT has accommodated a range of demands by farmers concerning price issues and conditions for the collaboration, including improved accountability. Cotton prices have been raised at several occasions, the rebate given to producers has been increased, and in 1997 and 1998 pressure from SYCOV resulted in the reintroduction of subsidies on fertilizers despite the inconsistency of subsidies with structural adjustment policies⁴⁴⁰. CMDT and SYCOV have had joint meetings to find solutions to the problems resulting from the widespread dissolution of village associations⁴⁴¹, and CMDT is considering ways to comply with farmers' requests for paid village teams to take over all extension activities⁴⁴². In addition to the representation of SYCOV in all decision-making structures, attempts to improve accountability also include SYCOV participation in the annual audit of the cotton sub-sector and in the review of CMDT's annual performance⁴⁴³ (Bingen, 1995 p. 6-7; Bingen et al., 1995 p.8; CMDT, 1993b p. 5-10; interviews with SYCOV leaders, CMDT staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994 and Feb. 1996).

A range of unresolved matters, however, remains. Some of these regard the wish by SYCOV to reduce the dependency on CMDT regarding input distribution and purchase of cotton. Thus, SYCOV's wish that input distribution be liberalised⁴⁴⁴ and that other agencies than CMDT are allowed to purchase cotton has not been accommodated⁴⁴⁵. Also the demand by SYCOV that classification of cotton takes place at village level instead of in factories has been rejected, and in early 1996 an answer to the request by farmers that they become shareholders in CMDT was

⁴⁴⁰ Tor Benjaminsen, personal communication, based on interview with staff from CMDT Equipement matériel, Bamako, April 1998.

⁴⁴¹ A meeting to discuss the widespread dissolution of village associations was called by SYCOV in May 1994, and another meeting was held by CMDT in Ségou in December 1994 (CMDT, 1994d; Bingen et al., 1995 p. 8). On SYCOV's initiative the criteria for acceptance of a new AVs are defined as a minimum of 45 exploitations and 50 T cotton (Interviews with CMDT staff, February 1996).

⁴⁴² The issue was discussed during a joint seminar for CMDT staff and representatives of the farmers' organisation SYCOV, held in Ségou in March 1993 (CMDT, 1993b p. 6). In February 1996 when the last fieldwork was carried out, the issue remained unresolved (Interviews with the regional director of CMDT, Sikasso and SYCOV leaders, February 1996).

⁴⁴³ The sensitivity of CMDT to pressures from SYCOV for improved accountability is illustrated by the handling in 1996 of a corruption scandal at the regional CMDT office in Koutiala: as soon as irregularities were revealed by the internal audit and became known by producers, the regional director and all other staff involved were immediately transferred (Le Républicain 7 February 1996).

⁴⁴⁴ The reintroduction of subsidies on fertilizers in 1997 and 1998 may (temporarily?) have put a damper on the otherwise strong wish by SYCOV that input distribution be liberalised. In early 1996 the issue was subject to a conflict between CMDT and SYCOV in Koutiala who had encouraged a few villages to buy fertilizers from private suppliers in order to compare the experience to that of being provided by CMDT. While SYCOV leaders argued that it had been a successful experiment demonstrating that better quality inputs could be delivered more timely and cheaper than inputs provided by CMDT, CMDT was upset about the risk that farmers were using low quality input (Interviews with the regional manager of CMDT, Sikasso and SYCOV leaders, Feb. 1996).

⁴⁴⁵ In the early 1990s when cotton prices were low, CMDT introduced production quotas to limit the offer of cotton at the world market. After the devaluation in 1994 the sale has increased, and CMDT, therefore, has been able to purchase the entire harvest. International trends may change, however, and lead CMDT to reintroduce the quotas (Interview with SYCOV leaders, February 1996).

still pending⁴⁴⁶ (Josserand & Bingen, 1995 p. 73-75; interviews with the regional director of CMDT, Sikasso, and SYCOV leaders, February 1996).

Finally, it should be mentioned that while the collaboration between CMDT and SYCOV at regional and national level is relatively close, tensions still exist at village level in the Koutiala area where many CMDT staff and farmers regard each other with scepticism and find it difficult to forget the confrontations in 1991⁴⁴⁷ (Interviews with SYCOV leaders, CMDT staff and farmers, the autumn of 1994 and Feb. 1996).

Conditions for the emergence of a politically forceful farmers' movement

SYCOV is one of many African rural organisations having seen the light of day during the 1990s. While some scholars explain the recent upsurge in the number of rural organisations by a range of favourable economic and political conditions, others stress that changes in the political and economic situation have forced farmers to organise mainly to protect themselves against worsening economic conditions and declining support from the state⁴⁴⁸.

There seems to be a widespread agreement, however, that the particular kind of rural organisation pursuing a strategy of engagement of the state is most likely to emerge under *favourable economic and political conditions*. Among these, *constitutional conditions protecting freedom of organisation and speech* or at least the absence of active persecution by an otherwise repressive state is often mentioned as a main condition (Éla, 1990 p. 84-85; Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 883). The period when SYCOV emerged was characterised by a previously unheard of measure of constitutional protection and political legitimacy (Bingen, 1995 p. 5).

Favourable economic conditions for the achievement by an organisation of the necessary economic autonomy of the state may include access to land and control over family labour and income from agricultural commodity production⁴⁴⁹ (Bratton, 1994a p. 235-236, p. 238). Bratton describes a favourable environment as a situation where agricultural surpluses can be disposed

⁴⁴⁶ In February 1996 the issue was still being investigated by CMDT. According to SYCOV leaders, several inquiries regarding preliminary conclusions had been ignored by the CMDT management (Interviews with SYCOV leaders, February 1996).

⁴⁴⁷ As expressed by a farmer in Kléla met in February 1996: "*Nous regardons la CMDT comme un ennemi. Ils ont beaucoup fait pour les paysans, mais ils sont des ennemis*".

⁴⁴⁸ Some scholars mention favourable conditions such as a shift in rural-urban terms of trade in favour of agricultural producers (Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 10), the opening of an organisational space for emergence of state-independent organisations after the retrenchment of the state (Bratton 1994a p. 248; Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 883), the opening of a political space by regime shifts fought for by pro-democracy movements (Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 18), and the fact that declining services from the state have sometimes created a feeling among farmers that 'we can do it just as well as they' (Bebbington, 1994 p. 215). Others, however, stress that the impact of structural adjustment programmes in Africa has been very uneven and have sometimes resulted in worsening terms of trade for the rural population (Gibbon, 1993 p. 13-14; Engberg-Pedersen et al., 1996 p. 30-37; Lachenmann, 1994 p. 83; Haubert, 1991 p. 730-731). The retraction of the state has been accompanied by a tendency to offload mainly the uneconomic tasks on farmers, and in many countries services on which farmers relied have disappeared altogether (Jacob & Delville, 1994 p. 10; Haubert, 1991 p. 733). According to these researchers, many of the new farmers' organisations should be seen as having a 'stop-gap' purpose, filling up the empty space left by a disengaging state (Lachenmann, 1994 p. 78, p. 83; Farrington & Bebbington, 1993 p. 120-121).

⁴⁴⁹ Other scholars just refer to a need for 'a certain economic power' of farmers (Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 868; Farrington & Bebbington, 1993 p. 100; Sims & Leonard, 1990 p. 64-65).

of at a profit beyond the household, i.e. where cash crop production dominates⁴⁵⁰. A particularly favourable situation exists where farmers control a strategic resource on which the state relies as the primary source of foreign exchange (Bratton, 1994a p. 248-250; Sims & Leonard, 1990 p. 64). The situation in the Sikasso region reflects such favourable conditions: cotton is among the primary sources of foreign exchange, farmers have considerable incomes from cotton production, and a diversified production structure allows farmers (at least for a limited period) to switch to other crops than those wanted by the state (Coulibaly, 1994 p.53).

Other favourable conditions mentioned in the literature are *a common cause* of an organisation and *a particular type of organisational experience*. This may regard shared economic interests, e.g. for service, credit or marketing, and again cash crop production is highlighted as an important driving force for the establishment of powerful farmers' movements⁴⁵¹. Furthermore, Bratton mentions a tradition of collective action in the agricultural sector and the availability of models of economic interest organisations as two important factors (Bratton, 1994a p. 248; Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p.15-16). Malian cotton producers, indeed, have a set of important shared economic interests related to cotton production and marketing. And they have achieved a valuable organisational experience after having managed village associations and later also inter-village associations for years.

Finally, it seems to be commonly agreed that *a relatively high level of formal education* is a favourable condition both for the emergence of farmers' movements and for the development of necessary management capacities and continued support by members (Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 25; Farrington & Bebbington, 1993 p. 100; Lachenmann, 1994 p. 81; Sims & Leonard, 1990 p. 64). In the Sikasso region literacy courses run by CMDT have provided many farmers with literacy and numeracy skills, and some researchers consider this a core reason for SYCOVs continued success and viability (Josserand & Bingen, 1995 p. 7).

All authors agree that *the role of the state* in providing the above-mentioned conditions may be very significant. At a general level, the existence of a favourable political environment of course depends on the type of political regime, while the level of formal education in a country depends

⁴⁵⁰ A special version of this hypothesis about a link between cash crop production and emergence of farmers' movements can be summarised as 'the end of the line' argument: James R. Bingen and Gudrun Lachenmann both discuss situations in which cash crop producing farmers feel threatened because state agencies are about to move out of their area, either because the crop is no longer profitable or because yields are declining and the state turns its attention to newer more fertile areas. In this situations farmers have little to lose by a confrontation of the state (Bingen, 1998 p.275; Lachenmann, 1994 p. 84-85, p. 89). Other scholars have questioned the positive role played by cash crop production. They argue that cash crop production is usually so important to the government that it will not allow the development of state-independent farmers' movements. According to these authors, independent organisations are more likely to emerge in marginal geographical areas and in sectors that do not attract the attention of the state (Gentil, 1986 p. 262; Jacob & Delville, 1994 p. 9; Haubert, 1991 p. 729). While the point about government attempts to control the emergence of independent organisations in cash crop producing areas seems highly valid, it is difficult to see how farmers' organisations in marginal areas will be able to put any pressure on the state, i.e. adopt a strategy of state engagement. It seems more probable that such organisations will use their independence to pursue disengagement strategies: 'the weapon of the weak' as Bratton has called this strategy (Bratton, 1994a p.236).

⁴⁵¹ Other common causes may be *common cultural and political interests* not directly related to agricultural production as factors that may lead to the emergence of a movement. Anthony Bebbington gives the example of Indians in the Ecuadorian Andes who came together in a farmers' organisation to further their common interest as indigenous people in obtaining equal rights with all other citizens (Bebbington, 1994 p. 215) A similar example is given by Gentil and Mercoiret who explain the emergence of the organisation Six S in Burkina Faso by the interest of farmers in conserving traditional values while at the same time get their share of the 'modern' social and economic development (Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 878).

on general government educational policies. Most important, however, *the character of the specific interaction* between state agencies and farmers in a given area may play a crucial role to the development of the capacities necessary for a farmers' movement to embark upon an engagement strategy. Although government extension programmes and state-sponsored rural organisations have usually mainly considered the interests of the state in extracting the largest possible surplus, a massive state presence in an area has sometimes unintendedly benefited rural organisational capacities. Thus, the organisation by the state of cash crop production and large irrigation schemes may allow producers to obtain independent economic resources and to gradually obtain the technical knowledge necessary to take over the management (Jacob & Delville, 1994 p. 9; Coulibaly, 1987 p. 71). The organisational experience derived from participating in state-controlled cooperatives and village associations may be turned into new use by farmers who create independent organisations (Gentil, 1986 p. 260; Lachenmann, 1994 p. 75; Tendler, 1997 p. 152-153; Haubert, 1991 p. 734). A particularly important role has sometimes been played by government agents acting as catalysts in promoting farmers' shared awareness of their common interests as producers⁴⁵² (Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 16; Lachenmann, 1994 p. 78). More indirectly, a period of significant state presence in an area may foster the belief that it is the duty of the state to give support, hence encourage farmers' organisations to raise demands on the state if the service is reduced (Bebbington, 1994 p. 215).

There is no question that the presence of government agencies and notably the extensive activities of CMDT have gradually strengthened the technical and organisational capacity of farmers in the Sikasso region. Farmers' wish to take over tasks previously undertaken by the state reflects their experience of being able to manage such tasks as the distribution of inputs and collection of the harvest. The fact that the collaboration among farmers at inter-village level emerged from the village associations illustrates how organisational experience gained through collaboration with government agencies may be turned into new use through the establishment of independent organisations. Finally, also in the case of the SYCOV movement, government agents identifying with farmers' interests seem to have played a role as catalysts in promoting farmers' shared awareness of common interests⁴⁵³.

Engagement of the state?

Having concluded that SYCOV has emerged under favourable conditions, it still remains to be discussed whether the organisation is able to engage the state, i.e. whether it qualifies for the designation of a civil association.

Recalling the definition of a 'rural civil association' presented in chapter 4 (based on the definition of a peasant' movement proposed by Gentil and Mercoiret and on the definition of a civil association by Chazan and Harbeson) criteria are:

⁴⁵² A similar catalytic role has sometimes been played by NGOs (Bebbington, 1994 p. 220; Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 875; Farrington & Bebbington, 1993 p. 113).

⁴⁵³ When farmers first protested against CMDT in 1974 (a protest against the dishonest practices of CMDT agents who graded and weighted cotton), they received help from a village-based CMDT agent (Bingen, 1994 p. 59). In 1991 the demands to CMDT were carried by a highly educated former government employee who had left government service to live as a farmer. Also the first president of SYCOV, Antoine Baba Berthé, is a former government employee (with the Cooperative Service) (Bingen, 1996 p. 3).

1) independent thinking and a certain financial autonomy from the state and other external funding sources, 2) a set of well-defined objectives (as opposed to the multipurpose economic and social activities of most rural organisations), 3) the active attempt to influence decisions by government agencies 4) a certain size and economic and political power, and 5) a well-established internal organisation.

The criterion of *independent thinking and a certain financial autonomy* represent a difficult dilemma for a farmers' movement. It can be very hard to strike a balance between, on the one hand, establishing necessary relations that allow political influence, access to information and financial resources and, on the other hand, keeping a distance to the state and other external actors that justifies the designation 'independent' (Bratton, 1994a p. 250; Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 23-24; Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 884).

SYCOV is clearly facing this dilemma. The close collaboration with CMDT is a precondition for its access to information and influence both on day-to-day issues such as the classification of cotton and on more general policy issues such as price negotiations. At the same time there is an inherent risk that the collaboration will lead to a situation where SYCOV leaders identify more with the interests of CMDT and the cotton sub-sector than with members' interests. In the eyes of many farmers boundaries between the two are blurred. Thus, some farmers interviewed reported to have been informed about SYCOV by CMDT agents and to use CMDT agents to get in touch with SYCOV when they need assistance by the organisation (Interviews with farmers in February 1996).

CMDT makes it abundantly clear that the agency is pleased to have a partner organisation which connects it to farmers. In the words of the regional director of CMDT in Sikasso: "if farmers had not done it themselves, CMDT would have had to invent SYCOV". After the initial mistake of rejecting farmers' demands in May 1991, the agency has done a considerable effort to accommodate demands not fundamentally questioning the role of the agency and to 'educate' SYCOV leaders to understand the economic considerations behind CMDT's policy. As part of the education SYCOV leaders have been offered study trips to France and training courses in financial and organisational issues related to cotton production and marketing⁴⁵⁴ (Bingen, 1998 p. 276-279; Josserand & Bingen, 1995; interview with the regional director of CMDT Sikasso Dec., 1994 and interviews with SYCOV leaders in late 1994 and February 1996).

As regards the resistance of SYCOV against more or less overt attempt to co-opt the movement, it may give reason to some concern that its president has described the partnership with CMDT as that of two parties facing the future 'hand in hand'⁴⁵⁵. Local SYCOV leaders are worried about the problem, and some openly accuse regional and national leaders of being corrupted by CMDT. Whether the leadership will manage to keep clear of such accusations and not least keep clear of

⁴⁵⁴ According to SYCOV leaders, also more tangible personal benefits have sometimes been offered - and refused on the grounds that leaders do not want to get too close to CMDT (Interviews with SYCOV leaders in late 1994 and February 1996).

⁴⁵⁵ In 1992 the newly elected president of SYCOV, Antoine Baba Berthé, said in a speech that "à partir de ce jour SYCOV sera au côté de la CMDT dans un rapport de partenariat que nous souhaitons fécond....SYCOV marque avant tout la reconnaissance pour tout ce que la CMDT, et avant elle la CFDT ont fait pour que nous arrivions à ce niveau...Ainsi la main dans la main, sans complexe aucun, souhaitons l'avenir avec confiance malgré les difficultés conjoncturelles que connaît la filière coton" (quoted from Josserand & Bingen, 1995 p. 69).

the reasons for the accusations remains to be seen (Interviews carried out in late 1994 and February 1996).

Concerning *a set of well-defined objectives*, the 12 demands presented by SYCOV in 1991 and still pursued evidently fulfil this criterion. It may in fact be argued that the farmers' movement sticks to a limited set of well-defined objectives at the expense of maintaining broader interests of the rural population in the region. Despite its claim to represent the interests of both cotton and food producers, SYCOV has so far concentrated on issues related to cotton production and marketing and hereunder especially price issues. To a certain extent this has happened at the expense of defending the interests of grain producers, vegetable producers, livestock owners and small-scale cotton producers (the latter tend to be more interested in access to credit to buy agricultural equipment than in higher cotton prices)(Interviews with farmers and with El Hadj Noumpounon Diarra, President of Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture, Sikasso, Dec.1994).

SYCOV also fulfils the criterion of *actively attempting to influence decisions by government agencies*. Its fight for representation at all levels of CMDT decision-making structures and its role in negotiations of the contract between the state and CMDT provide it with a considerable political influence. Its tendency to address economic rather than political issues, however, may limit its real political influence. Only once has the movement been involved in discussions which questioned the fundamental relationship between the state and farmers: in December 1991 SYCOV representatives together with farmers from other parts of Mali participated in a conference on the rural sector that produced a series of far-reaching recommendations concerning the future relationship to the state. The recommendations included the transfer of full responsibility for the rural development tax to local communes and devolution of authority with regard to natural resource management to rural communities⁴⁵⁶ (Bingen, 1994 p. 63). Apparently, this attempt to influence the political agenda has not later been followed up, and SYCOV has been conspicuously absent from the debate about decentralisation and land tenure issues which it has left entirely to the political parties (Interviews with SYCOV leaders, representatives for political parties and Chéibane Coulibaly, Feb. 1996).

SYCOV's *size and economic and political power* was clearly demonstrated when CMDT in 1991 had to give in confronted by the threat of a cotton strike. Its members control one of the most important economic sectors in the economy (in certain respects *the* most economic sector), and the mere fact that the possibility of a strike has been brought up has considerably strengthened its political power. The priority given to economic issues, however, has more similarities with the typical policy of small and not so powerful organisations than with large economic and powerful organisations usually more inclined to address more fundamental policy issues⁴⁵⁷.

⁴⁵⁶ The five-days conference, known as 'Les Etats Généraux du Développement Rural' was preceded by preparatory regional meetings. While James Bingen describes the process as the result of a genuine demand by farmers to be heard, Chéibane Coulibaly has a different opinion and describes it as "run by civil servants who spoke in the name of farmers" (Coulibaly, 1994 p. 31; Coulibaly, personal communication, Oct.1994).

⁴⁵⁷ The general experience is that small organisations tend to respond to the pressure from members by addressing economic rather than political issues. They are preoccupied with gaining access to existing agricultural services or improving the terms upon which such services are delivered rather than with more fundamental policy issues. Large, federated and commercial farmers' organisations, on the other hand, are more able to call for policy change which would alter the mix of services and allow more influence over the conditions of production and marketing (Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 16; Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 876-877, p. 883 ; Bratton, 1994a p. 238; Sims & Leonard, 1990 p. 65-66).

The fifth and last criterion is probably the one that SYCOV will find it most difficult to fulfill: it is difficult to describe its *internal organisation as well-established*, and it is clearly threatened both by internal cleavages and by competition from other actors who speak in the name of farmers.

A well-established internal organisation is usually equated with *internal democracy* in an organisation: leadership accountability, information sharing, transparent financial and economic management, and active involvement of members in important decisions are factors crucial to the continued adherence by members (Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 24-25; Bingen, 1996 p. 4-5; Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 868, p. 883; Farrington & Bebbington, 1993 p. 112; Fox, 1992). Among the most obvious threats to a movement is the risk that a *divide between leadership and general members* gradually grows larger. Corrupt leaders pursuing personal economic or political interests represent an extreme form of the problem, but also dedicated leaders who fail to establish accountability to their members may experience a rapidly deteriorating membership base (Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 883; Lachenmann, 1994 p. 81; Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 23). The problem can be severely enforced if state organisations attempt to co-opt the movement. Leaders, seen by members to have too close contact to government extension organisations and official marketing structures, will be under suspicion for corruption (Bratton, 1994a p. 232; Bratton & Bingen, 1994 p. 18). The situation is particularly difficult, if leaders belong to a small educated elite not well-understood by members, or if leaders are former executives from state organisations who easily integrate into state structures or international aid organisations ('those who are always invited to international conferences') (Lachenmann, 1994 p. 81).

In addition to the divide between leadership and members, other forms of cleavages that may have detrimental impacts on a movement are the many *social conflicts* which often characterise a rural environment. Ethnic, socioeconomic, gender-based, lineage-based, age-based and many other cleavages may permeate a farmers' movement. If large-scale or better-off farmers dominate a farmers' movement, they may pursue only their own interests possibly at the expense of poorer farmers (Sims & Leonard, 1990 p. 65-66; Haubert, 1991 p. 738-739). It may be reflected in a leadership crisis or in lack of support from either minority groups or larger parts of the constituency (Jacob & Delville, 1994 p. 13; Lachenmann, 1994 p. 82; Blundo, 1994 p. 107-118; Gentil & Mercoiret, 1991 p. 884). The emergence of a wide range of new organisations at community level in countries where democratisation processes are ongoing may have contributed to the eruption of many latent conflicts and thereby to the breaking-up of what has appeared to be the former unity of community-based organisations (Jacob & Delville, 1994 p. 11).

SYCOV is facing a very difficult task to establish an internal structure that will allow it to survive the threat from the various internal cleavages. In fact many of its leaders do fit the portrait of 'a small educated elite not well-understood by members, or being former executives from state organisations', and the problem of keeping close relations to members is very real (Bingen, 1996 p. 4). The problem is partly logistical and financial (how to ensure transfer of information to members dispersed over a very large area⁴⁵⁸), partly a result to the general tendency to person-

⁴⁵⁸ In early 1996, SYCOV still had no telephone line, no employed staff and no means of transport (Interviews carried out in Feb. 1996).

oriented leadership⁴⁵⁹, and partly reflecting what may be a true contradiction of interests. Thus, there seems to be an over-representation of large-scale cotton producers ('gros producteurs') among SYCOV leaders, and accordingly an emphasis put on their interests. For lack of evidence⁴⁶⁰, the surmise is based mainly on complaints by small farmers that SYCOV is letting them down, on the observation that at least in some villages there is an overlap between SYCOV leaders and large-scale producers⁴⁶¹ and on statements by resource persons in and outside the region with a knowledge on the organisation⁴⁶² (Interviews with SYCOV leaders, farmers and resource persons in the autumn of 1994 and Feb. 1996).

Other than this - probably most important - internal cleavage, conflicting interests between the Koutiala area, where SYCOV emerged, and other areas less integrated into the cotton production may challenge the unity of the organisation⁴⁶³. And finally the many village-level conflicts among lineages, generations, quarters, etc. may seriously affect the organisation.

Among the external threats the emergence of the many new political parties seems to represent the most important. In preparation of the parliamentary and presidential elections in 1997 it was observed how in early 1996 the many new political parties were trying to win the support of the rural population by engaging in advocacy related to rural peoples' rights. Whereas in the Koutiala area in the early 1990s people may have approached SYCOV for assistance with specific problems, in the mid-1990s it had (again) become common to contact a local member of parliament⁴⁶⁴ (Interviews with SYCOV leaders, representatives of political parties and Chéibane Coulibaly, February 1996).

While conditions for its emergence have been favourable, *conditions for SYCOV's successful engagement of the state* look a bit more mixed. SYCOV has the potential to become a civil association that engages the state and becomes able to substantially influence it. It is too soon, however, to say if it will be able to overcome the many internal cleavages and the risk of co-optation by CMDT. Available sources may suggest that it is moving in the direction of becoming

⁴⁵⁹ During the fieldwork in 1996 I was referred to SYCOV's president for clarification of questions which leaders at other levels were not able to answer. It turned out to be very difficult, though, to get access to the president who seemed to be travelling extensively abroad.

⁴⁶⁰ To my knowledge a study on the social background of SYCOV leaders has not yet been carried out. Unfortunately, it did not make part of the present study either.

⁴⁶¹ In the leadership of SYCOV's 'secteur de Kléla', many members were at the same time members of 'la section de mécanisation', i.e. they were owners of tractors (belonging to group-m in the DRSPR-typology). The head of section proudly reported to personally account for no less than 15% of all the cotton produced in the village (Interviews carried out in Feb. 1996).

⁴⁶² Chéibane Coulibaly is among the resource persons who are not afraid to confirm that many SYCOV leaders represent the interests of large-scale producers, whereas he describes it as difficult to see the interests of small producers in the organisation (Interview carried out in February 1996).

⁴⁶³ The election in 1992 of Antoine Baba Berthé from Kadiolo cercle is believed to reflect attempts to ensure the support also from the southern traditionally less militant part of the region (Bingen, 1996 p.3).

⁴⁶⁴ During an interview in February 1996 Sina Coulibaly, member of Parliament for UDD, explained how he had the possibility of going 'straight to the minister' in order to raise concerns reported to him by local farmers, whereas SYCOV leaders have access only to CMDT. There are many former UDPM leaders among the leaders of UDD, and they are continuing the traditional role of party leaders as 'mediators' between farmers and government authorities. Interviews with farmers in the Koutiala area confirmed the competitive role of UDD to SYCOV, whereas in the Kadiolo area the problem does not seem to exist, partly because SYCOV is much less known (hence few farmers would address the organisation in case of trouble, anyway) and partly because the competition among the parties is much less intense (Interviews carried out in February 1996).

a relatively forceful economic interest organisation defending the interests of large-scale cotton producers rather than becoming a civil association that has the objective of changing relations between state and society.

11.2 Existence of 'civil norms'?

The second approach, suggested in chapter 4, to the identification of societal forces with an important political potential is the search for *a particular set of civil norms*. Inspired by Hyden (Hyden, 1994), the chapter proposed to identify such norms by looking for *the perceived ability to influence public policy (engage the state)*.

A distinction was made between 1) what difference people see themselves being able to make by trying to influence the state (*'civic competence'*), 2) what difference they see government being able to make without their cooperation (*'political authority'*), 3) what difference they see themselves being able to make without the cooperation of the government (*'social reciprocities at the community level'*).

In the village survey the issue was approached by asking the 312 respondents first a set of open questions and then a closed question on the role of the state, the village and of third parties.

In the open questions, they were asked to describe the main problems facing the village in general and the problems related to natural resources management in particular. They were then asked to indicate

- 1) what difference to the problems they themselves are able to make.
- 2) what difference they see the state being able to make.
- 3) what difference they see others being able to make.

The closed question regarded the preferred division of authority between the state, the village and third parties concerning a range of specific tasks (e.g. price negotiations regarding producer and input prices, extension activities and definition of rules concerning natural resource management).

11.2.1. Understanding the state: three different perspectives

Comments by respondents to the open question on how to solve the problems they are facing suggest a classification of views of the state in three main groups that could be labelled:

- 1) 'the state should do everything' (reflecting a high level of *political authority*)
- 2) 'we can handle everything ourselves' (reflecting a high level of *social reciprocities*)
- 3) 'the village and the state should collaborate and third parties become involved' (reflecting a high level of *civic competence*).

In practice, distinctions between such views are of course not as clear-cut as indicated by these labels. Thus, the same individual may express contradictory attitudes, e.g. by deploring the limited capacity of the state to solve any problems and yet suggest that the state should undertake all kind of tasks alone. In the majority of cases, however, a remarkable consistency characterises the statements not only by single respondents but also - as it will be shown in the following section - by respondents from the same village.

1) 'The state should do everything'

Respondents who argue for the need for a highly interventionist state mention a wide range of tasks to be performed by the state. The state in their view should provide their village with social and physical infrastructure such as roads, health centres, schools, water supply, agricultural equipment, dams, etc. Some respondents even mention the provision of food aid among core tasks of the state⁴⁶⁵. Furthermore, it is considered a task of the state to increase producer prices and reduce input prices, to provide the population with credit and to improve marketing conditions for vegetables and fruit. Others mention that the state should improve extension services and provide more qualified staff to village health centres. Some respondents would like to leave it to the state to define rights concerning management of natural resources, to mediate in conflicts between villagers and transhumant pastoralists, and to protect forests against wood cutters from neighbouring villages and urban centres⁴⁶⁶. They think that the state should assist the village in maintaining its internal social order⁴⁶⁷ and in solving village-internal conflicts which cannot be solved by the village chief⁴⁶⁸. Finally, many respondents consider it an obligation of the state to maintain law and order⁴⁶⁹.

It is a common feature of respondents in this group that they explain their views by referring to the limited organisational and financial capacity of their own village and to the lack of alternatives to the state in the form of private or inter-village organisations. In addition to this a moral obligation by the state to care for its citizens is sometimes mentioned⁴⁷⁰.

Respondents in this group express a profound fear of challenging the existing social order⁴⁷¹ and use words such as 'chaos' and 'social disorder' ('l'anarchie') to describe the possible consequences of lessening the control by the state⁴⁷². Typically, they regret the change of regime in 1991 and find that everything was better before. They fear that any changes in the division of authority between the state and societal actors will eventually result in a situation where the state

⁴⁶⁵ "L'État peur nous faire dons de céréales si non ca ne va pas" (Sinkolo no. 16).

⁴⁶⁶ "Le gouvernement peut nous aider à sanctionner les exploitants de notre forêt" (Koloni no. 2) "L'État doit renforcer le service des Eaux et Forêts et le Commandant (Koloni no. 18) "L'État doit nous aider à renforcer nos règles et sanctions, les consolider pour le bien-être du village" (Sincina no. 516).

⁴⁶⁷ "L'État doit tout faire pour appuyer notre entente dans le village" (Sinkolo no. 25) "L'État doit nous aider à mettre de l'ordre dans les règles sociales (les sanctions etc.) nous aider à nous discipliner nous-mêmes" (Sincina no. 20) "L'État doit chercher à nous faire entendre dans le village" (Sincina no. 33).

⁴⁶⁸ "Si nous nous entendons pas, nous amènerons le conflit chez le chef d'arrondissement. S'il se trouverait incapable il amènerait à Sikasso" (Kléla no. 27)

⁴⁶⁹ "L'État doit assurer la garantie de la sécurité" (Sinkolo no.12).

⁴⁷⁰ The moral obligation was sometimes expressed as the obligation of the 'good father' out of sheer pity to take care of its 'child': "L'État doit avoir pitié de nous en nous faisant un dispensaire dans le village. Nous avons 27 km à parcourir pour avoir le dispensaire de M'Pessoba" (Dossorola no. 24). In an official document from the Cellule de Planification et de Statistique under the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment the picture of the state as the good father is taken very far: "Le désengagement ne doit pas signifier abandon des collectivités territoriales; l'État doit se comporter en "bon père de famille" qui assiste, conseille et contrôle" (MDRE- CPS, 1994).

⁴⁷¹ The existing social order - or rather the order prevailing until 1991 - is summarised by two respondents as follows: "Toutes les affaires de ce pays sont dans les mains de l'État, le gouvernement, c'est lui qui doit décider tout" (Sinkolo no. 1). "L'État doit nous aider financièrement. Le village a toujours besoin de l'État qui est l'étape suprême de la hiérarchie des pouvoirs" (Sinkolo no. 23).

⁴⁷² "Décentralisation veut dire l'indépendance du village vis-à-vis l'État. Je sais que ce serait de l'anarchie, désordre total dans le pays car aucun village ne peut être indépendant de l'État" (Woroni no.16).

retreats completely from their village. As the village, in their opinion, has neither the financial nor the organisational capacity to become responsible for tax collection and investments, they foresee a total economic and social collapse⁴⁷³.

In addition to the lack of financial and organisational capacity by the village, their lack of knowledge of other types of actors influences these respondents. Thus, they seem to be unfamiliar with inter-village organisations, NGOs or private enterprises⁴⁷⁴. In particular it is notable that the farmers' movement was not mentioned by any of these respondents.

2) 'We can handle everything ourselves'

Diametrically opposed to the call for a highly interventionist state, a group of respondents stress the capacity of their village to manage without any assistance at all from the state.

Whereas the 'state-dependent' group is worried about limited financial resources at village-level to undertake necessary investments, respondents in this group stress the organisational capacity of their village and hardly mention the question of infrastructural investments. A closer reading of statements, however, reveals that both groups in fact refer to the same issue, namely whether the village possesses the necessary social consensus to define common rules (e.g. on tax collection and natural resource management) and to enforce the rules without risking to end up in a situation where external assistance is needed to solve internal conflicts.

Thus, many respondents in this group refer their view on the strength of the village to the fact that so far all village-internal conflicts have been handled by the village management without involving any government authorities: a powerful village chief is able to cut through conflicts and make decisions which are respected by all parties⁴⁷⁵. Others praise the qualified management of financial resources by the village association⁴⁷⁶, the technical competence of villagers themselves

⁴⁷³ "On nous dit que l'État va se retirer des affaires du village. L'État ne doit pas se retirer. Les villageois sont incapables sans l'État. Nous n'avons pas les moyens financiers - les impôts ne seront pas payés" (Molobala 8). "Le village n'a pas d'argent, ni d'autres moyens. Si non on aurait pu faire quelques chose depuis longtemps...Si jamais l'État se retire des affaires des villages, qui va aider les villages à se développer désormais. Les villageois ne se respectent plus, il n'y a plus obéissance dans les rapports. Ce serait un problème difficile. Il faut que nous cherchions d'abord à nous entendre avant tout" (Dossorola no. 20). "L'État ne doit pas se retirer. Si non, les villageois ne peuvent rien faire d'eux-mêmes. Nous n'avons pas assez d'intellectuels dans le village. Même s'il y a des fils villageois hors du village, il serait un peu difficile pour eux de gérer, puisqu'ils ne vivent pas avec nous, ils méconnaissent les réalités des villageois" (Kléla no. 15) "Le village ne peut rien. On ne peut que souhaiter la pluie chaque année" (Koloni no. 1).

⁴⁷⁴ "Si ce n'est pas l'État je ne connais pas celui qui pourrait aider les villages à résoudre leurs problèmes" (Dossorola no.4). "Si ce n'est pas l'État je ne sais pas celui qui va nous faire quelque chose. C'est à lui que nous payons les impôts" (Dossorola no. 6). "Peut-être c'est Dieu qui pourrait faire quelques chose pour nous. Si le gouvernement n'est pas capable de nous faire quelque chose" (Dossorola no. 13).

⁴⁷⁵ "Le village n'a jamais passé ses conflits à l'arrondissement. Il s'est toujours débrouillé à arranger ses problèmes" (Chiémé no.16). "Nos conflits sont réglés entre nous dans le village. Nous n'avons jamais amené un conflit villageois à l'arrondissement" (Chiémé no. 26).

⁴⁷⁶ "Déjà nous gérons nos affaires avec le peu d'argent dans la caisse AV et avec bonne entente. La caisse fait des crédits aux villages qui remboursent sans problèmes. Le conseil du village avec les sages est un organe précise de l'ordre social" (Chiémé no.18).

to undertake extension activities⁴⁷⁷ and the capacity of the village branch of the national hunters' association to maintain law and order⁴⁷⁸.

While the capacity of the village is considered very high, these respondents have an extremely low esteem of the capacity of the state. The state is mainly seen as an extractor of resources from rural communities giving nothing in return, neither in terms of services, nor in terms of investments⁴⁷⁹.

Third parties such as e.g. inter-village organisations are not considered potential actors able to influence village-level or more general problems in the area⁴⁸⁰. When asked if any others can do something to their problems, the only village-external actors these respondents can think of are their migrant relatives in Côte d'Ivoire⁴⁸¹.

3) 'The village and the state should collaborate and third parties become involved'

A third group of respondents resembles a combination of the two other groups, but it has some distinctive features that justify a classification in a particular category. They share with the first group a profound scepticism towards possibilities for the village of managing without assistance from the state. And they share with the second group a very critical assessment of the capacity of the state to make a difference to their problems. Unlike the two other groups, however, these respondents do not see a solution in either a highly interventionist state or in a retreat of the state. Instead they suggest a collaboration between the state and the village involving also third parties.

Various examples of collaborative relations between the state and the village are mentioned. These include e.g. support by the state to reinforcement of rules defined by the village, joint efforts for the maintenance of law and order, and assistance from the government administration to tax collection organised by the village⁴⁸².

⁴⁷⁷ "Je prône la solidarité au niveau des populations du village... Quand mes boeufs tombent malade, je préfère faire appel à la famille Sangaré (peuhl) qui ont assez de boeufs et qui possèdent des techniques de traitement. La CMDT et l'élevage n'ont jamais foutu pied dans mes champs. Je me débrouille seul et avec les équipes techniques de villageois formées par les services techniques" (Nafegue no. 7).

⁴⁷⁸ "Je fais partie de l'équipe des chasseurs du village, nous assurons la sécurité du village. Nous organisons des patrouilles nocturnes. Si nous rencontrons une personne qui ne sait pas parler sénoufou, il aura des sérieux problèmes avec nous" (Nafegue no. 4).

⁴⁷⁹ "Je n'attends rien de l'État car ils sont là à nous retirer les impôts sans qu'on sache où va cette somme... Nous avons toujours résolu les conflits du tout genre au niveau de village. Nafegue n'a jamais transféré un conflit à l'arrondissement. Je prône la solidarité au niveau des populations du village" (Nafegue no. 7). "Nous n'aurons plus à envier l'État pour nous satisfaire à nos besoins, nous pouvons bien réussir pour nous même et grâce à nous" (Chiémé no. 5). "L'État ne fait rien de ce qu'il doit faire. Nous payons l'impôt depuis que nous existons, nous n'avons rien eu de l'intéressant" (Molobalá no. 8).

⁴⁸⁰ "Je ne vois pas quelqu'un autre qui pourrait nous faire quelque chose. C'est du village de serrer la ceinture et faire face à ses problèmes" (N'golokasso no. 6). "Même s'il y a d'autres qui pourraient nous aider, je n'y vois pas cela. Donc, pour moi le village doit doubler l'effort pour faire face à ses problèmes" (N'golokasso no.9) "C'est nous-mêmes qui sommes responsables de nos problèmes. C'est au village de trouver une solution à ses problèmes et non d'autres personnes" (N'golokasso no 27).

⁴⁸¹ "Les fils du village en Côte d'Ivoire nous aide constamment pour le paiement de l'impôt" (N'golokasso no.16)

⁴⁸² "L'État doit nous aider à renforcer nos règles et sanctions, les consolider pour le bien être du village" (Sincina no. 16). "Nous avons une association des chasseurs qui assure la sécurité du village. Nos chasseurs collaborent avec la gendarmerie à Sikasso. Il n'existe pas chez nous ici de cas des voles, sauf quelques rares fois des jours de foire, et là c'est des étrangers" (Kléla no. 4) "Mais il faut que le Commandant soit présent au moment de récupération

NGO activities are few in the Sikasso region, but it is worth noticing that many respondents in this group mention the experience with NGOs when asked about possible third parties that could assist the village⁴⁸³. For some respondents, experience with a non-governmental project in their village seems to have broadened their outlook and made them refer more generally to 'external partners' or 'private businesses' as possible collaborating parties⁴⁸⁴.

One group of respondents stand out as particular, namely those who not only mention third parties when specifically asked about such actors, but spontaneously stress the need for third parties when asked what *the village* can do. In virtually all cases these respondents refer to the farmers' movement as a representative of village populations which can help them influence the state. Thus, price negotiations between SYCOV, CMDT and the government, undertaken in relation to the renewal of the general agreement between CMDT and the government⁴⁸⁵, is highlighted as an example of how the collaboration between the population and the state can take place⁴⁸⁶.

11.2.2. Village background conditioning views of the state

In addition to the open-ended questions that provoked the free comments referred to above, respondents were presented with a closed question on the preferred division of authority between the state, the village and third parties concerning each of a range of specific tasks, including: a) price negotiations regarding producer and input prices, b) extension activities, c) definition of rules concerning natural resource management, d) mediation in conflicts over natural resources e) mediation in other village-level conflicts (e.g. inheritance conflicts), f) maintenance of law and order and g) investments in physical and social infrastructure.

des impôts dans le village. Si non le chef de village aura des difficultés récupérer les impôts totaux" (Molobala no. 10)

⁴⁸³ *"Je ne compte pas sur l'État. Je compte surtout sur les projets ONG Corps de la Paix qui sont sensibles car il y en a qui vivent parmi nous et qui sont capable"* (Sinkolo no. 26). *"Il doit en avoir.. (autres qui pourrait nous assister).. tel que HELVETAS qui a déjà fait quelques chose dans le village"* (Nafegue no. 8). *"Nous comptons sur les projets comme la Vision Mondiale, nous sommes aussi prêt à contribuer pour les travaux d'exécutions"* (Koloni no. 19). *"Le Dangroup a fait du bien pour le village en donnant au villageois de l'eau potable. Si un autre partenaire pourrait faire autant, on est prêt à collaborer"* (Woroni no. 21). *"Le ville jumelée de "Cautance" de France peut nous aider à faire quelque chose encore"* (Sincina no. 32).

⁴⁸⁴ *"Des partenaires étrangers peuvent bel et bien nous venir en aide technique et financière. Nous sommes aussi prêt à contribuer avec eux financièrement et en ressources humaines"* (Nafegue no. 5). *"Les privés ressortissants du milieu peuvent faire des dépôts de pharmacie, vulgariser les techniques de soins, de traitement. Ils sont nombreux à Sikasso et ils sont capable"* (Woroni no.8).

⁴⁸⁵ For the first time the farmers' movement was given signatory power to the agreement, when it was renewed in 1994, a few months before interviews were conducted (CMDT, 1994b). This comment and answers reported in table 11.1 below concerning price negotiations illustrate that respondents both distinguish between the state and CMDT and perceive of CMDT as part of the larger state.

⁴⁸⁶ *"Le SYCOV doit avec le gouvernement et la CMDT fixer les différents prix. C'est le SYCOV qui nous représente, nous le cotonnier et vivriers. Normalement c'est le SYCOV qui doit donner le prix avant les deux autres partenaires"* (Sincina no. 17). *"Le SYCOV est un grand espoir pour nous sur lequel nous comptons beaucoup dans l'amélioration de nos conditions de travail"* (Molobala no. 28). *"Nous attendons le SYCOV pour la diminution des prix de l'engrais. Le SYCOV est notre espoir pour le moment"* (Molobala no. 4). *"Nous attendons notre comité de SYCOV pour bénéficier d'une réduction du prix de l'engrais..."* (Kléla no. 13). During a visit to Sincina, the village where SYCOV was first established, the village chief illustrated the point about a close collaboration between the state and SYCOV by clenching two fingers: *"La collaboration entre nous doit être comme ca!"*

Table 11.1. Preferred division of authority between the state, the village and SYCOV, according to village background (share of respondents in % of all respondents from the village) (n=309).

	PRICE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND CMDT <i>WITHOUT INVOLVING THE VILLAGE</i>	DEFINITION OF NRM-RULES*) BY THE STATE <i>WITHOUT INVOLVING THE VILLAGE</i>	INVOLVEMENT OF SYCOV IN PRICE NEGOTIATIONS	MEDIATION IN VILLAGE-LEVEL CONFLICTS BY THE VILLAGE ALONE
Ngolokasso	0%	0%	0%	93%
Chième	0%	0%	3%	90%
Nafegue	5%	9%	0%	100%
Sincina	0%	5%	36%	98%
Molobala	0%	3%	30%	68%
Kléla	0%	0%	9%	57%
Koloni	57%	33%	0%	90%
Dossorola	43%	80%	0%	63%
Woroni	46%	46%	0%	27%
Sinkolo	48%	52%	0%	10%

notes: *) nrm-rules= rules concerning natural resource management

Some of the answers to these questions are shown in table 11.1 which illustrates substantial differences among the villages (for a geographical situation of the villages, see the maps in the first part of the dissertation, and for a summary of their characteristics, see the section on 'Characteristics of the 10 villages under study' in the annex). Four villages, situated in the northern part of the region or immediately south of Sikasso, distinguish themselves from the others by a considerable share of respondents who prefer that the government and CMDT undertake price negotiations without involving the villages (i.e. themselves) (Koloni, Dossorola, Woroni and Sinkolo). Two of these villages further distinguish themselves by a remarkably low share of respondents who find that mediation in village-level conflicts should take place in the village alone, without involving government authorities (Woroni and Sinkolo). In all other villages the majority of respondents prefer not to involve the state, and in Nafegue all respondents without exception have given this answer. Finally, three villages considered strongholds of the farmers' movement, differ from the others by a certain share of respondents who indicate that SYCOV on their behalf should be involved in price negotiations with the state and CMDT (Sincina, Molobala and Kléla).

Based on answers reported in table 11.1 supplemented by answers to the question about how to solve their problems, villages can roughly be classified in the above-mentioned groups as follows:

1) 'The state should do everything': Koloni, Dossorola, Woroni, and Sinkolo

Four villages classified in the first group are all situated in the northern part of the region (Koloni, Dossorola and Sinkolo) or immediately south of Sikasso (Woroni) and are characterised by various levels of internal conflicts. Thus, in the three first-mentioned villages the authority of village chiefs is challenged, and village associations are breaking up. In Woroni conflicts have not yet erupted but are lurking beneath the surface. The majority of respondents in these villages prefer that the government and CMDT negotiate producer and input prices without involving the village, that the state runs the extension service, defines rules concerning natural resource management, maintains law and order, and finances all investments. In Woroni and Sinkolo the majority of respondents even want the state to mediate in village-level conflicts without involving the village population, and one third of respondents in these villages want the state to mediate also in conflicts over natural resources without involving the village. No respondents in these villages mention a role for any third parties.

2) 'We can handle everything ourselves': N'golokasso, Chiémé and Nafegue

Three villages classified in the next group are situated in the southern part of the region and are characterised by strong internal cohesion. Village chiefs have maintained their authority, there is only one village association in each village, and the traditional hunters' organisation is maintaining law and order. The majority of respondents in these villages prefer that the village alone should be responsible for definition of rules concerning natural resource management, enforcement of such rules, and mediation in any other village-level conflict. They suggest that price negotiations and financing of investments should involve the village together with the government and CMDT. The majority of respondents in Chiémé and N'golokasso, furthermore, suggest that the village should undertake all extension activities alone. In Chiémé the majority of respondents prefer that the village should be solely responsible for maintaining law and order. No respondents in these villages mention a role for any third parties.

3) 'The village and the state should collaborate and third parties become involved': Sincina, Molobala and Kléla

The three villages considered strongholds of the farmers' movement are all situated in the northern or central part of the region, Sincina and Molobala are relatively close to Koutiala town, and they are all characterised by serious internal conflicts. The villages differ from the rest by a relatively large share of respondents who spontaneously mention SYCOV as a preferred partner in negotiations about cotton producer prices (36% in Sincina, 30% in Molobala and 9% in Kléla, respectively). The majority of respondents in Molobala and Kléla suggest a collaboration between the village and the state concerning mediation in village-level conflicts and definition of natural resource regulations. The enforcement of the rules, however, should be taken care of by the village without interference by the state. Concerning the financing of investments, respondents in Kléla and Molobala prefer a collaboration between the state and the village, whereas in Sincina a collaboration between the state, the village and NGOs is suggested. In Kléla and Molobala the majority of respondents want the village to be the sole responsible for extension activities and for maintaining law and order.

The hypothesis about village background being decisive to the view of the state is confirmed by assessments by respondents of the major political, social and economic changes that took place in the years after 1991 and immediately preceding the village survey. When respondents were asked to mention the three most important changes since 1991, very different views were expressed.

Table 11.2. Most important changes after 1991, according to village background of respondents (share of respondents in each village having mentioned the various changes) (n=312)*

	PRICE INCREASE AFTER DEVALUATION (**)	REDUCED TAXES	REPRESSION BY THE FORESTRY SERVICE HAS STOPPED	SOCIAL DISORDER	POLITICAL FREEDOM
Chième	57%	40%	50%	3%	7%
N'golokasso	30%	53%	60%	17%	3%
Nafegue	41%	59%	54%	5%	0%
Woroni	53%	43%	43%	0%	3%
Molobala	44%	29%	41%	12%	21%
Kléla	26%	26%	31%	14%	20%
Sincina	50%	33%	13%	23%	10%
Koloni	17%	33%	37%	57%	7%
Dossorola	70%	33%	20%	30%	0%
Sinkolo	61%	39%	16%	23%	6%

Notes:

*) Although the question on major changes was phrased as an open-ended question, only five major types of changes dominate the answers. In addition to these (reported in the table), 8 other changes were mentioned by 1-9 respondents each (a total of 35 respondents corresponding to 11% of all respondents). These changes were a) forced marriages have been abolished (9 respondents), b) the security situation has deteriorated (7 respondents), c) outbreak of a national school crisis (5 respondents), d) cotton prices have increased (4 respondents), e) repression by the government administration has increased (4 respondents), f) women's tons have been established in certain villages (3 respondents), g) social differentiation has increased (2 respondents) and h) outbreak of the Tuareg rebellion (1 respondent).

**) It appears from the answers that respondents refer to a price increase of consumer goods and agricultural inputs rather than to increasing producer prices. The positive impact of the devaluation of the CFA in the form of higher cotton and livestock prices was not yet felt in late 1994 when the majority of the interviews were carried out (Kébé et al., 1995a p. 12, see also the discussion of problems related to the timing of the survey in 'Fieldwork methodology and literature study' in the annex).

While mentioning of major economic changes does not appear to follow any clear village-determined pattern, descriptions of political changes as either 'social disorder' or 'political freedom' seem influenced by the village background of respondents. It appears, thus, that the assessment mainly reflects the level of social cohesion in villages. In the northern conflict-ridden villages a relatively large share of respondents mention social disorder ('l'anarchie') among major

recent changes (Sincina, Koloni, Dossorola and Sinkolo). In Koloni⁴⁸⁷ and Dossorola⁴⁸⁸ where conflicts are particularly pronounced, no less than 57% and 30% of respondents, respectively, feel that the existing social order is challenged.

In southern villages where traditional authorities have maintained their control, on the other hand, very few respondents mention 'social disorder' among the major changes (Chième, Nafegue and Woroni). N'golokasso is an exception to this which may be explained by an ongoing and very violent conflict with pastoralists which neither the village leadership nor government authorities have been able to solve.

The tendency to a north-south division in political statements seems reinforced by the crime wave, mentioned in chapter 7, that has swept the northern part of the region after a partial retreat of the gendarmerie, while in the south, the traditional hunters' association to a large extent has been able to take over the task of maintaining law and order.

Political freedom is not considered a change (or achievement) worth mentioning by the majority of respondents. The only villages where a certain number of respondents have given this answer are the three villages considered strongholds of the farmers' movement (Molobala, Kléla⁴⁸⁹ and Sincina). In these villages many inhabitants have personally experienced that inter-village organisation and confrontation with CMDT have resulted in tangible benefits⁴⁹⁰.

Finally, the mentioning of the abolition of repression by the forestry service reveals a clear south-north pattern: roughly speaking, the further south the village is situated, the more abundant natural resources are, and the more often the change of the forestry service is mentioned. While in the southern villages Chiémé, N'golokasso and Nafegue 50-60% of respondents highlight the stop of repression by the forestry service, only a minority in northern villages such as Sinkolo, Sincina and Dossorola mentions this among most important changes.

It seems, thus, that the hypothesis about different views of the state being held by the population in different parts of the region has been confirmed. The north-south difference is reflected in

⁴⁸⁷ In Koloni an ongoing conflict on inheritance of the position of village chief is dividing the village in two. Personal comments further illustrate the negative assessment of the situation: *"Depuis la chute du régime de Moussa, tout l'ordre social est déstabilisé, c'est des troubles sociaux partout"* (Koloni no.9) *"Je me répète: il n'y a pas de cohésion dans le village. Depuis la chute de régime Moussa, on n'a pas vu du respect, on assiste seulement à des tiraillements des désaccords, mécontentes perpétuelles dans tout le village"* (Koloni no.21)

⁴⁸⁸ In Dossorola a conflict between the lineage having established the village and late comers are seriously threatening social stability. *"Je peux dire que depuis la chute du régime Moussa nous n'avons plus eu une paix sur le plan économique. Nous n'avons pas d'entente dans le village, nous n'avons aussi pas d'argent"* (Dossorola no.1). *"S'il y a l'entente dans le village je peux espérer la décentralisation peut marcher. S'il n'y a pas d'entente tel que chez nous et que c'est le chef du village ou un villageois qui doit récupérer les impôts, ça va mal tourner, il y aurait des réticents et finalement personne ne va payer. Avec quoi les villageois vont gérer leur vie?"* (Dossorola no.19).

⁴⁸⁹ It should be noted that the time lag of one year between interviews in Molobala and Kléla (early 1996) and in the other villages (late 1994) may have affected the results. The process of preparing rural communes during 1995 may have made the inhabitants in Kléla and Molobala observe an increased political involvement of the population that was less visible in the autumn of 1994 (see also the discussion of problems related to the timing of the survey in 'Fieldwork methodology and literature study' in the annex).

⁴⁹⁰ The new self confidence of villagers is reflected in the following statement by a respondent in Kléla: *"Les villageois n'ont plus peur de parler de certaines choses au chef d'arrondissement. Maintenant, nous pouvons dire au chef d'arrondissement de se patienter, nous attendre un peu avant de trouver de l'argent pour l'impôt"* (Kléla no.28).

opposing views held by on the one hand respondents in villages characterised by internal conflicts, and on the other hand, respondents in villages characterised by social cohesion. While the first express a high degree of political authority, the latter express a high degree of social reciprocities at the community level. The most interesting finding from the investigation, however, is that 'civil norms' are conditioned neither by the experience of a large degree of uncertainty nor by the experience of social stability. Instead it seems to be conditioned by the experience of being part of a movement which has managed to put organised demands on the state and having seen the demands being (partly) accommodated.

11.3. Existence of a class or ethnically based political potential

The last approach suggested in chapter 4 to identify societal forces with a particular political potential is to carry out an analysis of class and ethnic relations.

Overt *ethnic* tensions appear to be limited in the region, and the information on the issue is very scarce: in the available literature there are virtually no references to relations among the various ethnic groups. As furthermore the village survey did not investigate the ethnic background of respondents, it is not possible to carry out a proper analysis.

A rough estimation of the issue, however, would suggest that to the extent that ethnic differences affect ongoing political changes in the region, it is as a factor reinforcing the differences between the northern and the southern part of the region. In chapter 8 it was described how increased conflicts between generations in the Minyanka community dominating the northern part of the region have led to a higher rate of breaking up extended families into smaller units than it is the case in the southern Senoufo-dominated area. The importance of lineage structures as decision-making units in the Minyanka community seems to be on the decline, while in the Senoufo community lineage structures are still very important. Authority of village-level authorities is more often challenged in the Minyanka community than in the Senoufo community, and the process of breaking up village associations is considerably more pronounced in the north.

While a different level of integration into the cotton economy appears to be the major reason for the striking geographical differences, it is most likely that they have been reinforced by the various characteristics of the social organisation among the two dominating ethnic groups. What seems less likely, however, is that ethnic identities play a role for political mobilisation in opposition to other ethnic groups. There are no political parties, thus, with a clear identity as either Minyanka or Senoufo-based⁴⁹¹, and although conflicts at village-level between descendants of the first inhabitant and latecomers may reflect ethnical differences, there are no signs that these are being used to form e.g. a Minyanka-based movement claiming rights vis-à-vis other groups.

As regards the possibility of finding *class-based political identities*, the analysis of socioeconomic differentiation in chapter 7 showed that marked differences exist between large-scale cotton producers and poorer households which for lack of equipment and draught animals are forced to cultivate manually.

⁴⁹¹ The political party UDD has its stronghold in Koutiala and is considered an example of a regionally-based party. There is no indication, however, that it is perceived of neither by its members nor by others as a Minyanka-based party.

Moreover, the analysis in chapter 10 pointed to a general extension bias for all agencies favouring better-off households at the expense of the poor. The negative assessment by poor farmers of extension services further suggests that perceptions of the state may be class-conditioned, hence class might be an identity used for political mobilisation.

And, finally, the analysis of the farmers' movement suggested that a certain divide between better-off and poorer farmers may characterise the movement. Large-scale cotton producers seem to be well represented in the board, and political priorities (i.e. the concentration on cotton and input prices) mainly reflect their interests.

Class-based differences in attitudes towards the state, however, are difficult to identify in the village survey. The only clear tendency is that group-d respondents generally prefer a relatively more interventionist state and a more limited role of the village than other groups. Differences in answers given by the three other groups (group a-c-respondents) are insignificant, and these are therefore presented in only one line in table 11.3 below.

Table 11.3. Share of respondents in group a-c and group d who want the state to be the sole responsible for each of a range of tasks *without* involving the village population (n= 319).

	PRICE NEGOTIATIONS	EXTENSION	DEF. OF NRM RULES *)	MEDIA-TION IN NRM*) CONFLICT	MEDIA-TION IN OTHER CONFLICTS	INVESTMENTS	MAINT. OF LAW AND ORDER
group-a group-b group-c	17-21%	21-39%	18-23%	5-6%	13-14%	17-22%	17-22% **)
group-d	30%	50%	50%	20%	35%	35%	40%

Notes:

*) nrm=natural resource management

***) group-c respondents differ from group-a and -b in this respect, as 38% of group-c respondents want the state to be the sole responsible for maintenance of law and order

The deviation of answers given by group-d respondents from those given by other groups of farmers should probably be explained by the general uncertainty that these farmers face. Although the state does not provide them with very much assistance and although their assessment of government agencies is negative (ref. chapter 10), the alternative that the state should retreat or seek a closer collaboration with village populations does not appear to be very attractive. Group-d farmers have no illusions about their own influence in village power politics and might therefore prefer that a village-external agent such as the state makes decisions about management of natural resources, conflict resolution, etc.

Answers to the question about the three most important changes since 1991 reveal a similar pattern where group-d farmers, to some extent together with group-c farmers, distinguish themselves from better-off respondents. It is notable that the tendency in table 11.4 below is exactly the inverse of the tendency in table 11.2 where answers to the same question were grouped according to village background of respondents. In table 11.4, thus, the mentioning of political changes does not seem to be influenced by socioeconomic background, whereas the

mentioning of economic changes (price increase and reduced taxes) varies according to the socioeconomic background of respondents.

Table 11.4. Most important changes after 1991, according to socioeconomic background of respondents (share of the group in % of the total group) (n=312).

	PRICE INCREASE AFTER DEVALUATION *)	REDUCED TAXES	REPRESSION BY THE FORESTRY SERVICE HAS STOPPED	SOCIAL DISORDER	POLITICAL FREEDOM
group-a	41%	46%	36%	16%	6%
group-b	39%	39%	39%	21%	11%
group-c	51%	31%	38%	17%	9%
group-d	65%	30%	10%	20%	0%

*) It appears from the answers that respondents refer to a price increase of consumer goods and agricultural inputs rather than to increasing producer prices. See also notes to table 11.2.

As seen from table 11.4, a very large share of poorer farmers, and notably of group-d farmers, mention the price increase after devaluation of the CFA in January 1994. Poorer farmers are believed to have been particularly hard hit by the 50% devaluation because they are forced to buy a large share of the food consumed, and because the compensation in the form of increased cotton prices has benefited mainly larger producers (Kébé et al., 1995a). In addition to this they are generally more vulnerable to major economic changes because of the lack of efficient coping mechanisms in the form of diversified income strategies, etc. (ref. the discussion in chapter 7).

The difficult economic situation of group-d and group-c farmers makes them less inclined to mention the tax reduction decided by the new democratic government among the major changes. The reduction is obviously more appreciated by better-off farmers who generally have larger households and therefore feel the impact of a reduced person-based tax much more.

While the village survey constitutes an insufficient basis for drawing any clear conclusions about the existence of a class based or ethnically based political potential, it seems to suggest that to the extent such a potential exists, it is rather to be found among better-off than among poorer farmers. Although poor farmers have a negative assessment of government agencies, they do not express any interest in changing present state and society relations. As an interest group they have a limited potential for putting demands on the state and a limited interest in replacing state authority by a larger involvement of village-level decision-making structures where their own representation is poor. Better-off farmers, on the other hand, may have achieved an economic position that no longer makes them accept to be a politically marginal group. Their present focus on economic issues may develop into an interest in political influence either through the farmers' movement or through the various political parties trying to gain support in rural areas.

Conclusion

The application of the conceptual framework suggested in chapter 4 to the investigation of social forces in the Sikasso region has resulted in the identification of several sets of societal forces which appear to have a potential for influencing state and society relations.

The farmers' movement has an obvious potential for becoming such a force. Conditions for its emergence have been favourable, and achievements by SYCOV are already significant. As it appeared both from descriptions in this chapter and from the analysis of CMDT in chapter 9, organised demands put on CMDT by the organisation have forced the agency to change the way it relates to farmers. Even before the emergence of SYCOV as an organised force, farmers were able to influence CMDT and take advantage of the gradually increased openness of the agency towards demand pressures. Whether the farmers' movement will be able to follow up the immediate successes by continuously putting pressure on CMDT to accommodate the interests of farmers, also when they differ from those of the agency, depends on its possibility of keeping a certain distance to CMDT, i.e. avoid co-optation, and of its possibility to stay united. None of these conditions can be taken for granted, and in particular the analysis suggested that there may be a risk of an internal division in the organisation between better-off farmers who dominate the leadership and poorer farmers who do not feel that their interests are being represented.

Whether SYCOV will qualify for the designation of a civil association in the sense that it engages the state depends on whether it will manage to widen priorities. What presently seems to be a focus on economic issues must be extended to include also broader political issues concerning relations between state and farmers. A very close collaboration between its leadership and CMDT would tend to turn priorities away from more fundamental political demands, whereas a certain autonomy may allow the economically powerful cotton producers to transfer their economic power into demands for more political influence.

While it still seems difficult to assess the potential of SYCOV as an association of influencing more fundamental relations between state and society, it appeared from the analysis of views of the state that its more indirect influence may be significant. Thus, the experience of some farmers of having successfully been able to put organised demands on a government agency has generated a view of the state that may be described as 'civil norms', i.e. the view that it is possible to influence the state through collaboration with its agencies.

The north-south difference expected to affect the views of the state was clearly reflected in the results of the village survey, but answers obtained did not suggest that any of the two population groups as such have a particular potential for changing relations between state and society. Thus, the high level of political authority expressed by respondents in northern villages does not point to much more than a demand for maintenance of status quo or maybe even a wish for a reversal of time to reintroduce the highly interventionist state of the former regime. The high level of social reciprocities expressed by respondents in southern villages, on the other hand, points to preferences for disengagement strategies which, although influencing the relationship between state and society, do not increase the political influence of those who apply the strategies.

The analysis of a class or ethnically based political potential was made difficult by lack of substantial data. Results from the village survey, however, seemed to suggest that to the extent

such a potential exists, it is rather to be found among better-off farmers than among the poor. Poorer farmers have a limited potential of putting demands on the state and a limited interest in replacing state authority by village power politics, and, therefore, do not express any interest in changing present state and society relations. Better-off farmers did not distinguish themselves as a particular group when asked about the role of the state, but the existence of large-scale producers who apparently have found their way into the leadership of the farmers movement may suggest that a group having achieved a strong economic position is no longer willing to accept being politically marginalised.

While the three entrance points to the analysis of social identities were meant to guide analyses in three different directions, a rough interpretation of their results points at a certain overlap. It could be argued, thus, that they all seem to support the perception that a particular forceful group is constituted of better-off farmers coming from the heart of the cotton-cultivation zone, they have gained a leading role in the SYCOV movement, and they express the view that it is possible to change relations to the state by collaborating with its representatives.

This uniformity of results can be seen as an indication of limitations of the three approaches. The fieldwork methodology and analysis of results have concentrated on 'engagement' whether acted out by a civil association or expressed as civil norms, and although a direct link between norms and strategies cannot be established, it is maybe not surprising that it leads to the identification of the same social forces.

Against this it can be argued that the problem relates more to lack of appropriate data than to the usefulness of guidelines suggested by the three approaches. Thus, had it been possible to carry out a thorough analysis of class relations instead of confining the analysis to views on the state expressed by farmers in different positions, it is quite likely that the investigation could have resulted in a more differentiated picture of societal forces in the region. For example a study of the dependency by poorer farmers on better-off farmers for employment and for borrowing equipment could have been related to their shared identities expressed maybe through membership of the same religious or other type of associations. An analysis of the class and ethnical composition of SYCOV members and notably of the SYCOV leadership would have allowed a test of the hypothesis about an internal cleavage between better-off and poorer farmers, and it could possibly have resulted in the identification of ethnically-based societal forces despite the lack of apparent signs of their existence. Finally, analysis of other associations than SYCOV, e.g. women's groups, parents' associations and the hunters' association, could have resulted in the possible identification of societal forces that are not related to class in the sense of shared identities developed around conflicting interests and lifestyles resulting from income and occupation (ref. the discussion in chapter 3).

Despite the limitations, however, the analysis in the present chapter has further stressed the highly heterogeneous character of societal forces in the region which neither the interactive approach nor organisation theory provide any appropriate tools to deal with. Chapter 7 and 8 described the different conditions for the population with regard to agro-ecological conditions, socioeconomic situation, and political and social organisation. In chapter 10 it was shown that extension agencies contribute to both socioeconomic inequalities and differences among villages, and it was found that different people relate differently to the agencies. Analyses in this chapter have suggested that different conditions have implications not just for the direct relationship between individual

farmers and the agencies but also for the more general perception of the state held by various groups of the population. Thus, when extension agencies as state representatives provide services to the population, they meet people whose willingness to collaborate differ considerably. While some consider the state the sole source of wealth and are eager to get as much assistance as possible, others consider the state and its agencies parasites on the rural population unable to provide anything useful to farmers. And still others are willing to collaborate on the condition that they can influence the way the interaction takes place.

The different pressures from societal forces have implications both for the agencies and for the more fundamental relations between state and society. They are partly a result of previous interaction with the state such as in the Sikasso case the integration into the cotton economy promoted by CMDT and the support by the same agency to the development of organisational and technical capacities of farmers to put a new type of pressure on state representatives. But societal processes, e.g. the rapid social and political changes at village-level in the Koutiala area, also have their own dynamics and significantly influence both perceptions and strategies vis-à-vis the state.

CONCLUSION TO THE EMPIRICAL SECTION

The empirical objective of the dissertation has been to illustrate and further explore the theoretical framework established in the first section. This has been done by identifying explanations for the different experience of interaction between farmers in the Sikasso region and four extension agencies all referring to the same government ministry.

The objective has been dealt with by studying pressures put on street-level bureaucracies in each of the four agencies and by assessing how these pressures affect the performance of the agencies (i.e their ability to accommodate farmers' demands).

Subsequently this analysis has been put in perspective by an analysis of the character of social forces in the Sikasso region which interact with and influence the four agencies.

The research questions which have guided the analysis are:

Is the Malian action environment dysfunctional to development in the sense that government agencies are doomed to poor performance, regardless of their various organisation-specific characteristics?

- 2) Is the institutional context of the public sector in Mali dysfunctional to development?
- 3) What are the constraints imposed on government agencies by the task network?
- 4) For each of the four agencies under study: what are their characteristics with regard to the six performance-conditioning factors: authority, rewards, organisational identification, peer pressure, work satisfaction and demand pressure?
- 5) To what extent are the agencies able to accommodate farmers' demands?
- 6) What is the economic, social and political context of the Sikasso region?
- 7) What are the societal forces of particular importance in the Sikasso region?

In the following these questions are answered by summarising conclusions to each of the chapters. This account together with the summary of conclusions to the theoretical section provide the basis for the final conclusion. Instead of repeating the chapter-by-chapter summary of conclusions, the final conclusion presents conclusions concerning main points of the theoretical framework for analysis of state-society relations and illustrates them by reference to empirical findings.

In *chapter 5* the first question has been answered negatively: although the *Malian action environment* is far from favourable, present positive trends in both the political and economic development leads to the conclusion that it is not completely dysfunctional to development. The general legitimacy of the government has been challenged by difficulties in the recent election process, but in a historical perspective the present regime appears to enjoy a legitimacy considerably above that fallen to the lot of its predecessors. The most serious challenge to public sector performance derived from the action environment is the low level of human resource development, reflected in health and educational standards among the poorest in the world.

The conclusion to the next step in the analysis of the shared environment of the agencies, the analysis of *the institutional context of the public sector* in *chapter 6* is less promising. The budgetary support is very low and is likely to negatively affect the general performance of

government agencies. Low salaries and retrenchment of staff resulting in poor motivation and in a relatively widespread corruption are critical parameters which individual agencies may find it extremely difficult to overcome. A historical heritage in the form of a generally centralised and hierarchical institutional set-up provides a poor basis for responsiveness by the various government agencies to demands raised by their clients. In *chapter 9* it was found that the institutional context of the public sector is seriously constraining the performance of two of the agencies, the forestry service and the livestock service, while it is detrimental to the performance of the cooperative service. Only CMDT is not seriously affected because its mixed status as both a public agent of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment and a private sector actor gives it access to more plentiful resources and possibility to define its own performance-enhancing employment conditions.

The portrait in *chapter 7 and 8* of the *economic, social and political context of the Sikasso region* has questioned the widely held picture of it as one of the most prosperous regions in the country having favourable conditions for agriculture and income levels above the national average. Whereas the position as the leading cotton- and food producing region in the country is undeniable, and very high incomes in certain households have been documented, social inequality and the existence of a group of poor farmers are reflected in relatively modest social indicators.

The two chapters describe two main lines of division of the population: a geographical division between the northern Koutiala area and the southern Kadiolo area, and a socioeconomic division which cuts across the region and reflects the highly different situation of large-scale mechanised cotton-producers and small-scale producers who cultivate manually.

Socioeconomic differentiation processes to a large extent seem to be linked to the integration into the cotton economy that has left small-scale producers in a vicious circle: for lack of own equipment they have to borrow from better-off households against repayment in the form of manual labour. This reduces their already limited labour force and thereby their income from cotton cultivation. Large-scale producers, on the other hand, usually have both a high level of mechanisation and better access to labour.

Also the north-south division seems linked to the integration into the cotton economy, as the earlier introduction of commercial cotton cultivation in the northern part of the region has reinforced differences relating to availability of natural resources, population pressure and characteristics of the social organisation by the Minyanka in the north and the Senoufo in the south. A marked reflection of the differences is that presently changes in family structures, lineage structures and in village-level relations are very rapid in the northern area where authorities at all levels are being questioned, whereas in the southern area village and family leaders to a large extent have maintained their authority.

The brief assessment of the *task network* of the four agencies in *chapter 9* found that it is very poor. This is reflected in the virtual absence of collaboration among the agencies, many overlaps in their activities and many gaps not covered by any of them.

The thorough analysis in *chapter 9* of *organisation-specific factors conditioning performance* has generally confirmed that the factors tend 'to go together': while in CMDT many of the factors are present and the performance is believed to be relatively high, the other agencies are suffering

from varying levels of poor performance because the existence of one or a few of the factors cannot compensate for lack of the rest. Thus, a high level of discretion of front-line staff without demand pressure (in the livestock service and the cooperative service) does not necessarily result in increased performance, and if all other conditions for good performance are absent, the experience of the forestry service shows that a sudden demand pressure will result in little more than perplexity.

Exceptions to this are the cases where only a few performance-enhancing conditions are found, and where agencies or particular parts of the agencies are able to perform well against otherwise hard odds. The most notable example is the cooperative service where a previously strong organisational identification by staff has survived the comedown of the organisation and has the potential of being converted into new work satisfaction for the staff, once they obtain the financial means to reestablish relations to clients. Also the work satisfaction of livestock agents based in villages demonstrates this. Despite the absence of a performance-related reward system, organisational identification and peer pressure, village-based livestock agents often find a basic work satisfaction in having close relations to clients, and apparently they are able to accommodate farmers' demand.

A comparison of the four agencies shows that a core organisational structure based on the mechanical model may develop in many different directions, depending on the resources available and the demand pressure faced. CMDT illustrates a mechanical model which has gradually become less mechanical by incorporating some learning from farmers and experience of field agents. The livestock service and CAC represent organisations which have become less mechanical mainly by default, because the management level does not have the resources necessary to maintain authority. And the forestry service represents an extreme example of a mechanical organisation which has not developed at all during very many years. The total absence of external pressures has allowed it to settle into a mechanical rut and left it completely unprepared for any demands to adjust.

It is believed that a main reason for the difference between CMDT and the other agencies is the fact that it has an economic imperative to produce cotton at low costs and provide a service that farmers request because of their economic interest in cotton cultivation. The other agencies have until recently have been ensured a certain allocation of funds regardless of their performance, and only the livestock service offers an assistance that farmers perceive of as economically useful. The particular type of pressure on CMDT has forced it to be more flexible and open to demands by farmers than other agencies. Whereas part of the CMDT success story is explained by its access to resources which the other agencies do not have due to their dependency on a poor state, the other part of the story relates to the particular character of demand pressures on the agency.

The analysis confirms the understanding of the state as a complex structure composed of many different parts all pulling in different directions. The four agencies illustrate how different strategies are pursued by different parts of the state not just with regard to their day-to-day activities but with regard also to their more fundamental relation to societal forces. While CMDT is pursuing an engagement strategy aiming to influence virtually every possible aspect of rural life, the strategy of the cooperative service exemplifies a disengagement strategy. Even within the same agency different strategies may be pursued. Livestock agents based in villages actively

address the population and are available for requests any time, day or night. Office-based agents, on the other hand, have given up and have to be given 'incentives' to work.

At the same time the analysis confirms that it is not appropriate to treat government agencies only as individual organisations. In addition to the dependency by three of the agencies on the institutional context of the public sector, they all share a dependency of the overall legitimacy of the state. To a varying extent all agencies have been affected by the change of regime in 1991 and the subsequent challenge of state authority. The forestry service obviously represents the most outstanding case, as it virtually collapsed when the regime that protected it was toppled. The general upsurge in popular manifestations and the countrywide prosecution of forestry staff contributed to inspire confrontations between farmers and CMDT a few months after 'les événements' in March 1991. Less spectacular expressions of agency dependency on the overall legitimacy of the state are the complaints by all agencies that it has become more difficult to make farmers attend extension sessions and comply with their advice.

The presentation in *chapter 10* of farmers' assessment of the ability of the agencies to accommodate their demands largely confirms the conclusions with regard to performance of the agencies made in chapter 9. According to farmers, CMDT is clearly the agency which provides the most extensive and most useful service, while the ability of the livestock service to accommodate farmers' demands seems somehow more varying. The performance of the forestry service is poor, and the performance by the cooperative service is extremely poor.

In line with their assessment of services, farmers simultaneously pursue many different strategies and are obviously very selective regarding the agencies with which they wish to collaborate. The strategy by most farmers vis-à-vis the forestry service and the cooperative service are best described as disengagement strategies, whereas the majority of farmers are extremely interested in contact to CMDT, and many are interested also in the assistance offered by the livestock service.

The most important finding from the village survey is that there is a marked social and geographical inequality in the distribution of services: without exception extension agencies in Sikasso tend to concentrate on better-off farmers at the expense of the poor. Furthermore, all agencies tend to favour and disfavour the same villages. Assessments of services provided by the agencies, accordingly, depend on who among the clients are being asked.

The social bias in service provision is believed to reinforce the already marked socioeconomic differences in the region. Farmers constitute a very heterogeneous group both with regard to socioeconomic conditions and with regards to their strategies vis-à-vis government representatives. In one end of the spectrum, agencies relate to better-off farmers eager to take their advice and able to apply it to solve the problems they have. These farmers meet extension staff with a firm belief in their right to receive assistance and the possibility of paying for it if necessary. And in the other end of the spectrum, agencies are dealing with poor farmers who lack the equipment necessary to make use of their advice, who are reluctant to ask for assistance for fear of being turned away, and who are unable to pay for services. Apart from CMDT none of the agencies appear to have taken this heterogeneity into account in their extension strategies, and in the case of CMDT the declared policy to reach all farmers by providing four different messages to farmers in different situations seems not to work.

The concentration of extension contacts on certain villages is explained by the inclusion of four villages in a donor-funded natural resource management project. The fact that a relatively modest donor-funded programme can make a significant difference to the assistance received in project and non-project villages draws the attention to the importance of project and programme-funded activities even in a privileged region such as Sikasso. In other regions, almost entirely depending on project-funded activities, the distribution of services among villages can be expected to be even more skewed.

Chapter 11 which puts the analysis of the performance of the four agencies into perspective by discussing *societal forces of particular importance in the Sikasso region* found that many such forces are at play.

The analysis of SYCOV, the farmers' movement shows that it has an obvious potential for becoming such a force. Conditions for its emergence have been favourable, and its achievements are already significant. An assessment of possibilities for describing SYCOV as a civil association in the sense that it engages the state, however, points to the conclusion that this depends on a number of decisive factors. These include its ability to avoid being co-opted by CMDT, its ability to avoid an internal cleavage between leadership and members, and its ability to widen priorities from what presently seems to be a focus on economic issues to include also broader political issues concerning relations between state and farmers.

In the search for social forces with a particular set of 'civil norms' it was found that the population in the northern part of the region generally express a high level of political authority, whereas respondents from southern villages express a high level of social reciprocities. This is explained partly by the dependence of the population in the north on cotton production and thereby on government price policies and services provided by extension agencies, and partly by the general social turbulence in this part of the region which has made many people doubt the capacity of village level structures. Contrary to this, the population in the southern area is still economically oriented towards Côte d'Ivoire, hence less dependent on the Malian state. Moreover, the fact that traditional authorities have maintained their position make respondents in these villages more inclined to believe that they can do without the state.

While none of the two groups express 'civil norms' in the sense that they believe that they can influence relations between state and society by collaborating with government agencies, such norms were found among respondents in villages which have an experience with the farmers' movement, SYCOV.

Finally, results from the village survey seem to suggest that to the extent a class or ethnic based political potential exists, it is rather to be found among better-off farmers than among the poor. Poorer farmers have a limited potential for putting demands on the state and a limited interest in replacing state authority by village power politics. Therefore, they do not express any interest in changing present state- society relations. Better-off farmers do not distinguish themselves as a particular group when asked about the role of the state, but the existence of large-scale producers who apparently have found their way into the leadership of the farmers movement may suggest that a group once having achieved a strong economic position will no longer be willing to accept to be politically marginalised.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical objective of the present dissertation has been the establishment of a conceptual framework to explain differences in interaction between government agencies and their clients. In the introduction it was formulated as a hypothesis that differences result from a variety of pressures being exerted upon each of the agencies. Thus, interaction processes and outcomes are seen as being determined by individual agency characteristics, by their characteristics as being part of the abstract state, and by the social forces with which they interact.

It has been *the empirical objective* to illustrate and further explore the theoretical framework by identifying explanations for the different experience of interaction between farmers in the Sikasso region and four extension agencies all referring to the same government ministry.

The empirical objective has been dealt with by studying pressures put on street-level bureaucracies in each of the four agencies and by assessing how these pressures affect agency performance (i.e. their ability to accommodate farmers' demands). This analysis has been put in perspective by an analysis of the character of the societal forces in the Sikasso region which interact with and influence the four agencies.

Systematic accounts of conclusions to each of the chapters are given in the two conclusions to the theoretical and the empirical section, respectively. While drawing on these, this chapter is not structured as a chapter-by-chapter presentation of findings. Instead, conclusions concerning main points of the theoretical framework for analysis of state-society relations are presented and illustrated by reference to empirical findings.

Five main points of the framework are highlighted: 1) the concept of interaction, 2) the engagement-disengagement framework, 3) the perception of the state as both a multiplicity of structures and a symbolic totality, 4) the framework for analysis of performance by government agencies, and 5) the understanding of societal forces as characterised by a wide variety of movements, networks, groups, cells and formal and informal organisations of which those trying to engage the state have a particular political potential.

After the presentation of conclusions, an assessment is made of the basis for conclusions. Thus, limitations of the theoretical framework as a guide to the empirical analysis are discussed, and subsequently limitations of the empirical case for illustration and further exploration of the theoretical framework are debated. Finally, broader theoretical and empirical perspectives of research results are discussed.

1. Conclusions to theoretical and empirical objectives

1.1. The concept of interaction

The point of departure for the present theoretical considerations about African state-society relations has been dissatisfaction with the tendency in the general debate to simplify issues (*chapter 1*).

State-oriented theories which have strongly influenced the general debate, and notably the debate about Francophone West Africa, contribute valuable insights to analysis of the African state. By concentrating on the inner dynamics of the state and by explaining societal processes only as reactions to state policies and strategies, however, they tend to ignore the influence of societal forces on the state. Furthermore, their assumption that public employees are motivated only by personal interests implies that state agents (or in a wider perspective: state organisations) cannot be expected to generate any major changes in state-society relations. When combining the two assumptions, hardly any scope is left for major changes in African state-society relations. Society-oriented theories, on the other hand, suffer from the opposite problem: either they consider the state a product of societal relations and downplay the importance of state-internal dynamics, or they concentrate on studies of community-level issues that are not related to the role of the state.

Also theories focussing on an unfortunate degree of state autonomy or on the capture of either state or society have severe limitations. The view in these theories of state-society relations as a zero-sum game makes it difficult for them to explain how social changes occur. Furthermore, they share with state-oriented or society-oriented approaches the tendency to portray the state as an entity which relates to society in an unequivocal way.

The problem of a simplified picture of state-society relations is not solved by contributions informed by the strategic relation approach. The suggestion by these theories not to distinguish between the analytical concepts of 'state' and 'society' avoids the problems encountered by the state or society-oriented approaches but confuses the possibilities of identifying interrelations. Agency-oriented approaches do not bring the analysis much further either. On the contrary, many agency-oriented contributions narrow the analytical perspective on state-society relations to studies of the interplay among individuals only. This is seen both in theories analysing state-internal dynamics as determined mainly by actions of individuals motivated by personal interests, and in studies on the interplay between state representatives and farmers emphasising the importance of personal relations between the two parties.

The concept of interaction suggested by the interactive approach is considered a fruitful attempt to overcome many deficiencies found in the above theories (*chapter 2*). The dissertation has argued for an understanding of the notions of 'state' and 'society' as analytically separable but deeply interrelated concepts. The state is anchored in society, and societal forces are influenced by the state, but they are not related in any simple and predictable way. Actions of state agents have implications for society, and actions of societal forces have implications for state structures and policies. However, also 'state-internal' dynamics are important factors in shaping state structures and policies, while 'society-internal' dynamics may occur independently of the state. Instead of a priori perceiving of state and society relations as dominated either by the state or by societal forces, it is considered fruitful to analyse their mutual interaction as being open to many different outcomes.

In the empirical analysis this perception of state-society relations was found useful to understand the interplay between extension agencies and farmers in the Sikasso region. The analysis of each of the four agencies illustrates the impact of farmers' strategies, but it also shows that a set of important conditions for the interaction are defined by state-internal factors related to budget allocations, organisational set-up, etc. (*chapter 9*). Similarly, the impact of state interventions on local communities, most obvious in the form of integration of the population into the cotton

economy, is undeniable, but societal forces are shaped also by society-internal dynamics such as the social and political organisation at village, lineage and family level (*chapter 7, 8 and 11*).

Thus, the marked difference between the experience of CMDT and that of the forestry service represents the clearest illustration of the importance to government agencies of interaction with societal forces (*chapter 9*). Whereas CMDT has been met by demands from farmers to adjust and incorporate their experiences into its extension strategy, farmers have shunned the forestry service and thereby deprived it of the possibility to gradually adjust and improve. At the same time a comparison of the two agencies illustrates the importance of conditioning factors not related to the interaction with societal forces. Given its mixed role as both a public agent of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment and a private sector actor, CMDT has access to more plentiful resources, and the agency can define its own performance-enhancing employment conditions. The forestry service, on the other hand, has experienced a dramatic cut in resources and is able to carry out only a very modest donor-funded extension programme.

Differences between the northern Koutiala area and the southern Kadiolo area are believed to have been reinforced by the early integration of the northern part of the region into the cotton economy, while in the southern part the production of cotton only recently has gained the same economic significance as remittances from migrants in Côte d'Ivoire. These differences, however, are not mere products of variations in government interventions, as the two areas differ also with regard to geographical conditions (the proximity of the Kadiolo area to Côte d'Ivoire), availability of natural resources, population pressure and not least social organisation of the two different ethnic groups dominating the areas (*chapter 7 and 8*).

The village survey found that the population in the north tends to have a high degree of 'political authority', in the sense that they expect the state to solve their problems and doubt their own ability to make a difference (*chapter 11*). Respondents from the south, on the other hand, express a high degree of 'social reciprocities' reflected in the view that they can do without services and regulation provided by the state, while relying instead on the capacity of village-level structures. The variation of answers is partly explained by different levels of actual dependence by the two areas on government agencies for input and credit provision, extension services, marketing, etc. It seems to be an equally important reason, however, that the northern part of the area is characterised by rapid changes in family structures, lineage structures and in village-level relations. This is reflected in general questioning of all authorities and serious difficulties for many village chiefs of maintaining their credibility in the eyes of fellow villagers. In consequence, many respondents express doubt about the ability of village-level structures to become involved in tasks presently undertaken by government representatives. Contrary to this, village and family leaders in the southern Kadiolo area to a large extent have maintained their authority. The population in this area, therefore, consider it possible and preferable to solve most problems at village level without involving the state.

Also the socioeconomic differentiation cutting across the region is both a product of interaction with government agencies and a result of local social and political organisation at village level (*chapter 7*). Social inequalities are reflected in highly different income situations for large-scale mechanised cotton-producers and small-scale producers who for lack of equipment have to cultivate manually. Not all farmers have the same access to credit for purchasing equipment and to assistance from extension agencies. Credit is allocated through village associations and based

on a group guarantee to ensure the repayment of loans. This appears to result in a relentless social screening of applicants for credit which makes it extremely difficult for poorer households to be considered. Concerning access to extension services, the village survey found that for all extension agencies without exception there is a clear tendency to concentrate services on better-off farmers at the expense of the poor (*chapter 10*). While government intervention, thus, seems to have reinforced social inequalities, socioeconomic differentiation is not a recent phenomenon. It has existed long before the integration of the region into the cotton economy, and it is related also to societal processes of change such as the disintegration of lineage structures that used to ensure a certain redistribution of wealth between poorer and better-off members of a lineage (*chapter 7 and 8*).

1.2. The engagement-disengagement framework

While the concept of interaction appears to be both theoretically satisfactory and empirically useful, *the engagement-disengagement framework*, developed by the interactive approach, is found to provide an appropriate tool to point out some main tendencies in the way society and state can relate to each other (*chapter 2*). The notions of engagement and disengagement refer to the possible strategies pursued by the two parties, where engagement describes attempts to influence the other party, and disengagement refers to attempts to avoid it. Many combinations are possible: the state can adopt engagement strategies by trying to regulate social behaviour, and it can disengage from society by reducing its services or physically withdrawing from its territory. Societal forces can engage the state by trying to influence it and by demanding services, and they can withdraw from the state by avoiding contact with its representatives or refusing to follow rules and regulations issued by the state.

Contrary to the limited perspective applied by theories that view state and society relations as a zero-sum game where 'one has to lose to let the other party win', the framework opens the possibility of mutual engagement of state and society, a win-win situation. It furthermore contributes to an understanding of how actions by one party may generate particular reactions by the other party.

In the Malian case the framework can be used to portray general lines of historical development in relations between the state and the rural population (*chapter 5*). In the first years after independence, part of the peasant community could be counted as at least half-hearted supporters of the new regime. Strategies by the state in this period were characterised by attempts to ensure social control by ideological mobilisation through national and party identification and affiliation, i.e. engagement strategies. When government policies became increasingly exploitative and repressive, however, mutual engagement was replaced by disengagement strategies by the rural population in the form of black marketing of agricultural produce, concentration on subsistence crops, changing the mix of crops, switching to other income strategies including migration, etc. A situation of engagement by the state and disengagement by the rural population continued, until the economic crisis and structural adjustment policies in the late 1980s forced the state to retract. The emergence in the 1990s of a number of farmers' organisations, among these the SYCOV movement in Sikasso, may indicate a new willingness among part of the rural population to engage the state with a view to change overall state-society relations. Based on an assessment of organisational characteristics and the strategies pursued by SYCOV, its character as a 'civil association' ready to engage the state cannot be fully established. The village questionnaire

survey, however, found that respondents from villages considered strongholds of the SYCOV movement express views on the state fairly similar to those considered conditions for societal engagement strategies, i.e. willingness to collaborate with the state and belief in possibilities to influence it (*chapter 11*).

Also for analysis of relations between individual extension agencies and their clients, the framework is considered useful (*chapter 9*). Strategies pursued by the four agencies under study vary considerably and may be described by the notions of engagement and disengagement: while CMDT is pursuing an engagement strategy aiming to influence virtually every possible aspect of rural life, the strategy of the cooperative service exemplifies a disengagement strategy. Even within the same agency different strategies may be pursued. Village-based livestock agents actively address the population and are available for requests any time, day or night. Arrondissement-based agents, on the other hand, have given in and expect to be given 'incentives' to work.

Like government agencies, farmers simultaneously pursue many different strategies and are obviously very selective regarding the agencies with which they wish to collaborate (*chapter 10*). Services offered by the forestry service and the cooperative service are considered useful only by a small minority of farmers, and it seems fair to describe the strategy by most farmers vis-à-vis these agencies as disengagement strategies. The majority of farmers, on the other hand, are extremely interested in contact to CMDT, and many are interested also in the assistance offered by the livestock service.

The relationship between CMDT and the farmers' movement SYCOV illustrates the positive impact on both state and societal forces of mutual engagement (*chapter 9 and chapter 11*). The support by CMDT in the form of literacy training, technical assistance and support to the organisation of village associations has gradually strengthened the technical and organisational capacity of farmers in the Sikasso region. Farmers' wish to take over tasks previously undertaken by the state reflects their experience of being able to manage such tasks as the distribution of inputs and collection of the harvest. The fact that the collaboration among farmers at inter-village level emerged from the village associations illustrates how organisational experience gained through collaboration with government agencies may be turned into new use through the establishment of independent organisations. As explained above, demands put on CMDT by farmers, on the other hand, have gradually strengthened the agency by forcing it to adjust and improve.

1.3. Understanding the state as both a multiplicity of structures and a symbolic totality

Understanding the variety of strategies pursued by different parts of the state is facilitated by the *perception of the state as both a multiplicity of structures and a symbolic totality*. The suggestion by the interactive approach to disaggregate the concept of the state constitutes a useful tool to identify its different parts and, thereby, to understand the complexity of the interplay between state and societal agents (*chapter 4*).

The interactive approach suggests an 'anthropology of the state' that distinguishes between the different agencies of the state, the different levels of the state apparatus, and the individual state agents, because pressures exerted upon each of these 'state components' vary. Thus, pressures

faced by front-line staff in the bottom of the hierarchy differ considerably from pressures exerted upon the top executive leadership. Similarly, each agency has its specific characteristics, and different conditions are reflected in different strategies pursued in the interaction with societal forces.

While the state is a complex and multifaceted structure, where different elements are pulling in different directions, it is at the same time a symbolic totality. It is a discursive construct resulting from a combination of people's encounters with state representatives (such as e.g. extension workers) and a more general image of the state which is not directly related to its specific agencies but can be based on experiences with more indirect interventions, e.g. in the form of price and tax policies, or derived from the handling by the government of regional conflicts or international issues. The particularity of the discursive construct of the state relates to its special character as an organisation that differs from all other powerful decision-making structures in society by its claim to represent the public good, its request for hegemony, and its entitlement to exercise the powers and authority needed to implement that claim (for example a monopoly of legitimate coercion, international sovereignty and the powers to tax and conscript).

The state depends on a certain amount of legitimacy in the eyes of the population in order to be sustained, and being part of the state, each of its agencies depends not only on its own legitimacy but also on the overall legitimacy of the state as such.

Disaggregating the state concept avoids the tendency of many theories to endow the state with an image of unity as a policymaking actor standing apart from society. While these often result in general conclusions about 'strong states' and 'weak states', the interactive approach adds some much needed light and shade to analysis of the state and facilitates the understanding of contradictory state strategies. The insistence that the state is at the same time a totality counters the inbuilt risk in organisation theory of an overly focus on agencies. If a state agency is analysed as any other organisation, the analysis will not be able to capture actions and reactions to agency strategies which cannot be referred to its own characteristics but relate to the experience by societal actors of interacting with other state agencies or to their general image of the state.

In the analysis of the four extension agencies under study, this understanding of the state proved very useful (*chapter 9*). As summarised above, the four agencies illustrate how different strategies are pursued by different parts of the state not just with regard to their day-to-day activities but with regard also to their more fundamental relation to societal forces. The agencies differ with regard to access to resources, the specific organisational set-up, and a range of other organisation-specific characteristics.

At the same time the analysis confirms that it is not appropriate to treat government agencies only as individual organisations. In addition to the dependence by three of the agencies on the institutional context of the public sector (the forestry service, the livestock service and the cooperative service), they all four share a dependence on the overall legitimacy of the state. To a varying extent all agencies have been affected by the change of regime in 1991 and the subsequent challenges to state authority. The forestry service represents the most outstanding case, as it virtually collapsed when the regime which protected it was toppled. The general upsurge in popular manifestations and countrywide prosecution of forestry staff contributed to inspire confrontations between farmers and CMDT a few months after 'les événements' in March

1991. Less spectacular expressions of the dependence of agencies on overall legitimacy of the state are the complaints by all agencies that it has become more difficult to make farmers attend extension sessions and comply with their advice. Also positive examples were found of the mutual influence of agencies' legitimacy. The interest of farmers in Sikasso in getting assistance from the livestock service to grow fodder crops and from the forestry service to plant fruit trees relates to their experience of having received a much appreciated assistance from CMDT. Whereas in other parts of the country, farmers have learned not to expect anything useful from government agencies, the experience in the Sikasso region is that their assistance may, indeed, be useful.

1.4. Framework for analysis of performance by government agencies

The conceptual framework offered by the interactive approach is very sketchy and does not provide guidelines that are directly applicable to an empirical investigation. While the framework represents a constructive starting point for further theoretical analysis, it is considered necessary to fill it in by theories at a lower level of abstraction in order to generate appropriate research questions for empirical studies.

It has been found that a number of contributions to organisation theory constitute relevant elements to substantiate the framework by providing more specific guidelines for an analysis of performance conditioning factors for government agencies (*chapter 3*). Performance is used as an operationalisation of the concept of interaction between government agencies and their clients, and it is defined as *the ability of an organisation to accommodate client demands*. This definition has been chosen because it assigns an active role to both parties in the interaction: the organisation tries to accommodate a demand, and clients raise a demand and subsequently assess the level of their satisfaction.

The relevance of organisation theory in analysis of organisations in developing countries is a much debated issue, and the application of organisation theory to analysis of government organisations in developing countries is even more controversial. Theories emphasising the importance in Africa of patron-client relations and basing their analysis on the view of civil servants as purely self-interested point to a completely different functioning of agencies in developing countries and in industrialised countries. Contrary to this, a range of authors, inspiring the use of organisation theory in the present study, all base their contributions on the assumptions that distinctive features of 'African behaviour' derive from an essentially universal mode of response to the particularities of the African environment. They are interested in cases of good performance and in identifying factors encouraging good performance. By assuming that people everywhere may express 'unself-interested' behaviour if allowed to do so, they define the challenge as understanding how the particular environment may sometimes limit possibilities for letting it thrive.

The overall framework for the analysis of factors conditioning performance by government agencies consists in a model that makes it possible to distinguish between situations where, on the one hand, government agencies are inevitably doomed to poor performance due to problems outside their own control, and, on the other hand, situations where general problems may be overcome at the level of individual agencies. *Three sets of agency-external factors are investigated, namely 'the action environment'* (i.e. the degree of political stability and legitimacy

of the government, the rate and structure of economic growth, and the human resource profile of the country), *'the public sector institutional context'* (i.e. the budgetary support, the overall institutional set-up of the public sector, its management practices and existing structures of formal and informal influence), and the *'task network'* of government agencies (i.e. relations of collaboration and coordination among the agencies). The action environment and the institutional context of the public sector may be dysfunctional to development in the sense that government agencies are doomed to poor performance, regardless of their various organisation-specific characteristics.

This model is combined with a range of contributions to theories about organisation-specific factors conditioning performance (revised agency theory and more recent contributions concentrating on work satisfaction and demand pressure). They point to *six factors of particular importance to organisational performance: 'authority', 'rewards', 'organisational identification', 'peer pressure', 'work satisfaction' and 'demand pressure'*.

Discussions of each of these factors point to the conclusion that the 'mechanical model', characterised by a high level of complexity, of formalisation and of centralisation and constituting the basic organisational feature of the four agencies under study, has a set of characteristics that can be expected to negatively influence performance.

The framework has been applied to the analysis of the four agencies under study (*chapter 5, 6 and 9*). The analysis of the Malian action environment concluded that although it is far from favourable, present positive trends in both the political and economic development suggest that it is not completely dysfunctional to development (*chapter 5*). Contrary to this, the analysis of the institutional context of the public sector found that this may in fact be dysfunctional to development (*chapter 6*). This applies to the case of the cooperative service being so crippled by lack of resources that it is virtually unable to carry out any activities (*chapter 9*). Also in the case of the forestry service and the livestock service, the institutional context of the public sector is constraining their performance. Only CMDT is not seriously affected because its mixed status as both a public agent of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment and a private sector actor makes it less dependent than the other agencies on the institutional context of the public sector.

The analysis of organisation-specific conditions in each of the four agencies has found that the six performance-conditioning factors suggested by the framework tend 'to go together': while in CMDT many of the factors are present and the performance is believed to be relatively high, the other agencies are suffering from varying levels of poor performance, because the existence of one or a few of the factors cannot compensate for lack of the rest. Thus, a high level of discretion of front-line staff without demand pressure (in the livestock service and the cooperative service) does not necessarily result in increased performance, and if all other conditions for good performance are absent, the experience of the forestry service shows that a sudden demand pressure will result in little more than perplexity.

Exceptions to this are the cases where only a few performance-enhancing conditions are found, and where agencies or particular parts of the agencies are able to perform well against otherwise hard odds. The most notable example is the cooperative service where a previously strong organisational identification by staff has survived the comedown of the organisation and has the

potential of being converted into new work satisfaction for the staff, once they obtain the financial means to reestablish relations to clients. Also the work satisfaction of village-based livestock agents demonstrates this. Despite the absence of a performance-related reward system, organisational identification and peer pressure, village-based livestock agents often find a basic work satisfaction in having close relations to clients, and apparently they are able to accommodate farmers' demands.

A comparison of the four agencies shows that a core organisational structure based on the mechanical model may develop in many different directions, depending on the demand pressure faced. CMDT illustrates a mechanical model which has gradually become less mechanical by incorporating some learning from farmers and experience of field agents. The livestock service and CAC represent organisations which have become less mechanical mainly by default, because the management level does not have the resources necessary to maintain authority. And the forestry service represents an extreme example of a mechanical organisation which has not developed at all during many years. The total absence of external pressures has allowed it to settle into a mechanical rut and left it completely unprepared for any demands to adjust.

It is believed that a main reason for the difference between CMDT and the other agencies is the fact that it has an economic imperative to produce cotton at low costs and provide a service requested by farmers because of their economic interest in cotton cultivation. The other agencies have until recently been ensured a certain allocation of funds regardless of their performance, and only the livestock service offers an assistance considered economically useful by farmers. The particular type of pressure on CMDT has forced it to be more flexible and open to demands by farmers than other agencies. Whereas part of the CMDT success story is explained by access to resources which the other agencies do not have due to their dependence on a poor state, the other part of the story relates to the particular character of demand pressures on the agency.

Conclusions regarding agencies' performance have been largely confirmed by farmers' assessment of the ability of the agencies to accommodate their demands (*chapter 10*). According to farmers, CMDT is clearly the agency which provides the most extensive and most useful service, while the ability of the livestock service to accommodate farmers' demands seems somehow more varying. The performance of the forestry service is poor, and the performance of the cooperative service is extremely poor.

The analysis of farmers' assessment of the agencies, however, added an important aspect to the discussion of performance, namely the issue of inequality in the distribution of services. In addition to the concentration of services on better-off farmers mentioned above, the survey found that all agencies tend to favour and disfavour the same villages. The concentration of extension contacts on certain villages is explained by the inclusion of some of the 'survey villages' in a donor-funded natural resource management project. The fact that a relatively modest donor-funded programme can make a significant difference to the assistance received in project and non-project villages draws the attention to the importance of project and programme-funded activities even in a privileged region such as Sikasso. In other regions, almost entirely depending on project-funded activities, the distribution of services among villages can be expected to be even more skewed.

Inequalities in the distribution of services imply that assessments of the assistance provided depend on who among the clients are being asked.

1.5. Disaggregation of the concept of society

As a perspective on the analysis of agency performance, a conceptual framework for the analysis of societal forces which interact with and influence government agencies has been established (*chapter 4*).

The framework is based on the assumption that similar to the notion of the state, there is a need to break down the concept of society to understand how different elements pull in different directions. Instead of looking for social forces (or identities binding together these forces) which can generally be defined as particularly important to influencing state and society relations, it is considered useful to assume that people have multiple identities, and that the relative importance of each of these identities depends on the particular context.

While it is suggested that all social forces have a certain impact on relations between state and society through their mutual interaction and through their interaction with state representatives, the search for forces with a particular political project, i.e. forces which try to influence the fundamental relationship between state and society, may follow many different paths, depending on the context. The framework identifies *three possible entrance points* to an empirical analysis of societal forces with a particular political potential, namely 1) *analyses of class and ethnic relations*, 2) studies of the strategies and organisational characteristics of a particular part of the associational scene (*'civil associations'*), and 3) studies of norms guiding the strategies of various social groups with a view to identify a particular set of *'civil norms'*.

The three approaches are considered complementary rather than mutually exclusive, and it is stressed that they are not fully covering the analysis of all potentially important social forces. Together the approaches form a conceptual framework which generates a series of relevant questions to an empirical investigation, but they do not capture the multiplicity of identities existing in a particular empirical context.

The application of the framework to the analysis of social forces in the Sikasso region found that many different forces are at play (*chapter 11*). SYCOV, the farmers' movement, has an obvious potential for becoming a 'societal force with a particular political potential', i.e. a force that tries to influence the fundamental relationship between state and society. Conditions for its emergence have been favourable, and its achievements are already significant. An assessment of possibilities for describing SYCOV as a civil association in the sense that it engages the state, however, points to the conclusion that this depends on a number of decisive factors. These include its ability to avoid being co-opted by CMDT, its ability to avoid an internal cleavage between leadership and members, and its ability to widen priorities from what presently seems to be a focus on economic issues to include also broader political issues concerning relations between state and farmers.

In the search for social forces with a particular set of 'civil norms' it was found that neither the population in the northern part of the region nor respondents from southern villages express 'civil norms' in the sense that they believe that they can influence relations between state and society.

However, as noted above, such norms were found among respondents in villages that have an experience with the farmers' movement, SYCOV.

Results from the village survey seem to suggest that to the extent a class or ethnic-based political potential exists, it is rather to be found among better-off farmers than among the poor.

1.6. Final conclusion

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the *dissertation has established a framework to explain differences in patterns of interaction between government agencies and their clients. The framework explain differences as results of a variety of pressures being exerted upon the agencies from their characteristics as being part of the abstract state, from their specific organisational characteristics, and from the social forces with which they interact.*

Theoretical conclusions have been illustrated and further explored by an empirical analysis of four extension agencies working in the Sikasso region and by assessing how pressures exerted upon the agencies affect agencies' performance (i.e. their ability to accommodate farmers' demands). This analysis has been put in perspective by an analysis of the character of the social forces in the Sikasso region that interact with and influence the four agencies.

2. Discussion of theoretical and empirical basis for conclusions

In the following an assessment is made of the basis for conclusions, i.e. an assessment of limitations of the theoretical framework to guide empirical analysis and of limitations of the empirical case to illustrate and further explore the theoretical framework.

2.1. Limitations of the theoretical framework

Operationalisation of the concept of interaction

Although the focus on interaction is stressed as the qualitatively new and constructive contribution by the interactive approach, theoretical discussions by authors applying the approach tend to concentrate either on analysis of the state or on analysis of society. *The approach is still very new, and guidelines for further theorising are not very elaborate. This particularly regards the core issue of interaction, as the framework for identifying and analysing interrelations between state and society mainly consists in the rather sketchy engagement-disengagement framework. The lack of guidelines for investigation of this issue is reflected in a bias also in empirical studies towards analysis of either state or society.*

Given the particular character of the state as an organisation which differs from other organisations in society by its claim to represent the public good and its entitlement to exercise powers and authority needed to implement that claim, researchers may be inclined to *analyse the interaction by taking the point of departure in state structures and state actions.* This tendency is reinforced by the structural manifestation of the state as one organisation as opposed to the multiplicity of societal organisations. In most cases it will be easier to define actors and structures under study and to get relevant data for analysis of the state than for a study of more intangible societal forces. This particularly applies to a study of interaction between state representatives and

the heterogeneous group of farmers whose differences in terms of socioeconomic situation, strategies and perceptions of the state are often poorly described and understood. In a study of interaction between state representatives and more well-established organised groups of society such as e.g. trade unions, on the other hand, it might be possible to carry out a more balanced analysis of strategies and conditions of both parties in the interaction.

In the present dissertation the bias towards analysis of the state is further reinforced by the selection of organisation theory to operationalise the framework provided by the interactive approach. Attempts to operationalise the concept of interaction through a study of *performance* by government agencies orient the analysis towards state structures and state actions. Even if the definition of performance as 'ability of an organisation to accommodate client demands' is meant to ensure the consideration of both parties in the interaction, it takes the point of departure in actions and conditions relating to the state, while the role of societal forces is largely confined to that of demanding services and reacting to initiatives taken by government agencies.

The problem is clearly reflected in the empirical analysis of interaction between extension agencies and farmers in Sikasso. The analysis is structured by taking the point of departure in conditions relating to the state, while societal forces are analysed only as a perspective on the main analysis of agency performance. Apart from the discussion of implications for CMDT of SYCOV's demands, it has not been possible to analyse the influence by specific social forces on the four agencies under study. For the other agencies, the analysis is limited to a general discussion about demand pressure where no distinction is being made between demand by different groups such as rich or poor, farmers in the north and farmers in the south, organised versus unorganised farmers, etc.

Emphasis on structural aspects of the state

The next problem to be mentioned is *the tendency of the interactive approach to emphasise the analysis of the state as a structure at the expense of an understanding of it also as a symbolic totality*. The definition of the state as 'an organisation within the society' and the interest in disaggregating the state in order to understand how its different parts are pulling in different directions, is an inspiring point of departure for empirical analysis of its agencies. There is a risk, though, of *overemphasising the diversity of the state* and to downplay the importance of other state manifestations which may significantly condition interaction with societal forces. Aspects of the state not sufficiently dealt with include e.g. price policies, market regulations and the legal framework. Also the issue of overall legitimacy of the state tends to be insufficiently considered when the state is 'unpacked', and analyses are made of its different parts.

Also in this case the problem is considerably aggravated when organisation theory is selected for operationalisation of the framework. Organisation theory deals specifically with the study of organisational manifestations of relations among various actors, and only few contributions attempt to widen the perspective to include also aspects of relations which are not reflected in organisational structures. The framework established for analysing agency-external factors conditioning performance represents such an attempt to widen the perspective. Even in this case, however, emphasis is put on structural conditions at the national level (e.g. the economic situation and the budgetary support for the public sector), whereas it does not sufficiently consider discursive aspects of the state.

To counter an overly focus on state diversity, a contribution particularly dealing with the issue of legitimacy has been used to supplement the framework. Still, lack of clear guidelines and the intangibility of the issue of legitimacy turn the empirical analysis in the direction of structural aspects which are more easily identified and discussed. Thus, the analysis of the four agencies has generated considerably more findings on their diversity than on their shared characteristics of being parts of the same state.

Another consequence of the structural orientation of the analysis is the *limited consideration of person-based relations within the state apparatus and between state and societal agents*. It has been formulated as a specific ambition of the dissertation to move beyond the tendency in many analyses of the African state to explain state-internal dynamics as determined mainly by actions of individuals motivated only by personal interests. Similarly, the study of interaction between state structures and societal forces is considered a more fruitful approach to analysis of state-society relations than the prevailing tendency to describe these relations as person-based relations between state bureaucracies and their allies in clan or ethnic-based networks.

Whereas findings summarised above demonstrate that it is, indeed, fruitful to apply a structure-oriented approach rather than focussing on actors defined only by their strategies, this approach has certain limitations when it comes to explaining issues such as the scale of corruption and the problem of nepotism both of which constitute significant aspects of the poor performance of the Malian state. Also the issue of power politics in and around agencies' central administration in Bamako is difficult to capture by use of a structure-oriented approach. In the analysis of the four agencies it appears that important conditions for their functioning are defined by decisions taken by top-level management in Bamako. Examples of this include the various structural reforms such as the reorganisation of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment, the decision to transfer the livestock service from CMDT to the department of livestock, and the recent transfer of the forestry service to a new ministry whereby it is being detached from the other agencies and avoids being part of an integrated extension service. In all cases it seems that individual actors have been pulling the strings, and power struggles among a handful of core players have had substantial implications for the agencies also at the field level in the Sikasso region.

The structure-oriented approach is only one reason for not considering these issues, while another reason is the ambition of moving the analysis out of the sphere defined by the presidential palace and government central administration, in order to capture the interaction between front-line staff and local populations. Disaggregation of the state not just according to agencies but also with regard to its hierarchical layers has turned out to generate very interesting insights into the interplay between state representatives and societal forces. Still, the focus on the lowest level of the state hierarchy has implied that less attention is being paid to superior levels which may be equally important to the actual outcome of the interaction.

Contributions focussing on person-based relations provide excellent entrance points to the study of phenomena such as corruption, nepotism and person-based power struggles and could have complemented analyses. Given their analytically unsatisfactory explanations of overall state-society relations, however, it has been decided not to attempt to integrate them into the theoretical framework established.

Limitations of the framework for analysis of societal forces

Whereas the interactive approach tends to focus on structural aspects in analysis of the state, there is a tendency to lack structural considerations in analysis of societal forces. Generally, *the framework offered by the interactive approach for analysis of societal forces must be described as rather weak*. It appears that many researchers have followed the mainstream trend and have replaced a previous focus on class and ethnic-based relations by a focus on the still very vague concept of civil society. Methodological guidelines for empirical analysis of civil society are few and do not indicate how to relate actions of societal forces defined as civil society to their influence on the state.

It is a weakness of the interactive approach, thus, that it *tends to invite purely political interpretations of interaction between state representatives and societal forces*, because main societal actors are defined by their actions rather than by their structural positions. The ultimate consequence of this may be that political forces are analysed as completely autonomous from socioeconomic and geographical conditions.

Also in contributions to organisation theory, clients' structurally different positions are 'blind spots'. The farthest these contributions reach is a distinction between demand pressures generated by clients as opposed to demanding pressures deriving from other actors such as the central government, donors, etc. The group of clients is not differentiated to allow a distinction of performance regarding services provided to e.g. poorer versus better-off clients.

For contributions to organisation theory focussing on the importance of personal relations between front-line staff and farmers, the problem is particularly pronounced. By dealing with interaction as a person-to-person relationship in which trust is considered decisive to the motivation of government staff to perform and to the inclination of clients to respond, these contributions shift focus away from structural conditions and apply a purely actor-oriented perspective with all its limitations.

The survey has confirmed that personal relations between extension staff and farmers are very important elements in the assessment by farmers of the services provided. Furthermore, the insistence on work satisfaction and trust as factors conditioning performance is considered refreshing in a debate which otherwise has concentrated on organisational explanations and has reflected the mainstream view of civil servants as purely self-interested. The perspective, however, cannot stand alone. The survey has *not* confirmed that personal relations - or trust - can bridge otherwise unequal relations. On the contrary, condescending behaviour by government agents and requests for bribes are mentioned as problems mainly by poorer farmers, whereas better-off farmers seem to find it easier to develop trust in relations to extension staff.

As demonstrated by findings from the village survey, structural positions may strongly affect what on the face of it appears to be individual strategies and therefore cannot be neglected when one wants to understand interaction between state representatives and societal forces.

Lack of consideration of international factors

The last limitation of the theoretical framework to be mentioned is *the international perspective which is cut off in the interactive approach as well as in organisation theory*. Given the dependence of the Malian state on international conditions beyond its own control, e.g. the international cotton market and the economy of Côte d'Ivoire, it could be argued that a study of state-society relations concentrating on Mali-internal conditions misses some very important points. An analysis of relations between extension agents and farmers taking the point of departure in structures and policies guiding the international cotton market would probably have generated a completely different outcome. In such an analysis the role of CFDT in the international competition and the particular relationship between CFDT and CMDT would be core issues, whereas the Malian state and cotton producers in Sikasso would be seen as mainly responding to internationally-defined conditions.

Also the role of international donors in establishing conditions for strategies pursued by government agencies could have been taken up as a separate issue. In the case of CMDT the importance of external capital is obvious, but also for the three other agencies donor funding, donor influence on reform initiatives, and mutual donor competition appear to constitute significant aspects of their basic functioning.

An international perspective is neither more nor less relevant than the one applied by the interactive approach, but it is different and leads to different results. It could be argued, therefore, that a combination of an international perspective and a state-society perspective would have resulted in a more balanced analysis. While this seems plausible, the reason for confining the analysis to Mali-internal relations is a wish to limit its scope to something manageable. An analysis combining state-society theories and organisation theory is already fairly complex and integration of international factors, although relevant, would have resulted in a highly complicated framework which might have drawn attention away from the main research interest in relations between state and societal forces.

2.2. Limitations the empirical analysis

Focus on farmers

Given the difficulties of striking a proper balance between analysis of the state and analysis of societal forces discussed above, it could be argued that an empirical focus on relations between extension agencies and farmers is not the most appropriate to illustrate the framework established by the interactive approach. Organised societal forces such as the students' movement, trade unions, or the Tuareg liberation movement would have been easier to identify and easier to analyse because more data would be available.

Furthermore, a study concentrating on some of these groups would have the advantage of dealing with societal forces which in the recent past have clearly and visibly affected relations between state and society as opposed to the more indirect impact of farmers' strategies. Thus, the rural population had no role in the overturn of the Traore regime in 1991, whereas the change of regime was the direct result of battles fought mainly by organised urban groups.

The argument is plausible, but similar to the decision not to include international factors, the choice of focus is based on research interest rather than on the identification of issues providing the most satisfactory methodological framework.

Limited data on societal forces

Even if the choice of empirical focus on farmers is accepted, it could have been expected that more specific data on the population in the Sikasso region had been generated by the study.

It must be considered a serious limitation that more tangible data on income distribution among households and on income distribution on various sources have not been available. Lack of data on the role of cotton, livestock and forestry in household incomes makes it difficult to come to a clear conclusion concerning the role of cotton in processes of socioeconomic differentiation. This again has implications for assessing the role of government agencies in societal dynamics.

A similar problem is represented by the lack of clear data on the general level of wealth in the Sikasso region as compared to other regions. While it is generally believed that Sikasso belongs to the most prosperous regions in the country, this perception is challenged by the limited (and unfortunately very old) data available on social indicators. It would have been interesting to be able to establish if high levels of political mobilisation and demands on the state in this region are related to an over-average level of wealth or rather to a more pronounced process of social differentiation.

The issue of ethnic relations has not been dealt with. It did not make part of the village survey to identify respondents' ethnic background, and the question of possible political mobilisation along ethnic lines was not pursued in interviews with resource persons.

Concerning the analysis of SYCOV, the farmers' movement, data allowing an assessment of its socioeconomic constituency would have made it possible to better approach the issue of the influence of societal forces on the state. Thus, the hypothesis about better-off farmers dominating its leadership is not based on substantial data but only on impressions gained during the fieldwork. Furthermore, the movement is still young, and it is still very early to assess its potential as a 'civil association'.

Entrance points to the study

The interview study with staff from the four agencies has been carried out in a period where three of the agencies (*viz.* the forestry service, the livestock service, and the cooperative service) have found themselves in an impasse between the old order characterising the time before the change of regime and a new structure defined by the reform of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment.

During interviews, a donor-funded natural resources management project was used as an entrance point to approach issues believed to condition agency performance (for a further discussion of this methodology, see the section on 'Fieldwork methodology and literature study' in the annex). It would seem that the ongoing reform of the ministry would have provided a more obvious entrance point, as problems related to the reorganisation would have been highly revealing for

existing practices and conditions in the four agencies. The reform, however, was still at the planning stage, when interviews were carried out, and only few staff members at arrondissement level were informed that changes were going to take place.

Also the ongoing administrative reform meant to decentralise authority to elected rural councils would have been an interesting entrance point to a study of changing state- society relations. Issues which could have been investigated by such a study include the role of traditional powers in relation to rural councils, the influence of rural councils on practices of government agencies, the impact of the reform on the discretion possessed by front-line staff, and the role of political parties vis-à-vis other organised groups such as the farmers' movement, the hunters' association, etc. Similar to the case of the reform of the ministry, however, implementation of the administrative reform started only after the fieldwork had been finalised.

3. Perspectives

The experience of interaction between extension agencies and farmers in the Sikasso region contradicts the prevalent view of cash crop production as a sophisticated form of exploitation of farmers who have no choice but to accept conditions imposed on them by a 'predatory' state. First, as demonstrated in the empirical analysis, farmers pursue many different strategies and cotton production is but one of them. Second, farmers are not forced to react in particular ways to conditions imposed on them, but they are highly selective regarding the assistance they want, and they are influencing both the agencies with which they directly interact and overall state-society relations by their strategies. Third, socioeconomic and geographically-conditioned differences among farmers make it less relevant to talk about 'farmers' strategies' vis-à-vis government agencies, as farmers in different structural positions react very differently. Fourth, capacities of farmers to influence government agencies cannot be understood without analysing their relationship to these very same agencies. Thus, in the case of SYCOV the organisational and technical capacity to raise demands to CMDT is very much a result of the support received from the agency. Even in cases where commercial cotton production is introduced only with a view to extract the largest possible surplus from the agricultural sector, the interaction between extension agencies and farmers may generate an outcome completely different from that intended by the government (and in the Sikasso case: foreign private interests).

While farmers in the northern Koutiala area seem to possess a larger potential for political influence than farmers in the south, the analysis of societal dynamics also shows that factors threatening this potential are related to the more advanced integration into the cotton economy in the north. Thus, the widespread dissolution of village associations in the Koutiala area may eventually undermine the unity of the farmers' movement which originally grew out of inter-village collaboration among these associations. Other conflicts which may threaten the position of the farmers' movement include the many conflicts, e.g. among generations, lineages, and individuals, allowed to erupt because village chiefs in the area no longer possess the authority necessary to keep them down.

The double impact of the cotton economy in the form of strengthening farmers' capacity to put demands on the state and undermining this same capacity illustrates that state- society relations are never simple and unambiguous. Future development of relations between state representatives and farmers in the Sikasso region may follow many different paths, depending on i.a. the extent

of social conflicts, SYCOV's ability to remain united and avoid co-optation by CMDT, the impact of the decentralisation process on the role of the state, the outcome of the administrative reform and particularly CMDT's role after the reform, national and international economic trends and possible changes in the institutional context of the public sector.

Concerning capacities of government agencies, the analysis has pointed to the conclusion that exposure of the agencies to increased demand pressures will not necessarily improve their performance unless changes are taking place in other parts of the organisations at the same time. Conditions for their performance do not only relate to the character of social forces with which they interact but are defined also by a range of agency-internal factors and by factors relating to their characteristics as being part of the state. Therefore, decentralisation of government agencies as a possible solution to present difficulties of making them respond to demand may be a questionable strategy unless the more general capacity of the state to respond to increased pressures is also strengthened.

ANNEX

FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE STUDY

Throughout the dissertation I comment - usually in footnotes - on the character of data that provide the basis for descriptions and analyses. However, it is found useful to have a coherent account of the data used and a thorough discussion of reservations for its validity and coverage. To allow the readers to assess the appropriateness of the way data has been collected, the fieldwork methodology and the literature study are described and discussed, and some of the ethical considerations related to the collection and presentation of data are explained.

The four main components of the collection of data for the present dissertation are:

1. Interviews with staff of the four agencies under study.
2. A village questionnaire survey in 10 villages in the Sikasso region.
3. Interviews with various resource persons.
4. Literature study.

The three first-mentioned activities have taken places during a total of six months of fieldwork in Mali (August 1993, September-December 1994 and February 1996), while the literature study has been carried out throughout the process of preparing and writing the dissertation until the final editing in the spring of 1999.

1. Interviews with staff from the four agencies under study

1.1. Timing and entrance point to the study

Before the initiation of the first field work in August 1993, my major worry was how to be allowed to carry out interviews with staff of the four agencies that I wanted to study. Questions on internal working procedures, on the relationship between front-line staff and superior levels of the agencies and not least on the way the agencies relate to local populations would most likely be considered controversial. I knew of only one study from a Sahelian country that had dealt with similar issues in interviews with government staff, namely the study by Jacob and Margot on relations between the government administration and local organisations in Burkina Faso (Jacob, J.-P. & F. Margot, 1992). In this case, however, the study was carried out by a large research team in close collaboration with Burkinabe authorities and not by an individual researcher who offered nothing in return but a copy of a Ph.D. dissertation to be written sometimes in the future. I have later learned that other researchers have in fact been discouraged to carry out studies on the interaction between the forestry service and villagers in Sahelian countries on the argument that it was too sensitive. While they experienced a general problem in several countries, the resistance was found to be greatest in Mali (Wiersum & Deprez, 1995; Freerk Wiersum, personnel communication, October 1996).

Two factors explain that I was spared the expected difficulties and have generally found it remarkably easy to get very open and frank discussions with government staff at all levels: one is the timing of the fieldwork relatively soon after the change of regime, and the other is the fact that I had the opportunity to use a donor-funded natural resource management project as an entrance point to the study.

The first and most obvious advantage of *the timing* of the fieldwork was that the democratisation process initiated in 1991 had considerably lessened formal restrictions on research. Thus, the unsuccessful attempt made by other researchers to study the interaction between the forestry service and villagers was made before 1991 when the authoritarian regime was still in power (Freerk Wiersum, personnel communication, October 1996). Second, the abolishment of the previously widespread repression and the introduction of freedom of speech had resulted in a general lack of fear by virtually all respondents to express themselves. Whereas before 1991 government staff and other people were always afraid to make a false step, in the early 1990s there was a euphoric feeling that everything was now allowed. This was reflected in all sorts of antiauthoritarian manifestations from refusal to wear safety helmets and pay tax to a hitherto unknown courage to criticise those in power. And third, the impasse between an old and a new order had left many government employees, notably at lower levels and notably in the forestry service, in a state of confusion and frustration that made them happy to be asked their opinion by an outsider who cared to listen. In fact sometimes the need to talk turned out to be so overwhelming that it could be difficult to make an end to an interview because the respondent wanted to continue.

Regarding the use of a donor-funded project as *an entrance point to the study*, I was fortunate to be offered the possibility to participate in a review for the World Bank of the so-called 'Test Zones programme' funded by Norwegian trust funds, just as I was about to leave for the preparatory field work in August 1993 (see a later section of this annex for a brief description of this project). Already in my initial research proposal I had decided to use this project as an entrance point to the fieldwork. First, because it involved an attempt to increase the collaboration on natural resource management activities among the four agencies that I wanted to study, hence it would provide an excellent opportunity to compare their different modes of operation. And second, because the project had the aim of granting arrondissement levels an increased influence on decision-making and financial management. Thereby, it would allow a study of the relationship between the various hierarchical levels in each of the agencies.

While it might have been difficult for me as an individual researcher to establish the relevant contacts to get close enough to the persons involved in the project, the participation in the review mission threw the door wide open for me. In a team of three persons, I was given the task of carrying out an institutional analysis of exactly the issues that were of interest to my own study, and I had ample opportunity to establish the contacts necessary for my future research (the review is reported in N'Djim et al., 1993). Thus, when I came back for the major fieldwork in September 1994, my previous contacts to the coordination unit of the project in the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment (Cellule de Planification et de Statistique) provided me with a letter of introduction that allowed me to approach all staff members in the four agencies for interviews. In cases where I had not previously met the persons to be interviewed, the letter was a considerable help, but in many cases I could simply draw on my own contacts established in 1993.

In addition to the letter of introduction from the Ministry of Rural Development, I was given a similar letter from the CMDT headquarters in Bamako that smoothed my contacts to CMDT staff. This was useful because CMDT staff tended to be more concerned than staff from the other agencies that not just a general permission by the ministry had been given, but that also their own management had approved of my research.

Finally, my opportunity through personal contacts to employ a former Directeur du Cabinet of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Security, Mr. M.S. Sokona, as research assistant turned out to be a significant advantage. Personal friendships and an extensive knowledge on the inner workings of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment made it possible for Mr. Sokona to arrange interviews for me with top-level staff in the ministry.

1.2. Selection of the region of Sikasso, of cercles, of arrondissements and of respondents to be included in the study

The 'Test Zones programme' covered a total of three cercles of which two in the Sikasso region and one in the Mopti region. I decided to concentrate on the *two cercles* in the Sikasso region, Kadiolo and Koutiala, as Sikasso appeared to offer a unique possibility to study the interplay between government agencies and a rural population in the process of raising organised demands to the state. The inclusion in the study of both Kadiolo in the south and Koutiala in the northern part of the region opened the possibility of an interesting comparison of the two cercles that differ in a number of respects of which the level of integration into the cotton economy is among the most important.

Within the two cercles a total of *seven arrondissements* were selected: three in Kadiolo (Kadiolo Central, Loulouni and Fourou) and four in Koutiala (Koutiala Central, Kouniana, Zangasso and Molobala). The choice of arrondissements was based on the experience in August 1993 of visiting a total of nine arrondissements in the two cercles. Thus, among the arrondissements already known a more limited number was selected with a view to ensure a certain geographical spread.

For each of the agencies it was attempted to have *staff at all levels* represented. If there were more than two staff members in the office at arrondissement level, the head of the agency was selected, and if he could not be found, I talked to the deputy. In case of CMDT that operates at different administrative levels, it was attempted to include both chefs secteur, aménagistes, chefs ZER, chefs ZAER and chefs SB in the study. In each of the two cercles, the head of the agencies or the deputy head was selected, and at regional level I interviewed the four regional directors. At national level, I talked to the national director of forestry, the deputy national director of livestock, two members of the MDRE Cabinet (advisors to the minister) and to the deputy General Manager of CMDT Direction Technique du Développement Rural.

During the months September- December 1994 a total of 64 staff members of the four agencies were interviewed. In addition to these, a number of staff were met during the participation in extension sessions and staff meetings, and finally some were met only for more informal discussions (e.g. a visit to CMDT staff in Bougouni cercle and a few visits to staff in arrondissements different from those included in the study).

1.3. Preparation and undertaking of interviews

In preparation of the interviews, I participated as an observer in a number of village extension sessions held by arrondissement and cercle staff in relation to the Test Zones programme. Furthermore, I participated in meetings held by local development committees (where all government agencies are represented by their head) at arrondissement and cercle levels, and

finally, I was allowed to be present at a number of joint meetings between arrondissement and cercle staff.

Based on this experience, I prepared a semi-structured interview guide that before each interview was adjusted according to the agency and position of the respondent. The main issues dealt with were:

- the working programme (main tasks in relation to the Test Zones programme and the general working programme, who defines the working programme, possibilities of responding to unforeseen requests for assistance).
- resources (number of staff, means of transport, allowances, importance of project funding, distribution of resources among the various hierarchical levels, implications of scarcity of resources).
- performance of the agency (share of the population that is not reached by the agency, performance of front-line staff, competence of staff, training needs, staff motivation, constraints to improved performance).
- relations among the various hierarchical levels (access to assistance from superior levels, information received from and given to superior and subordinate levels, decisions on staff transfers, rewards and punishment, experience of granting more discretion to front-line staff in the Test Zones programme).
- relations to peers (how much contact, division of labour).
- relations to other agencies (experience of working together in the Test Zones programme, interest of the agency in increasing the collaboration with other agencies, performance of other agencies).
- relations to the population (changes in relations after the change of regime, new demands by the population, need for extension services/competence of the population to take over part of extension tasks themselves, main constraints to improving relations).
- assessment of future prospects for the agency (reform of the MDRE, decentralisation perspectives, privatisation, new demands from the population).

All interviews were conducted by me in French and reported by notes taken during and immediately after the interview. Although this method of reporting has obvious limitations (Kvale, 1996 p. 160-166), it was preferred to the alternative of taping the interviews on the grounds that a tape recorder is a very unusual and spectacular item in Malian rural settings. Had a tape recorder been used, it might have attracted all attention and probably also scared many respondents from freely expressing their opinion.

1.4. Data processing and analysis

The structure of analysis was provided by the distinction between six main factors of importance to the performance of a government agency resulting from the theoretical discussions in chapter 3, namely 1) *authority* 2) *rewards* 3) *organisational identification* 4) *peer pressure* 5) *work satisfaction* and 6) *demand pressure*. For each of the agencies all relevant statements on these issues reported in the notes on the interviews were compiled and analysed.

1.5. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in relation to an interview study as the one carried out with staff of the four agencies mainly regard two issues: *informed consent* and *confidentiality*. Informed consent implies that respondents participate on a voluntary basis after having been informed about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design as well as of any possible risks and benefits from participating in the research project. Confidentiality implies that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported (Kvale, 1996 p. 109-123).

It may be argued that I have not fully respected the principle of voluntary participation by obtaining the consent from the management level of the agencies and thereafter presenting subordinate staff with a letter that demanded their participation. In hierarchical organisations like those under study there is not much leeway to refuse such a demand. Against this objection, however, it can be argued that the general willingness by respondents to engage in elaborate discussions of the issues raised is an indication that their participation was in fact quite voluntary.

More problematic is the fact that I used the Test Zones programme as an entrance point, and later considerably toned down its role in the study. My shift of role from a consultant to the World Bank who reviewed a particular project to a researcher with a different agenda may not have been absolutely clear to all respondents. Whereas they would have understood that the research project was mainly about explaining the achievements of the Test Zones programme, the final version of the dissertation hardly mentions this project and instead concentrates entirely on analysing the various information on each of the agencies. While I acknowledge that this approach is open to challenge, it was not the result of a calculated strategy of misinforming respondents. In my original research proposal and still in the preparation of the field work I expected the Test Zones programme to provide not just a practical entrance point but also an adequate structure to the analysis of the relationship between government agencies and the local population. It was only after having started the interview study that I realised that a focus in the dissertation on a donor-funded project with all its limitations would force me to discuss issues such as e.g. funding conditions and project preparation that are entirely different from the main interest of my analysis.

Having said this, it should be noted that it is a very well-known experience of most researchers that access to what may be considered controversial data is considerably easier to get if the researcher is acting as a consultant or use the insight obtained for instance during project employment than if her identity is that of 'a researcher from a university somewhere in Europe' (e.g. Nico von der Lühne, personal communication Feb. 1996; James Thomson, personal communication, May 1995).

Before each interview at cercle and arrondissement level I promised the respondent that all information given would be treated confidentially in the sense that their name would not appear in the report in relation to their statements. I have respected this by avoiding references to individual statements and instead just referred to e.g. 'interviews with forestry staff'.

Staff at regional and national level were not promised confidentiality as they must be considered decision-makers who are expressing official view points rather than individual assessments. In cases, however, where these respondents have obviously gone beyond their mandate and given

controversial information or assessments, I have avoided to relate the statements to any individual.

In all cases where higher level staff are cited as the source of specific information, they are referred to by their position instead of their name. Names of all respondents can be found in the 'list of persons met'. It has been considered necessary to present this list in order to live up to the basic principle of scientific research of telling who participated in a study and when and where it took place. For subordinate staff the lack of explicit references in the text should still guarantee their anonymity.

As a final remark on confidentiality it can be mentioned that probably the best insurance that the present study is not doing any harm to the respondents is the regrettable fact that it is reported in English which very few people in Mali read.

2. Village questionnaire survey

2.1. Purpose of the survey

The village survey had two purposes:

- 1) to obtain farmers' assessment of the ability of the agencies to accommodate their demands, i.e. an assessment of the performance by the agencies (reported in chapter 10) and
- 2) to obtain an indication of the more general view of the state held by farmers (reported in chapter 11).

In the questionnaire found later in this annex, a series of questions was first asked to identify the background of the respondent (question 1-7). In addition to these, five main types of questions were asked of which four dealing with aspects of demand satisfaction (ref. the discussion in chapter 3):

- a question concerning frequency of contact to the agencies (question 8).
- questions concerning reliability of services provided (question 9-10)
- questions concerning the usefulness of services provided (question 11-12 and 14).
- a question concerning personal relations between extension agents and farmers (question 13)
- and finally, questions asked to approach the issue of how farmers perceive of the more general relationship between themselves and the state (question 15- 22).

2.2. Preparation of the survey

In preparation of the survey, group interviews and individual interviews based on a semi-structured guideline were undertaken in three villages (Woroni, Sinkolo and Koloni).

It was the purpose of these visits to get a first impression of the contact between the villages and the various government agencies and to find out how the more abstract question of the perception by the village population of the role of the state could be approached. In addition to this, the visits served the purpose of obtaining some background information on each of the villages concerning their history, the main problems faced and their situation with regard to natural resources (scarce or abundant, subject to conflicts, etc.). Tools used during these visits included simple Venn diagrams, problem tree mapping and rough wealth ranking exercises.

In addition to the experience gained from the initial village study, inspiration for the preparation of a draft questionnaire was gained from various written sources, interviews with resource persons and interviews with staff of the four agencies that had gone on for about a month when the village survey was prepared. Especially a study on the frequency and character of contacts between farmers and the livestock service and CMDT and an interview with its main author gave rise to some very useful methodological considerations (Coulibaly et al., 1993).

Concerning the most difficult questions on general relations between farmers and the state, a study from Tanzania by Göran Hyden was found to suggest an interesting approach (Hyden, 1994). The theoretical considerations behind the formulations of questions are further discussed in chapter 4, but here it can briefly be mentioned that it was attempted to get an indication of the *civic competence*, the *political authority* and *social reciprocities at the community level* by asking 1) what difference people see themselves being able to make to their problems by trying to influence the state (*civic competence*), 2) what difference they see government being able to make without their cooperation (*political authority*) and 3) what difference they see themselves being able to make without the cooperation of the government (*social reciprocities at the community level*).

The draft questionnaire was tested in Nafegue village by me with the research assistant acting as interpreter. After a revision, the research assistant carried out all remaining interviews alone, while my role was confined to that of visiting the villages before the survey to hold discussions with the village leadership and ask their permission to undertake the study, and to currently check the questionnaires as they were filled in.

2.3. Role of the research assistant

The research assistant, Ibrahima Sogodogo (psycho-pédagogue, based in Sikasso) was given a very large responsibility as he was carrying out most of the village survey alone. He lived up to the responsibility, indeed, by conscientiously following the agreements we had made and by carefully reporting the very detailed comments given by many respondents.

As the interviews were carried out during the busy period when cotton is harvested, the research assistant lived in each village for about a week or ten days and approached the respondents either early in the morning or late in the evening.

During daytime when most people were in the fields, he collected background information on the villages from old people and others who were not involved in the cotton harvest. Informal chats late in the evening with young men at his own age supplemented the information received from the old.

The majority of interviews were conducted in Bambara which most people in the region speak. In some cases, however, he had to rely on assistance from Minyanka- or Senoufo-speaking interpreters.

2.4. Criteria for selection of villages

A total of 10 villages were included in the survey of which 8 were visited in 1994 (Sinkolo, Woroni, Koloni, Nafegue, N'Golokasso, Chième, Dossorola and Sincina) and 2 were added in the spring of 1996 (Kléla and Molobala).

As the interest of the survey was to identify possible patterns in the way the village population relate to government agencies rather than establishing a picture of the interaction in an 'average village', criteria for selection of villages emphasised the inclusion of villages in *different situations* instead of attempting to obtain a sample representative of the villages in the region.

The eight villages first included were selected according to the following criteria:

- a certain geographical spread, variation in the distance to administrative headquarters and in the distance to major roads.
- representation of different experience with government assistance: four villages involved in the Test Zones programme and four villages not involved were selected.
- one village, Sincina, known to be a stronghold of SYCOV, the farmers' movement, was selected to see if answers given by respondents in this village would differ from those given by others.

When a first processing of data indicated, that the pattern of answers in Sincina in fact differed rather markedly from that found in other villages, the two villages added to the survey in 1996 (Kléla and Molobala) were selected with the purpose of including two more villages known to be supportive of SYCOV.

2.5. Selection of respondents

The survey includes a total of 312 respondents in the 10 villages. An average of 30 respondents in each village were selected at random by taking e.g. every fifth household in the membership list of the village association (AV). For each of the households selected, the position in the DRSPR-typology (the a-d classification, explained and discussed in chapter 7) was copied from the list.

Within the households, the head of household was usually selected (about half of all cases), and if he was not available, a younger brother or son was interviewed. Only 11 women were included in the survey.

This methodology may invite at least three points of criticism that will be discussed in the following:

- 1) it may be problematic to select respondents by taking the point of departure in households.
- 2) the virtual absence of women in the survey may have important implications on results.
- 3) random selection of households is not the best way to ensure the representation of respondents in different socioeconomic position.

1) An extensive literature exists on the problem of using *the household as a unit of analysis* in studies of e.g. food production and nutrition, farming systems and farmers' responses to government policies (e.g. Guyer, 1981; Folbre, 1986; Berry, 1986; Peters, 1995). The approach is criticised for overlooking both important internal relations in the households (notably the role

of women as independent economic actors), transfers of resources among households (e.g. according to lineage structures) and for downplaying the problem of defining households membership in societies with high mobility.

In the present study households have not been used as a unit of analysis but only as a means to identify individual respondents. The criticism that regards its inadequacy as a unit with well-defined borders is, therefore, less relevant, but the point about a risk of overemphasizing its character as an entity has to be acknowledged. By selecting only one member per household, there is an implicit assumption that this person is speaking for all its members. The inclusion in the survey of a certain number of younger brothers and sons of the head of household partly makes up for the problem, and it is worth noticing that the survey has not found any significant differences in the answers given by men in different position. It remains a limitation, however, that women have not been heard.

2) *The absence of women* from the survey was not a result of a deliberate choice. Initially it was intended to let every second respondent be a woman, but already during the preparatory visits to the three villages and notably during the test of the questionnaire a serious problem was faced. Women in the Sikasso region constitute an important part of the agricultural labour force, but their role in agricultural decision making and their contact to government extension agencies is virtually nil (see the section on 'gender inequalities' later in the annex). When asked about their contact to government agencies, their assessment of the quality of service and their opinion on the role of the village vis-à-vis government representatives, women, therefore, simply referred to their husbands. The same problem was faced by the study carried out by Coulibaly et al. (Coulibaly et al., 1993), and while in this study it was accepted that the share of respondents able to provide meaningful answers was very low, it was decided in the present study to concentrate on men and include only the handful of women met who seemed able to answer.

Implications of the omission of women are believed to be rather limited, as far as the questions dealing specifically with the contact to extension agencies are concerned: women do not have these contacts and it just did not make sense to pursue the issue. For questions on the general relationship between the village and the state, however, it is quite likely that it would have made a difference to the results obtained if it had been possible to include women. In the study by Hyden on Tanzania referred to above, women were identified as one out of four groups of respondents, and their answers differed substantially from those given by other groups and added significant insights to the overall results. In the present study, however, it would have been necessary to develop a special questionnaire to women that took into consideration the special character of their contacts to government representatives (concentration of contacts on health staff). For reasons related to time and resources, this option was not pursued.

3) It may be argued that *selection of respondents based on a wealth-ranking exercise* rather than on a random selection of members of the village association (AV) would have ensured a better representation of households in different situations. This is probably true, and it has to be admitted that the reason for preferring the random selection was that it was considerably faster and could be undertaken by the research assistant without my presence. A properly done wealth-ranking exercise is quite demanding in terms of time (Grandin, 1988), and it is believed that a rough wealth-ranking exercise would not be much better than the random selection. Thus, the categories resulting from a simple wealth-ranking exercise carried out in relation to the Test

Zones programme in Sinkolo are not very different from the a-d-categories (ME, 1993). The major difference is that the wealth-ranking exercise generated a further differentiation of the large middle groups (group-b and group-c), whereas the groups of 'very rich' and 'very poor' correspond quite well to group-a and group-d, respectively. Results from the simple wealth-ranking exercises carried out during the preparation of the questionnaire confirm this conclusion.

2.6. Data processing and analysis

Given the many open questions in the questionnaire and the careful reporting by the research assistant of comments given by respondents on answers to closed questions, data processing and analysis turned out to be a sizable task. It was further complicated by the fact that many respondents combined answers in an unforeseen way or introduced new categories in answers to closed questions. As an example can be mentioned the question on the preferred division of labour among the state, the village, CMDT and private actors (question 22), which most respondents answered by indicating whom they wanted to collaborate on the task, e.g. 'the village and the government together', or 'CMDT and SYCOV'.

In order to identify main patterns of answers the excel spread sheet software was used to produce cross tabulations of answers. In case of open questions and new categories introduced by respondents, answers were classified in a set of main categories before the data was entered into the programme.

Most of the data resulting from the survey is presented in tables and discussed in chapter 10 and 11. In a few cases where cross tabulations did not generate any clear patterns, the findings are not presented. This mainly regards the various cross tabulations of answers to questions 8-22 with identifying characteristics of respondents such as age, position in the household and the existence of literate members of the household. For a presentation of identifying characteristics of respondents, see the table C-F later in the annex.

The question about whether the village technical team can be replaced by government agencies (question 14) seems not to have been well understood by respondents, and answers are therefore not reported.

Finally, it was found that 1994 was too early to ask respondents what they understood by the word 'decentralisation'. It was only with the preparation of the establishment of rural communes in 1995 that the population in the Sikasso region were informed about plans to decentralise the administration. In late 1994 the majority of respondents answered that they had never heard the word being mentioned.

Many of the statements, whether answers to open questions or comments, could not appropriately be processed in a computer programme. Instead they were copied from the questionnaires and classified according to main topics. Wherever an analysis in the text draw on such statements, the statement itself is quoted in a footnote. It has been decided to present these statements in French rather than translate them into English. Although it is acknowledged that this may reduce the understanding by some readers, the argument is that the statements have already been translated once by the research assistant from Bambara into French. While the vernacular is clearly shining through the quotations in French, because the research assistant has managed to make a very

direct translation rather than transform the statements into 'good French', it is feared that this would get lost in a second translation.

Quotes of statements by government staff interviewed, on the other hand, are translated from French into English, because in this case I feel more sure to be able to convey the exact meaning of what has been said.

2.7. Reliability of the answers obtained

It is appropriate to discuss at least five issues concerning the reliability of the answers obtained:

- 1) use of a questionnaire survey to obtain complex discursive replies.
- 2) use of hypothetical questions.
- 3) the concept of the state.
- 4) the concept of trust.
- 5) the timing of the survey.

1) Traditionally a *questionnaire is considered an appropriate tool to obtain quantitative information*, i.e. measure the prevalence and generality of variables that have already been defined (how many, how often, etc.). Questions likely to result in complex discursive replies, on the other hand, are most often dealt with by use of qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviewing. In the literature on research methodologies, however, there is a growing interest in 'mixing methods' by combining quantitative and qualitative methods and data (e.g. Brannen, 1992; Kvale, 1996; Grønmo, 1982). This may be done for instance by identifying a set of opposing views on a particular phenomenon through interviews and subsequently use questionnaires to assess the prevalence of the views. Whereas the obvious advantage is that more general information is obtained than if the researcher had to reply only on a limited number of in-depth interviews, the weakness of the method is that there is less possibility to ask follow-up questions and clarify doubts on the spot. This implies that a larger task of interpretation is left to the researcher and this again increases the influence of the subjective views held by the researcher.

While obviously this problem is present in the interpretation of the village survey, it was modified somehow by my possibility during the fieldwork in February 1996 to revisit a number of the villages and test my interpretations through individual and group interviews.

2) Some of the questions in the questionnaire have a *hypothetical character* as they are inviting personal assessments of an ideal situation, e.g. 'what could the state do to solve your problems?' (question 18) or 'who should be responsible for the following tasks?' (question 22). It could have been feared that such questions would make little sense to people not used to be asked their opinion even about basic everyday problems, let alone abstract political issues. Nevertheless, answers and comments by respondents reveal that they in fact handle such hypothetical questions without major problems. It is, thus, a common feature of many answers that they start by pointing out how it ought to be and then add that this is, however, not how it is in the present situation.

3) Also questions that refer to *the concept of the state* might be expected to challenge the analytical capacity of farmers of whom many are illiterate. The questionnaire both refers to 'les

services étatiques' as all the agencies, including CMDT, that intervene in the village (question 8), and later it suggests a distinction between 'le gouvernement' and CMDT (question 22).

The answers obtained, however, do not suggest that respondents have had any major difficulties understanding each of the government agencies as both independent actors and part of the state ('l'État'). It seems, though, that farmers similar to the point made by Gupta have a practical knowledge of the state as fragmentary and yet a unit (Gupta, 1995). 'L'État' is an important aspect of everyday realities in rural areas and generally people do not find it difficult to discuss its actions, merits and demerits⁴⁹².

What may be difficult, though, is the distinction between government agencies and other external agents who intervene in a village. During the preparatory study in three villages, it appeared that anybody 'from outside' tended to be associated with the state. Thus, researchers, NGOs and donor-funded-projects were mentioned together with CMDT, the health service and the administration. Each of these has a separate identity but they tend to be lumped together when questions regard the role of the state versus that of the village.

This may have implications for the questions on what the state can do to solve the problems of the villages as compared to what the village and 'others' can do (question 17-19). The many respondents who have answered that there are no other than the state or themselves, who can solve their problems, may simply have associated anything 'non-village' with the state.

4) *The concept of trust* constitutes a problem not only because it is always dangerous to use unclear concepts in a questionnaire survey where the precise interpretation is left to respondents, while in the next step the interpretation of answers is left to the researcher. In this particular case the potential confusion was further increased by the mistake of using the concept in two different meanings. Thus, the issue of *usefulness of the services* was approached by asking in which agency respondents trusted most and least. In the local context, the French word 'confiance' is often used in relation to organisations, firms, or persons that come up to expectations, i.e. are useful in the broad sense of the word. At the same time the issue of *personal relations between extension agents and farmers* was dealt with by a question about 'confiance' in relation to individual agents (village-based agents vs. agents based in arrondissement headquarters, young vs. old, etc.). The two different applications of the concept transgress the theoretical distinction in chapter 3 between 'compliance for utilitarian reasons' and 'compliance because of normative obligations'. This is regrettable, and a more straightforward question about usefulness would have been preferable. This could have taken the point of departure in a specific question to respondents about the type of problems that they are unable to solve themselves followed by their assessment of what agencies are able to do to the problem as compared to the assistance obtained from others such as neighbours, private veterinarians (in the case of livestock), etc.

⁴⁹² In French a linguistic distinction is made between l'État' and 'le gouvernement' very similar to the conceptual distinction proposed by Chazan et al. when they define 'the state' as a set of associations of agencies claiming control over defined territories and their population and 'the government' as the specific occupants of public office who are in a position to make binding decisions at any time (Chazan et al., 1992 p. 39). In English the notion of 'government' is often used interchangeably to the notion of 'state' (e.g. 'government agencies' instead of 'state agencies'). The latter is reflected also in this dissertation.

While it has to be acknowledged that using the concept of trust invites misunderstandings and erroneous interpretations of answers, the many personal comments by respondents are believed to some extent to have reduced the dimensions of the problem.

Another problem relates more generally to questions about demand satisfaction: despite an understanding of the questions in accordance with the meaning intended by the researcher, respondents may have various motives to exaggerate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with services provided. It is mentioned in chapter 3 that the reason for approaching the issue by four specific type of questions, is that any questions to clients concerning their satisfaction with services provided are likely to be answered negatively, as needs tend to be indefinite and therefore never properly satisfied. The opposite problem has been raised by N'Golo Coulibaly who has mentioned the risk that people perceive of a survey like the present as a study on the performance of individual agents and therefore express more satisfaction than actually felt (N'Golo Coulibaly, personal communication, September 1994). While it is too simple to argue that these two problems may have counterbalanced each other, it is quite likely that they have enforced the differenced found between (better-off) farmers, who express satisfaction with the services, and (poorer) farmers, who have a negative assessment of the services. Thus, those, who have a limited contact to extension agencies and find it difficult to obtain assistance, have little to lose by savagely criticising their performance, whereas those, who have a relatively frequent contact and find services useful, want to protect the agents providing the services.

5) Given the political character of many of the issues dealt with in the questionnaire, the timing of the survey may have affected the results. The major part of the field work was carried out in late 1994 when farmers were subject to cotton production quotas and the impact of the devaluation of the CFA in the form of higher cotton prices was not yet felt (Giraudy, 1996; Kébé et al., 1995a p. 12). In many villages in the northern part of the region, there was a general frustration about the 'changing times' that had a number of negative consequences in the form of social turbulence at village level and increased crime rates, but had not yet yielded any tangible improvements in the everyday life.

In the southern part of the region, on the other hand, the dependency on cotton production is less pronounced and the social order at village level not yet challenged. In this area the changes may have been felt mainly as a loosening by the state of its grip of the villages (less repression, reduced tax payment).

It is possible, therefore, that the timing of the survey has resulted in a picture of considerably larger differences between the northern and the southern part of the region than those found if the survey had been carried out a few years later when benefits of the devaluation were more generally felt.

The fact that two villages, Molobala and Kléla were only included in the survey in early 1996 may also have affected the results. Together with Sincina these two villages are pointed out in the analysis as representing a particular type of village with a high level of civic competence, defined as a willingness to engage the state (chapter 11).

2. 8. Ethical considerations

The informed consent by respondents was ensured by first obtaining the permission by the village chief to carry out the survey. Usually this happened in relation to a meeting where many of the men of the village were present and invited to ask questions and comment on the survey.

Like in the case of interviews with government staff it could be argued that individual respondents might have felt under pressure to participate after the village management had given its consent. Again a counter argument would be that respondents who felt under pressure would be unlikely to comment so extensively as it turned out to be the case.

The confidentiality of respondents has been ensured by referring individual statements only to their survey number and their village (e.g. N'golokasso no. 15), and in cases where their socioeconomic position is decisive to interpret their statements, to their position in the a-d-typology and their village (e.g. group-c respondent Chième no.9).

As it is believed that this method sufficiently conceals the identity of respondents, no attempts have been made to disguise identifying features of the villages. Thus, all villages are referred to by their real names because in the interpretation of statements considerable importance is attached to the village-background. If fictive names had been used, the value of findings for other researchers working in the area would be substantially reduced, and any possibility to crosscheck information would be lost.

3. Interviews with resource persons

3.1. Persons met and purpose of the interviews

Given the importance attached to establishing the context of the interaction between government agencies and farmers and the lack of literature dealing with core issues of the study (see below), a considerable number of resource persons have been interviewed. They can be divided into six main groups:

- 1) government administrative staff
- 2) other government staff
- 3) donor representatives
- 4) researchers and project staff
- 5) representatives of the farmers' movement
- 6) representatives of political parties

1) At each administrative level I had to pay a courtesy call to the head of the government administration (chefs d'arrondissement, commandants de cercle or their deputies and the governor of Sikasso and some of his core staff). I decided to use the occasion to ask a series of questions on general relations between government representatives and the population in the area and on social changes at village level. The questions concerned the type of problems presented to the administration and those solved by village chiefs themselves (special emphasis was put on land tenure cases), the development of tax payments, the reaction by the administration to the

dissolution of AVs (in Koutiala) and the attempts by the administration to make the various government agencies collaborate.

2) In addition to staff of the four agencies and administrative staff, other government staff interviewed include representatives of the various planning and coordination units in the central administration in Bamako with influence either on the existing relationship among the four agencies or on future reform plans. The Cellule de Planification et de Statistique in the MDRE was the most important of these, as it was responsible of coordinating all initiatives within the field of natural resource management (including the Test Zones programme), and thereby constituted the main link between the agencies at national level. CAMOPA, la Mission de Decentralisation and staff from the various national environmental programmes and planning units were visited to obtain information on ongoing reform plans.

3) Also as part of the attempts to establish an overview of ongoing reform plans of importance to the four agencies under study, the main donors in the field of natural resource management were visited. These included the World Bank, La Caisse Française, USAID, GTZ and UNSO.

4) Although Sikasso region has relatively fewer donor-funded or NGO-run projects than other regions in the country, there are quite a number, and many of the most important resource persons turned out to be sociologists or socioeconomists working in these projects. Assistance from the regional coordinator of the Test Zones programme made it possible to establish an overview of activities and visit most of the projects within the first few weeks of the fieldwork. This provided me with valuable background information before the initiation of the interview study and the village survey. In addition to these interviews, researchers from ESP-GRN were a major source of information on the general context in the Sikasso region, while Bamako-based researchers, notably from IMRAD and AVES, shared with me their analyses of overall political changes in the country. At the end of the fieldwork in 1994 I had the opportunity to present preliminary findings to some of these resource persons at a seminar held at ESP-GRN.

5) When I left Mali in 1994 I intended to use the last part of the fieldwork (February 1996) to concentrate on SYCOV, the farmers' movement. While preparing for this fieldwork, however, I decided to broaden the scope to study also other expressions of the emerging 'civil society' including the many political parties that had increased their importance at local level in preparation of presidential and parliamentary elections in 1997. The time spent on the farmers' movement was therefore cut down to a few interviews with representatives of SYCOV, Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture in Sikasso and Kafu Djigené to supplement those undertaken in 1994. In retrospect, I deeply regret this decision as it would have been considerably more useful for my analysis to have obtained more information on SYCOV - not least on the profile of its members.

6) I had expected that the interviews with representatives of political parties carried out in February 1996 would have provided me with an improved understanding of societal forces in the Sikasso region. At this time it seemed that the parties were taking over the role from SYCOV of mediating between the village population and government representatives, and it was my impression that the parties were playing a central role in challenging existing authorities at village level (in the Koutiala area). I must acknowledge, however, that these interviews contributed very little to my analysis. With a few interesting exceptions local party representatives met were

generally not very well-informed about conditions of the rural population, hence unable to offer any analysis of ongoing changes.

3.2. Ethical considerations

In relation to interviews with resource persons ethical considerations mainly regard the issue of confidentiality. They all participated on a purely voluntary basis and unlike staff of the four agencies they were not questioned about issues in relation to their employment situation but rather asked to provide information on and assess general development issues in Mali.

Instead of confidentiality many resource persons - and other researchers who have later commented on draft chapters - have a right to be quoted as the source of particular information or insights that otherwise would wrongly be credited me. As a general rule their names, therefore, appear in the text when they have provided what may be described as 'original information', i.e. information that is not easily accessible from written sources or other resource persons.

Like in the case of regional and national level staff of the four agencies, exceptions to the principle of indicating the source are cases where resource persons have given controversial information or assessments that might give them difficulties if spread to a wider audience. As an example can be mentioned information on personal controversies among donor representatives that (sadly) might be of importance to national planning processes and thereby represent an interesting angle on the study of the four agencies, but which is considered too sensitive to be attributed to identifiable individuals.

4. Literature study

4.1. Library studies

The excellent library at ESP-GRN in Sikasso has provided me with the largest and most important part of the literature used in the present study. It has a very good coverage of socioeconomic and natural resource management issues in the Sikasso region and also contains a considerable number of official Malian documents. The librarian at ESP-GRN was so kind to continue sending me lists of new acquisitions after the fieldwork had been finalised.

Other Malian libraries visited include Centre de Documentation of Institut d'Economie Rurale, the library of Institut des Sciences Humaines and la Bibliothèque Nationale du Mali (all in Bamako).

In Paris I have visited OECD Antenne de Documentation, la Documentation Française and the library of ORSTOM. In Holland I have visited the libraries of Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam and of Institute for Social Studies in the Hague. And in Norway I have visited the library of Centre for Environment and Development at the University of Oslo.

The availability in Denmark of literature on Mali is very limited, but the excellent facilities at the library of University of Roskilde for searching on the internet and the connections of this library to a wide range of other libraries in Europe have provided me with a considerable amount of relevant literature.

4.2. Other sources of literature

During the fieldwork in Mali I benefited from the willingness of many researchers and project staff interviewed to share with me their literature. Government staff at regional and national level allowed me to photocopy official documents, and a letter from the Governor of Sikasso gave me access to development plans, statistical data and budgets at cercle and arrondissement level. Also in my search for literature, my research assistant, Mr. M.S. Sokona, was an excellent help to establish relevant contacts.

After the fieldwork I have had the advantage of an extensive exchange of literature with other Mali-interested researchers. My colleagues at University of Oslo and NORAGRIC in Norway are among the most important, while other contacts have been established through researchers at ESP-GRN in Sikasso and through my participation in various seminars and conferences.

Subscriptions on a weekly Malian newspaper 'Cauris' and on the 'Malinet' discussion group on the internet which refers i.a. AFP telegrams and Malian newspapers have kept me up to date with the political and economic situation in the country.

4.3. Gaps in the available literature

In the available literature on Mali there are two lacunae of special importance to the present study. First, the literature on institutional issues such as the functioning of government agencies and their relations to local populations is very scarce and second, theoretical analyses of recent developments in relations between state and society are virtually nonexistent. This has forced me to a large extent to rely on oral sources in the form of interviews with government staff, farmers and resource persons and on my own interpretation of findings. And it has limited my possibility of challenging my own results and interpretations by comparison to studies made by other researchers.

As it has already been mentioned, I have not had access to studies on Malian government agencies that take up issues such as internal working procedures, the relationship between front-line staff and superior levels and the way the agencies relate to local populations.

A number of the planning documents made to prepare the reform of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment briefly touch on some of the issues but emphasis in descriptions and analyses are put on the mutual collaboration among the various agencies rather than on the characteristics of each of the agencies (e.g. MAEE, 1991; MAEE, 1992e; MAEE, 1992d; MDRE, 1992g).

In Sikasso the 'farming systems approach' applied by ESP-GRN implies that while very detailed information can be found on issues such as e.g. cropping pattern, the cotton economy and the gender division of labour, only one study on the interaction between extension agencies and farmers has been made (Coulibaly et al., 1993). This study has been very useful as a frame of reference for results obtained from the village questionnaire survey on the direct contact between agencies and farmers - and as mentioned above also inspired the preparation of the questionnaire. But the concentration of the study on mapping the interaction (frequency of contact, who takes the initiative, which members of the household are contacted, etc.), rather than explaining it, has

again forced me to rely on interviews (including interviews with the main author of the study) rather than on written sources for interpretations.

Considering the unique character of CMDT and its successful attempts to increase cotton production in southern Mali, the absence of a thorough organisational analysis of this agency seems surprising. Many studies on the Sikasso region deals with aspects of the way CMDT operates, and it is possible to draw part of a general picture by piecing together analyses from various sources written with other purposes such as studies on the farmers' movement (e.g. Bingen et al., 1995; Marchant, 1991) and studies of cotton production in the region (e.g. Sanogo, 1989; Guindo & van Campen, 1994). Publications by CMDT and CFDT supplement the picture, but none of the sources available report an analysis similar to the one attempted in this study.

Some of the consultancy reports on the forestry service made on request by donors discuss the problematic relations between forestry staff and local populations and also touch on problems derived from the organisational set-up of the agency (e.g. Brinkerhoff & Gage, 1993; McClain, 1992). Whereas these reports have been very useful for crosschecking my own findings, they tend to focus on legal and land tenure issues and only deal with organisational aspects in passing.

While in the case of the forestry service and CMDT it is possible to draw on some written information on the agencies, very few sources dealing with the livestock service and CAC have been found.

In order to compensate for the lack of possibilities for crosschecking findings and challenging interpretations I have discussed a first (and very rough) version of the analysis (Degnbol, 1996a) with a large number of researchers with insight on Mali as well as with researchers interested in African state-society relations.

Concerning theoretical analyses of relations between state and society in Mali, the few existing publications date some years back and are all based on a theoretical approach very different from the one applied in this dissertation (Meillassoux, 1970; Amselle, 1985; Bagayogo, 1987; Amselle & Gregoire, 1987). The recent literature on democratisation and decentralisation processes often contains some general considerations about changing relations between state and society (e.g. Smith, 1997; Faye, 1995; Kassibo, 1997; Bérédogo, 1997). But a genuine attempt to identify various types of societal forces and analyse their interaction with the state has not been found.

For my purpose the most useful contributions are the few publications that discuss the relationship between the state and the rural population (e.g. Coulibaly, 1994; Bingen, 1994, Cissé et al., 1981). It is a limitation however, that these publications do not attempt a differentiation between the various groups of the rural population. Moreover, they are mainly empirical and contain very little theoretical reflection.

Thus, attempts made in chapter 11 to identify various types of societal forces in the Sikasso region and explain them both as a result of the interaction with government agencies and as an important conditioning factor for the future interaction find very little - if any - support in the literature.

For lack of possibilities to challenge findings and interpretations by use of the existing literature, I have discussed also this analysis with several other researchers, but unfortunately the draft has been written up so late that I have not received comments from researchers with particular insight on the Sikasso region.

A last gap in the literature to be mentioned is more general: given the concentration of the collection of literature in the years 1993-1996 when the fieldwork was carried out and libraries in other European countries were visited, the majority of references are from the early 1990s to early 1996. Despite my attempts to get access to more recent publications through exchange of literature with other researchers and search in various library data bases, the existence of relevant recent publications not included in this study cannot be ruled out. This is particularly likely to regard recent studies of decentralisation processes, e.g. in the form of Master theses or consultancy reports. It may also regard recent studies on the ongoing reform of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment that would have provided a very interesting perspective on the analysis of the four agencies. And finally, studies of recent developments in relations between the SYCOV farmers' movement and CMDT may exist without my knowledge.

4.4. Statistical data

Important reservations must be made for the reliability of all statistical data on a country such as Mali characterised by a large informal economy, extensive smuggling of agricultural produce, livestock and goods across the borders, lack of a recent population census and lack of data on social indicators such as health and education. Under such circumstance statistical data must be considered rough indications of tendencies rather than reliable information on specific amounts, sizes and shares.

Having said this, it has been attempted to use the best possible data available in descriptions of both the national and the regional context of the study. In chapter 5 and 6 on 'the action environment' and 'the institutional context of the public sector' most statistical data are derived from the Economist Intelligence Unit, the World Bank, IMF and UNDP statistics. Data from these sources are supplemented by information obtained from usually well-researched magazines such as *Marchés Tropicaux*, *Jeune Afrique*, *Bulletin de l'Afrique Noir* and the *Courier*.

Concerning statistics on the Sikasso region, chapter 7 and 8 mainly draw on data collected by researchers from ESP-GRN, data published by CMDT based on reports produced by the extensive network of village-based 'enquêteurs' and data from the regional statistical department (DRPS). Data collected by local projects and data from a recent monograph on the region (Loosvelt et al., 1995) supplement the information. It is a serious problem that available data on social indicators in the Sikasso region are very old.

The unreliability of much of the data available is reflected by large discrepancies between information given by different sources on the same phenomena. In cases where deviations are so significant that doubt can be raised about the usefulness of the data even as rough indicators, this is commented in the footnotes, and data from more than one source are quoted.

In addition to the low reliability of available data, also lack of data on important issues is a problem. This particularly regards the characteristic of the Sikasso region in chapter 7 where lack

of tangible data on income distribution on various sources and on income differences among the various types of households makes it difficult to come to a clear conclusion concerning the role of cotton in processes of socioeconomic differentiation. This again has implications for the interpretation of the questionnaire survey reported in chapter 10 and 11. Thus, the marked difference in access to extension services, reported by households of type a and type d, suggests that the various agencies play a role in increasing social inequalities. As the particular role of cotton, livestock and forestry in household incomes is not known, however, dimensions of the influence by the agencies cannot be established.

A similar problem is represented by the lack of clear data on the general level of wealth in the Sikasso region as compared to other regions. While it is generally believed that Sikasso belongs to the most prosperous regions in the country, this perception is challenged by the limited data available on social indicators. It would have been interesting to be able to establish if high levels of political mobilisation and demands on the state in this region are related to an over-average level of wealth or rather to a more pronounced process of social differentiation.

Consequences of these and other problems resulting from lack of data are discussed in the text and taken into consideration in the final conclusion.

LIST OF PERSONS MET DURING THE FIELDWORK IN 1994 AND 1996

(Dates of meetings are indicated in brackets)

1. Staff of the four agencies under study

1.1. National level

MDRE, Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts, Bamako

Yafong Berthé - Directeur National (14/12 1994)

MDRE, Direction Nationale de l'Élevage, Bamako

Habib Coulibaly - Adjoint au Directeur National de l'Élevage (15/12 1994)

Souleyemane Ouattara (*several meetings, 1994*)

MDRE Cabinet, Bamako

Abdoulaye Touré - Conseiller Technique au Ministre du Développement Rural et de l'Environnement, Agriculture (15/12 1994)

Hamady N'Djim - Conseiller Technique au Ministre du Développement Rural et de l'Environnement, Génie Rural (*several meetings 1994 and 1996*)

CMDT, Bamako

M. Kassim Dembele - Adjoint au Directeur Général, Direction Technique du Développement Rural (6/9 1994, 2/2 1996)

M. Jean-Pierre Derlon - Chef de Service Gestion des Terroir (7/9 1994, 2/2 1996)

M. Bakary Malé - Chef de Service des Ressources Humaines (14/12 1994)

1.2. Regional level

Direction Régionale des Eaux et Forêts, Sikasso

Hammid Ag M. Lamine - Directeur Régional des Eaux et Forêts (19/12 1994)

Soumaila A.T. Coulibaly - Adjoint au Directeur Régional (13/9 1994)

Direction Régionale de l'Élevage/PAAP, Sikasso

Ibrahim Ayouba Maïga - Directeur Régional de l'Élevage (19/12 1994)

Mamadou Berthé - Intérim du Directeur (14/9 1994)

CMDT, Région de Sikasso

Ousmane Guindo - Directeur Régional (5/12 1994, 12/2 1996)

Mamadou B. Dembélé - Chef Division Administrative et Sociale (8/12 1994)

Fusseini Togola - Superviseur Programme Zones Test (*several meetings 1994 and 1996*)

Brema Koné - Vulgarisateur/animateur/formateur (14/9 1994)

Direction Régionale de CAC, Sikasso

Samba Sissoko - Directeur Régional (9/12 1994)

1.3.1. Koutiala Cercle

Ibrahima Doumbia - Chef Cantonnement Forestier until 1 October 1994 (14/9 and 15/9 1994)
Acougnon Dolo - Chef Cantonnement Forestier after 1 October 1994 (28/11 1994)
Maïga - Adjoint au Chef Cantonnement Forestier (15/9 1994)
Lasina Goïta - Responsable du projet Siwaa, Cantonnement Forestier (24/10 1994)
Mamadou I Dembele - Chef Secteur de l'Élevage (25/11 1994)
Leye Sidebé - Adjoint au Chef Secteur de l'Élevage (25/11 1994)
Ibrahima Y. Maïga - Chef d'Aménagement Hydraulique Pastorale, Secteur Élevage (*several meetings 1994*)
Lasana Ba - Aménagiste, CMDT Koutiala (*several meetings, 1994*)
Negeba Fané - Chef de Div. de Défense et Restauration des Sols, CMDT Koutiala (7/12 1994)
Sekouba Synayoko - Directeur CAC, Koutiala (16/9 and 1/12 1994)

1.3.2. Kadiolo Cercle

Goïta - Chef Cantonnement Eaux et Forêts until 1 October 1994 (19/9 1994)
Mamadou Berthé - Chef Cantonnement Eaux et Forêts from 1 Octobre 1994 (6/12 1994)
Drissa Coulibaly - Chef Secteur Élevage (23/9 and 7/12 1994)
Nouhoum Goré Cissé - Chef Secteur CMDT (7/12 1994, 15/2 1996)
Dauda Sanogo - Aménagiste CMDT (23/9 and 3/10 1994, 15/2 1996)
Sedou A. N'Diaye - Directeur CAC (23/9 and 3/10 1994)
André Sanayogo - Intérim au Directeur CAC (6/12 1994)

1.3.3. Bougouni Cercle

Amadou Daou - CMDT Chef SAT (14/12 1994)
Karim Dembele - CMDT (14/12 1994)

1.4. Arrondissement level

Arrondissement Kadiolo Central (Kadiolo Cercle)

Bayayogo - Chef de Poste Eaux et Forêts (20/10 1994)
Adama Sangaré - Chef de Poste Vétérinaire (9/11 1994)
Dauda Sanogo - Aménagiste de la CMDT, Secteur Kadiolo (20/10 1994)
Mamadou Namou - Chef CAC (20/10, 1994)

Arrondissement Fourou (Kadiolo Cercle)

Cletant Sanogo - Chef de Poste Eaux et Forêts (3/10 and 9/11 1994)
Amadou Touré - Deuxième Adjoint au Chef de Poste Vétérinaire (8/11 1994)

Arrondissement Loulouni (Kadiolo Cercle)

Yaya Fomba - Chef de Poste Eaux et Forêts (3/10 1994)
Dauda Fomba - Adjoint au Chef de Poste Vétérinaire (18/10 1994)
Kolaka Kasambara - CMDT Chef ZER (18/10 1994)

Coulibaly - CMDT Chef ZER (19/10 1994)

Woransa Koné - Chef CAC (19/10 1994)

Arrondissement Koutiala Central (Koutiala Cercle)

Adama Koné - Chef de Poste Forestier (15/9 and 24/10 1994)

Alou Dembele - Chef de Poste Vétérinaire (26/9, 27/9 and 24/10 1994)

Mentaba Berthé - CMDT Chef ZER (26/9 1994)

Arrondissement Zangasso (Koutiala Cercle)

Mahamane Cissé - Chef de Poste Forestier (15/9, 16/9 and 7/10 1994)

Sanogo - Chef de Poste Vétérinaire (28/9 1994)

Togo - CMDT Chef SB, Sinkolo (1/11 1994)

Coulibaly - Chef CAC (7/10 1994)

Arrondissement Kouniana (Koutiala Cercle)

Dramane Traoré - Chef de Poste Forestier (15/9 and 29/9 1994)

Tiecoura Diaketé - Adjoint au Chef de Poste Vétérinaire (21/11 1994)

Mamadou Siaka Coulibaly - Chef de Poste Vétérinaire, Koloni (29/10 1994)

Adama Diabaté - Aménagiste CMDT (29/9 1994)

Brema Diarra - Chef Secteur CMDT (21/11 1994)

Mohammed Soumaré - Secrétaire Technique CMDT (21/11 1994)

Mamadou Konaté - CMDT Chef ZAER, Koloni (29/10 1994)

Arrondissement Molobala (Koutiala Cercle)

S. Sanogo - Chef de Poste Eaux et Forêts (28/9 1994)

Jean-Marie Dembele - Chef de Poste Vétérinaire (28/9 and 10/11 1994)

Tangara - Chef Secteur CMDT (28/9 1994)

Lasine Coulibaly - Aménagiste CMDT (28/9 and 10/11 1994, 9/2 1996)

A Douaré - Secrétaire Technique du Secteur CMDT (28/9 1994)

Mamadou Coulibaly - CMDT Chef ZER, Kansasso (28/9 1994)

Abdoulaye Maïga - Chef CAC (11/11 1994)

Arrondissement M'Pessoba (Koutiala Cercle)

Sidebé - Chef de Poste Forestier (15/9 1994)

Arrondissement Konseguela (Koutiala Cercle)

Lamine Konaté - Chef de Poste Forestier (15/9 1994)

2. Government administrative staff

Gouvernerat, Sikasso

El Hadj Sekou Dembele - Gouverneur (20/9 1994)

Bocary Sanessekou - Directeur du Cabinet (12/9 1994, 5/2 1996)

Maro Diabaté - Conseiller au Développement (1994) (12/9 and 8/12 1994)

Sagou Dolo - Conseiller au Développement (1996) (5/2 1996)

Koutiala and Kadiolo cercles

Issa Tieman Diarra - Commandant de Cercle, Koutiala from 1 November 1994 (23/11 1994)

NN - Première Adjoint au Commandant, Koutiala (1/12 1994)

Ibrahima Samaké - Commandant du Cercle, Kadiolo until 1 October 1994 (19/9 1994)

Amadou Dolo - Commandant du Cercle, Kadiolo from 1 October 1994 (7/12 1994)

Bobacar Koïta - Première Adjoint au Commandant du Cercle, Kadiolo (19/9 1994)

Arrondissements

Abdoulaye Bocar Touré - Chef d'Arrondissement, Kadiolo Central (9/11 1994)

NN - Chef d'Arrondissement, Fourou (8/11 1994)

Abdoulaye Doumbia - Chef d'Arrondissement, Loulouni (19/10 1994)

Abdoul Kader Sisseko - Chef d'Arrondissement, Koutiala Central (1/11 1994)

Mamadou Koné - Chef d'Arrondissement, Zangasso (16/9 and 7/10 1994)

Mamoutou Traoré - Secrétaire au Chef d'Arrondissement, Zangasso (16/9 1994)

Seydou Samba Sidebé - Chef d'Arrondissement, Kouniana (21/11 1994)

Oumar Gendou - Secrétaire Administratif, Kouniana (29/9 1994)

Bocarit dit Samba Touré - Chef d'Arrondissement, Molobala (23/11 1994)

3. Other government staff

MDRE Cellule de Planification et de Statistique, Bamako

Moussa Kalifa Traoré - Directeur 1994 (7/9 1994)

Mamadougou Goïta - Directeur 1996 (2/2 1996)

Mahamane Traoré - Juriste foncier (several meetings 1994 and 1996)

Bréhima N'Diaye - Aménagiste (25/11 and 13/12 1994)

Ousmane Sangaré - Ingénieur des Eaux et Forêts (25/11 1994)

MDRE, Direction Administrative et Financière, Bamako

NN - Directeur (16/12 1994)

Mission de Décentralisation

Ousmane Sy - Chef de la Mission (17/11 1994)

Noël Diarra - Adjoint au Chef de la Mission (17/11 1994, 23/2 1996)

Mamby Diaby Kélétiogui - Président du GREM, membre de la Cellule de Coordination Régional de la Mission de Décentralisation, Sikasso (7/2 1996)

CAMOPA (Cellule d'Appui à la Mise en Oeuvre du Plan d'Action du MDRE), Bamako

Mohammed El Mackyou Diallo - Chef de CAMOPA (16/11 1994)

Moussa Leo Sidebé - Cadre de CAMOPA (16/11 1994)

Aboumediane Touré - Assistant à la CAMOPA (22/2 1996)

Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (PGRN), Bamako

Porna Bengaly - Conseiller Technique (8/9 1994)

Plan National d'Action Environnementale (PNAE) Bamako

Salif Kanouté - Directeur PNAE/CID (23/2 1996)

Programme National de Vulgarisation Agricole (PNVA), Bamako

Aly Kontao - Coordinateur National de PNVA (16/11 1994)

Sokona - Chef des Activités Féminines (17/11 1994)

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique (CNRST), Bamako

Mahamane Diallo Iam - Directeur (2/2 1996)

Aly Yero Maïga - Directeur Général Adjoint (2/9 1994)

Ismail Ouattara (2/9 and 8/9 1994)

Centre Régional de Recherche Agricole (CRRA), Sikasso

Siaka Dembele - Directeur Régional (22/12 1994)

Direction Régionale de la Jeunesse, des Sports, des Arts et de la Culture, Sikasso

Karamoko Koné - Directeur Régional (12/9 1994)

4. Donors

Banque Mondiale, Bamako

Agadiou Dama - Responsable des projets et programmes gestion des ressources naturelles (10/10 1994)

La Caisse Française, Bamako

V. Papazian - Responsable des projet et programmes gestion des ressources naturelles (14/12 1994)

USAID, Bamako

Abdoulaye Dagamaïssa - Responsable des projet et programmes gestion des ressources naturelles (18/11 1994)

GTZ

Ekkehard Dudeck - Conseiller Technique au PGRN (17/11 1994)

UNSO, Bamako

Kalfa Sanogo (13/12 1994, 23/2 1996)

5. Project staff/researchers

AVES, Bamako

Samba Soumare - Sociologue (11/10 1994)

Ousmane Traoré - Juriste (12/10 1994)

IMRAD, Bamako

Chéibane Coulibaly - Sociologue (10/10 1994, 22/2 1996)

Institut des Sciences Humaines, Bamako

Kléna Sanogo - Directeur (9/9 1994)

Felix Koné - Sociologue (16/9 and 16/11 1994)

Institut du Sahel, Bamako

Dolo - Intérim du Directeur CERPOD (8/9 1994)

Aïcha Boucenna - Responsable de la Banque Régionale de donnée, PFIE (11/10 1994)

Ba Moussa Batchily - Coordinateur, PFIE (11/10 1994)

Ibrahima Djire - Documentaliste, PFIE (11/10 1994)

Rabby Wene - Économiste (15/12 1994)

Institut d'Economie Rurale, Bamako

Bacacy Sékou Coulibaly - Chef Programme Economie des Filières (10/10 1994)

DRSPR - ESP/GRN (Equipe Système Production/GRN), Sikasso

Bocary Kaya - Aménagiste (20/9 1994)

N'Golo Coulibaly - Sociologue (21/9 1994)

Thea Hilhorst - Socio-économiste (*several meetings 1994 and 1996*)

Demba Kébé - Coordinateur (26/10 1994)

Toon Defoer - Chef d'Assistance Technique (*several meetings 1994*)

M'Pie Bengaly - Agronome (15/2 1996)

Amadi Coulibaly - Aménagiste (15/2 1996)

CAT/CRN (Cellule Aménagement du Territoire/Gestion Ressources Naturelles), Sikasso

Yaya Sidebé - Directeur/sociologue (12/9 and 6/10 1994)

PADREF, Sikasso

Bocary Barry - Économiste (19/12 1994)

Projet Gestion de Terroir (FAC), Sikasso

Olivier Lefay (14/9 1994)

Mahamadi Diawara (14/9 1994)

Projet Inventaire des Ressources Ligneuses - FAO, Sikasso

Souleymane Ouattara - Sociologue (2/11 and 22/12 1994, 14/2 1996)

Yaya Ballo - Aménagiste pastoraliste (14/9 1994)

Kampsax/Dangroup, Sikasso

Patricia Boussone - Sociologue (*several meetings, 1994*)

Demba Samaké - Sociologue (1/10 1994)

Observatoire de Foncier, Sikasso

Tinouyou Sanogo - Juriste (13/2 1996)

Intercooperation A.R.F.S., Sikasso

Pascal Cuny - Assistant technique et chercheur (21/2 1996)

Equipe Diagnostic sur la formation forestière, Sikasso

Sory Samassekou - Chef du Section Formation/Division Projets et Programmes, Dir. Nat. des Eaux et Forêts (13/9 1994)

Akougnon Dolo - Directeur du Centre de Formation Pratique Forestier, Tabakoro (13/9 1994)

AFVP, Kadiolo

Adama Cissouma - Aménagiste (8/11 1994)

Vision Mondiale, Koloni

Zakaria Sidebé - Directeur local, Koloni (29/10 1994)

Projet Gestion Terroir, Développement Local San-Koutiala

Pierre Brassat - Chef de Projet (23/11 1994)

Projet AT/D2, Ségou

Luc Togo - Chef Unité Socio-économiste (25/10 1994)

Gauchio Coulibaly - Ingénieur Génie Rural (25/10 and 26/10 1994)

6. Farmers' organisations

SYCOV

Abdoulaye Dembele - Président du bureau, secteur de Koutiala (26/9 1994, 9/2 1996)

Charka Koné - Vice-président, secteur de Koutiala (26/9 1994)

David Dauda Dembele - Secrétaire chargé aux relations extérieures, secteur de Koutiala (26/9 1994)

Moussa Traoré - Commissaire au compte, secteur de Koutiala (26/9 1994)

Amadou Traoré - Trésorier, secteur de Koutiala (26/9 1994)

Sidiki Coulibaly - Organisateur Adjoint, secteur de Koutiala (26/9 1994)

Moussa Bamba - Trésorier adjoint, section de Kléla (11/2 1996)

Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture, Sikasso

El Hadj Noumpounon Diarra - Président (2/12 1994, 13/2 1996)

Bokary Sountoura - Secrétaire Général (2/12 1994)

Kafu Djigené

Lasina Djabaté - Délégué régional (19/2 1996)

7. Political parties

US-RDA

Abou Bamba - Secrétaire Général de la Commune de Sikasso et Secrétaire Politique de la Cercle de Sikasso (6/2 1996)

ADEMA

Abdoulaye Traoré - Secrétaire Général de la section de Sikasso et membre du Comité Exécutif du parti (6/2 1996)

Nasanga Drissa - Secrétaire à la communication, section de Sikasso (6/2 1996)

Ladji Konaté - Secrétaire Général, section Kadiolo (16/2 1996)

BDIA Faso Djigi

Moustapha Bamba - Président de la section, Sikasso (7/2 1996)

Oumar Baba Diarra - Secrétaire à l'organisation, Sikasso (7/2 1996)

Seko Ouattara - Deuxième secrétaire à l'organisation, Sikasso (7/2 1996)

PARENA, Sikasso

Mamadou Drissa Traoré - Président de la section, Sikasso (11/2 1996)

PMDR

N'Golo Sanogo - Président de la section Sikasso(7/2 1996)

UDD

Sina Coulibaly- Président de la section Koutiala, Deputé au Parlamant (14/2 1996)

CNID

Abubacar Tidiane Diarra - Secrétaire Général de la section de Koutiala (18/2 1996)

PMDR

Youssef Berthé - Secrétaire Général, section de Kadiolo (15/2 1996)

8. Others

CFDT, Paris

François Bérourd - Directeur du Développement Rural (15/7/1996)

QUESTIONNAIRE POUR L'ÉTUDE DES VILLAGES

No. _____ Date de l'interview _____

1. Nom de l'interviewé _____

2. Homme Femme

3. Age 20-30 30-40 40-50 50-

4. Classification de l'exploitation A B C D

5. Position dans l'exploitation _____

6. Village/quartier/arrondissement _____

7. Est-ce-qu'au niveau de votre exploitation on trouve des néo-alphabètes Oui Non

8. Quels sont les services étatiques avec qui vous avez un contact

	Fréquence de contact sur l'initiative du service Saison sèche	Fréquence de contact sur l'initiative du service Hivernage	Fréquence de contact sur votre propre initiative Saison sèche	Fréquence de contact sur votre propre initiative Hivernage
Eaux et Forêts				
Élevage				
CMDT				
CAC				
Administration				
Santé				
École				
Autres				
Autres				

9. Est-ce-que les services arrivent à vous assister si vous avez besoin d'eux

	Toujours	Souvent	Rarement
Eaux et Forêts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Élevage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CMDT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CAC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Santé	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
École	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Autres	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Autres	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Commentaires _____

10. Si les services n'arrivent pas à vous assister, est-ce-que c'est par

	Oui	Non
a. manque de moyen de transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. manque de ressources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. manque de personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. manque de compétence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. manque de compréhension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
de la vie paysanne		
f. manque de bonne volonté	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. d'autres raisons _____		

11. Quels est le service auquel vous avez le plus de confiance? pourquoi? _____

12. Quels est le service auquel vous n'avez pas de confiance? pourquoi? _____

13. Quels sont les agents de services en qui vous avez confiance

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Les jeunes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b. Les vieux | <input type="checkbox"/> c. L'age n'a pas d'importance | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Ceux qui ont eu beaucoup de postes | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Ceux qui ont duré sur la poste | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Pas d'importance | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> g. Ceux qui sont basés au village | <input type="checkbox"/> h. Ceux qui sont basés à l'arrondissement | <input type="checkbox"/> i. Ceux qui sont basés au cercle | <input type="checkbox"/> j. Pas d'importance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> k. Ceux qui parlent minyanka | <input type="checkbox"/> l. Ceux qui parlent senoufo | <input type="checkbox"/> m. Ceux qui parlent bamanan | <input type="checkbox"/> n. Pas d'importance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> o. Ceux qui viennent individuellement | <input type="checkbox"/> p. Ceux qui viennent en groupe | <input type="checkbox"/> q. Pas d'importance | |

Pourquoi? _____

14. Est-ce-que l'équipe technique de l'AV pourrait remplacer un ou plusieurs des services techniques?

- Non Oui - quels services? _____

15. Quels sont les trois problèmes majeurs au village (selon ordre d'importance)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

16. Quels sont les trois problèmes majeurs liés à la gestion des ressources naturelles (selon l'ordre d'importance)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

17. Qu'est-ce-que le village peut faire pour résoudre ces problèmes?

18. Qu'est-ce-que l'État peut faire pour résoudre ces problèmes?

19. Est-ce-qu'il y a d'autres qui pourraient résoudre ces problèmes? (qui? comment?)

20. Quels sont les changements les plus importants après 1991? (selon l'ordre d'importance)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

21. Qu'est-ce-que vous comprenez par le mot 'décentralisation'?

22. A votre avis qui doit prendre la responsabilité des tâches suivants

	Le Gouverne- ment	le village	la CMDT	les privés	d'autres /qui?
a. Fixation des prix d'intrants et prix des produits agri- coles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conseils techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Définition des règles concernant la gestion des ressources naturelles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Intervention en cas des conflits sur la gestion des res. naturel. (litiges,etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Intervention en cas d'autres conflits au village (conflit sur le droit de succession, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Garant de la sécurité	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Investissement en infrastructure physique et sociale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. Commentaires

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEN VILLAGES UNDER STUDY

Table A. Basic characteristics of the ten villages at the time when the survey was undertaken (late 1994 for eight of the villages, and early 1996 for Molobala and Kléla).

	GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION	DISTANCE TO ARRONDISSEMENT HQ	ACCESS FROM MAIN ROADS	INCLUDED IN THE 'TEST ZONES PROGRAMME'	NUMBER OF INHABITANTS (APPROX)	INTERNAL CONFLICT	SYCOV'S POSITION	NGO PROJECTS
Koloni	far north	35 km	very difficult	yes	1,680	yes	not present	yes a)
Dosso-rola	far north	27 km	very difficult	no	720	yes	not present	no
Sincina	north	5 km	very easy	no	2,820	yes	very strong	yes b)
Molobala	north	0 km	very easy	no	11,700	yes	strong	(yes) c)
Sinkolo	north	12 km	easy	yes	1,870	yes	not present	(yes) c)
Kléla	middle	0 km	very easy	no	10,700	emerging	strong	no
Woroni	south	5 km	very easy	yes	1,790	emerging	not present	no
N'golokas.	south	12 km	very difficult	no	820	no	not present	no
Nafegue	far south	25 km	easy	yes	760	no	present	yes d)
Chièm.	far south	8 km	very difficult	no	630	no	not present	no

Notes:

a) Vision Mondiale

b) Friendship association 'Coutance' in France

c) 1 Peace Corps volunteer in Sinkolo and 2 volunteers in Molobala.

d) Helvetas

Table B. Geographical distance from the base of operation of agencies to each of the ten villages in the survey (in km).

	CMDT	LIVESTOCK	FOREST	CAC	ADMIN	HEALTH	EDUCA
Chième	0 (S)	8 km	-	-	8 km	8 km	8 km
Dossoro	8 km (Z)	27 km	-	-	27 km	8 km	8 km
Kiléla	0 (R)	0	0	-	0	0	0
Koloni	0 (R) (TZ)	0 (TZ)	35 km (TZ) *)	35 km (TZ) *)	35 km *)	0	0
Moioba	0 (R)	0	0	-	0	0	0
Nafeg	2 km (Z) (TZ)	25 km (TZ) **)	25 km (TZ)	25 km (TZ)	25 km	25 km	2 km
N'golo	12 km (R)	12 km	-	-	12 km	12 km	12 km
Sincina	5 km (R)	5 km	5 km (p)	5 km (p)	5 km	0	0
Sinkolo	0 (S) (TZ)	12 km (TZ)	12 km (TZ)	12 km (TZ)	12 km	0	0
Woroni	2 km (S) (TZ)	5 km (TZ)	5 km (TZ)	5 km (TZ)	5 km ***)	0	0

notes:

0 = the agency operates from the village

- = the agency has no activities in the village

(S) CMDT is represented by a Chef SB

(Z) CMDT is represented by a Chef ZER

(R) CMDT is represented by a Chef ZAER

(TZ) the agency participates in the Test Zones programme in the village and therefore visit it more frequently than other villages.

(p) the agency runs a project in the village and therefore visit it more frequently than other villages (the 'Siwaa project')

*) during the rainy season the direct road from Koloni to the arrondissement HQ in Kouniana is impassable and the real distance via Koutiala is 93 km. An 'agent de l'État civil' in Koloni handles simple administrative matters which reduces the need for travels to the arrondissement HQ:

***) A CMDT zoo-technician in a nearby village (2 km from Nafegue) is often contacted instead of the livestock service in the arrondissement HQ in Kadiolo. Most farmers do not make the distinction and may well have referred to the zoo-technician when commenting on the livestock service.

***) An "agent de l'État civil" in Woroni handles simple administrative matters which reduces the need for travels to the arrondissement HQ.

Brief presentation of shared characteristics of the villages.

Like information in table A, the following brief presentation of the ten villages under study refers to the time when the survey was undertaken (i.e. late 1994 for eight of the villages and early 1996 for Molobala and Kléla). The villages have been grouped to highlight the shared characteristics within each of the groups that are reflected in results from the survey (reported in chapter 10 and 11).

Chiémé and Nafegue are situated in Kadiolo cercle, while **N'golokasso** is situated a little further north just across the border to Sikasso cercle. Access to Nafegue is relatively easy as the road from the arrondissement headquarters in Kadiolo is fairly good, but the distance is long (25 km). Access to Chiémé and N'golokasso is very difficult due to the poor condition of roads. The involvement in cotton cultivation dates only about 10 years back, and in all three villages remittances from relatives in Côte d'Ivoire still play a significant role. They are small villages (600-800 inhabitants) characterised by social stability, ethnical homogeneity (they are all Senoufo-dominated) and strong leadership. The power of village chiefs is uncontested, and there is only one village association in each of the villages. The traditional hunters' association is strong and maintains security, and in Nafegue it is believed that the village chief controls supernatural forces that can keep all unwanted visitors away. In Chiémé and N'golokasso conflicts with transhumant pastoralists are on the increase, and in N'golokasso the conflict has costed lives. This has strained relations to the government administration that has imprisoned young people from the village involved in the bloodsheds.

Woroni and Sinkolo are situated in two different cercles (Woroni in Kadiolo and Sinkolo in Koutiala). They further differ by the level of integration into the cotton economy, as in Sinkolo cotton cultivation has been the major source of income for at least 20 years, while the dependence by Woroni on cotton sales is of a more recent date. Moreover, in Woroni the Senoufo population dominates, whereas Sinkolo is Minyanka-dominated. The villages, however, share a number of common characteristics. They are situated close to a national road, close to arrondissement headquarters, close to a larger town (Sikasso and Koutiala, respectively), and they are relatively large (1600-1800 inhabitants). Village elites have strong informal ties to powerful groups in Sikasso and Koutiala, and village chiefs appear to have held important positions in the former unity party, UDPM. Both village chiefs have maintained a certain authority, and there is only one village association in each of the villages. In Sinkolo, however, an internal conflict is erupting, and also in Woroni the existing social order is increasingly threatened as economically powerful groups claim their share of political power.

Koloni and Dossorola are both situated in the northern part of Koutiala cercle (Dossorola cannot be found on a map, as government authorities consider it a quarter of the village of Zanzaouni). Distances to arrondissement headquarters are long, and due to poor roads both villages are completely cut off from the outside world during the rainy season. The villages have been involved in cotton cultivation for three decades and depend entirely on income from cotton cultivation. While several ethnic groups are found in the villages, the Minyanka population dominates. Both villages suffer from serious internal conflicts opposing decedents of the first inhabitants and decedents of late comers. In Koloni (approx. 1700 inhab.) the conflict is reflected in an intense fight over the hereditary right to the position of village chief that is related to the intervention by French colonial power in selection of village chiefs. In Dossorola (approx. 800

inhab.) the conflict is explained by the demand by economically better-off latecomers that they take over the village leadership. In Koloni the conflict has resulted in the split of the village association in three, while in Dossorola it is considered a question of time before the village association will have to split.

Sincina, Molobala and Kléla are all situated in the heart of the cotton cultivation zone: Sincina and Molobala in Koutiala cercle, and Kléla in Sikasso cercle. The three villages have been integrated into the cotton economy for three decades. Sincina is situated so close to the town of Koutiala that it can be considered a suburb to the town. Molobala and Kléla are arrondissement headquarters and have close relations to Koutiala and Sikasso, respectively. All three villages are very large: Molobala and Kléla have about 11,000 inhabitants each, while Sincina is smaller but still an over-average village with 3,000 inhabitants. The villages are well equipped with social and physical infrastructure, which in the case of Sincina has been funded mainly by a French friendship organisation. Internal conflicts are profound in Molobala and Sincina where they are related to interventions by the French colonial power and the government administration of the Traoré regime, respectively, in selection of village chiefs. In Kléla an emerging conflict is expressed in the fight between different families over the hereditary right to the position of village chief. In Molobala there are five village associations, in Sincina there are two and in Kléla there is one. The three villages are considered strongholds of SYCOV, the farmers' movement: the first SYCOV meeting ever was held in Sincina, and the sections in Molobala and Kléla are very active.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS IN THE VILLAGE SURVEY

Table C. Socio-economic background of respondents in each of the five villages belonging to the CMDT-defined 'Koutiala region' and average for the region.

	group-a	group-b	group-c	group-d	group-m	total in %	n
Koloni	33%	30%	33%	3%	-	100%	30
Dossorola	13%	37%	43%	7%	-	100%	30
Sincina	18%	48%	30%	5%	-	100%	40
Molobala	26%	32%	32%	9%	-	100%	34
Sinkolo	26%	29%	29%	13%	-	97% ***)	31
Average 'Koutiala region' *)	40%	42%	13%	5%	1%**)	101% **)	-

notes:

*) Overall distribution of cotton-producing households in the northern part of Sikasso region, called 'Koutiala region' by CMDT (CMDT, 1995b p. 4). For a definition of the five groups, see chapter 7.

***) According to DRSPR, group-m makes up an estimated 1% of the households in the 'Koutiala region' (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p.23). This share is not included in the average given by CMDT, 1995b.

***) for 3% (=1 respondent) the position in the DRSPR-typology has not been noted on the questionnaire.

Table D. Socio-economic background of respondents in each of the five villages belonging to the CMDT-defined 'Sikasso region' and average for the region.

	group-a	group-b	group-c	group-d	group-m	total in %	n
Kléla	14%	31%	37%	6%	11%	100%	35
Woroni	27%	30%	27%	13%	-	97%**)	30
N'Golokas	17%	53%	30%	-	-	100%	30
Nafegue	36%	32%	18%	9%	-	95% ***)	22
Chième	17%	33%	50%	-	-	100%	30
Average 'Sikasso region' *)	32%	38%	11%	19%	-	100%	-

notes:

*) Overall distribution of cotton-producing households in the southern part of Sikasso region, called 'Sikasso region' by CMDT (CMDT, 1995b p. 4). For a definition of the five groups, see chapter 7.

***) for 3% (=1 respondent) the position in the DRSPR-typology has not been noted on the questionnaire.

***) for 5% (=1 respondent) the position in the DRSPR-typology has not been noted on the questionnaire.

Comment to both tables: the distribution of respondents on the five groups varies so significantly between the villages that it questions the usefulness of calculating an average of a larger area such as the CMDT-defined 'Koutiala region' or 'Sikasso region'. It is notable that in all the villages under study except N'golokasso and Nafegue the share of respondents in the better-off groups (a and b) are considerably below the average for the area.

Table E. Position in the household of respondents in each of the ten villages included in the survey.

	head of household	brother of head of household	son of head of household	wife of head of household	wife of son of head of household	sister of head of household	Total n=312
Koloni	50%	30%	17%	3%	-	-	100%
Dossorola	57%	27%	17%	-	-	-	100%
Sincina	55%	28%	13%	5%	-	-	100%
Molobala	62%	15%	24%	-	-	-	100%
Sinkolo	48%	10%	35%	3%	3%	-	100%
Kléla	69%	20%	11%	-	-	-	100%
Woroni	43%	26%	20%	3%	3%	3%	100%
N°Golokaso	57%	20%	23%	-	-	-	100%
Nafegue	45%	18%	23%	14%	-	-	100%
Chième	67%	23%	10%	-	-	-	100%
Total	56%	21%	19%	3%	1%	-	100%

Table F. Age of respondents in each of the ten villages included in the survey.

	20-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	more than 50 years	total n=312
Koloni	-	27%	50%	23%	100%
Dossorola	-	20%	63%	17%	100%
Sincina	-	15%	60%	25%	100%
Molobala	9%	44%	35%	12%	100%
Sinkolo	10%	39%	35%	16%	100%
Kléla	3%	46%	34%	17%	100%
Woroni	3%	33%	40%	13%	90% *)
N'golokasso	-	30%	60%	10%	100%
Nafegue	23%	32%	27%	18%	100%
Chième	3%	30%	50%	17%	100%
Total	4%	31%	46%	17%	100%

Notes:

*) for 10% (=3 respondents) the age has not been noted on the questionnaire.

WOMEN IN THE SIKASSO REGION

It is found relevant to explain the conspicuous absence of women in the questionnaire survey as well as in the main text of the dissertation by briefly describing the role of women in agriculture and their limited contact to government extension agencies.

Role of women in the agricultural production

There is a considerable disagreement among researchers regarding women's situation in general and their involvement in the agricultural production in particular.

One aspect of the disagreement regards the impact on women's situation of the dissolution of extended families. On the one hand Jonckers argues that women in small households consisting of only a husband and his wife (wives) have substantially less leisure time than women living in extended households. In extended households women can take turns to cook, and some of them can avoid participating in the agricultural work, whereas the only woman in a household will have to cook every day and participate much more actively in the agricultural work⁴⁹³ (Jonckers, 1994 p. 127). Furthermore, members of a small household have limited time to participate in the various mutual labour associations, hence receive a very limited support from the associations in return (Jonckers, 1987 p. 148). This is supported by a study by Tounkara on women's role in the cotton economy that concludes that women in extended families have more time than other women to work on their individual fields (Tounkara, 1994 p. 28). Rondeau, on the other hand, argues that although more time is spent on cooking in a small household, these women have gained an increased control of their working time and have more leisure time⁴⁹⁴ (Rondeau, 1994 p. 112).

Disagreement also exists regarding the general consequences for women of the integration into the cotton economy. Tounkara mentions that before the introduction of cotton, the contribution by women to the agricultural work on the common field mainly consisted in their participation in the manual weeding. After the introduction of cotton, they have become involved in an extensive range of agricultural tasks and have less time to concentrate on their individual fields (Tounkara, 1994 p. 18-19). Also other studies stress the active involvement of women, in particular young unmarried women in the Senoufo community, in all kind of agricultural work on the common field (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 43, p. 3 in the annex; Kébé & Brons, 1994 p. 14; Sanogo, 1989 p. 246).

A study by Sissoko on the impact of CMDT's activities on women's situation introduces some light and shade into this clear-cut picture of an increased work load of women. The study concludes that although women *may* participate in virtually all agricultural tasks, their involvement in most tasks has been reduced after the mechanisation of the agricultural

⁴⁹³ "...la plupart des unités sont de dimension réduite et certaines ne comptent qu'une ou deux femmes. Celles-ci ont alors la charge quotidienne des repas et sont en plus mobilisées, comme les hommes, par les cultures commerciales. Elles ne peuvent plus se livrer à toutes leurs activités culinaires ni se cultiver une parcelle personnelle" (Jonckers, 1994 p. 127).

⁴⁹⁴ "Il est clair que les femmes ont maintenant un meilleur contrôle de leur temps de travail: elles peuvent disposer de plus de temps pour elles mêmes. Par contre, elles doivent consacrer plus de temps qu'avant à la cuisine" (Rondeau, 1994 p. 112).

production. The important exception is their participation in the harvest which has been increased given the extension of the area cultivated, hence the longer duration of the harvest. Most importantly, however, the study stresses the need to distinguish between the situation of women, according to the level of mechanisation of the household, the size of the household and their ethnicity (Sissoko, 1994 p. 14-21).

Rondeau further qualifies the picture of a highly varying situation of women. She totally rejects the idea of describing 'the general situation of women' and instead introduces a typology of villages according to the historical and present involvement of women in the agricultural work on the common field of the household. Her typology shows that all options are possible: women may 'always' have been actively involved in the agricultural production and may have either continued their involvement or decreased it. They may have been involved only in the harvest and may have either maintained the limited involvement or increased it⁴⁹⁵ (Rondeau, 1994 p. 197). In addition to the village tradition, Rondeau mentions a range of other factors that influence the situation of a woman: her age, the number of women in the household, the number of small children, the attitude of her mother-in-law towards the division of labour in the household, the religion and last but not least the wealth of her household⁴⁹⁶ (Rondeau, 1994 p. 168-169, p. 197-198). Zuidberg & Djiré and Dembélé et al. both support the view that many women contribute to cover the food consumption of the household by cultivation on individual plots and have considerable incomes from various non-agricultural activities (livestock raising, gathering of plants, trade and processing of agricultural products)⁴⁹⁷ (Zuidberg & Djiré, 1992 p. 19; Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 19-28).

Contact of women to government agencies

Regardless of their view on the involvement of women in agriculture, available sources all agree that women have a very limited say in decisions regarding the management of the farm and the use of incomes from the common field. Women are generally described as a labour force submitted to the decisions of the men and very little informed about the various technics applied on the farm⁴⁹⁸ (Toukara, 1994 p. 19, p.29; Kébé & Brons, 1994 p. 14; Crowley, 1991b p. 51; Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 33-35; Hilhorst & Coulibaly, 1998 p. 14).

Also, the contact of women to the various government agencies is very limited. Thus, more than half of the women interviewed in a study by Coulibaly et al. in the Koutiala and Sikasso area were

⁴⁹⁵ "...village (de type A) où les femmes ont toujours été présentes dans le champs collectif, ceux (de type B) où elles l'ont quitté depuis quelques temps, ceux (de type C) où elles ont toujours limité leur participation à la période de récoltes...ceux (de type D), autrefois de type C, où les femmes ont accepté d'investir plus de temps qu'auparavant dans le champs collectif" (Rondeau, 1994 p. 197).

⁴⁹⁶ Based on a recent study in the region Dembélé et al. mention many of the same factors (Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 10).

⁴⁹⁷ Zuidberg and Djiré criticise both CMDT and researchers from DRSPR (now ESP-GRN) for having totally neglected the importance of women's individual plots and non-agricultural incomes. According to them, the focus on cash crops production on the common field and the view of the household as a homogeneous unit controlled by the head of the household have made CMDT and the researchers miss an important aspect of the economic situation both of women and of the household as such (Zuidberg & Djiré, 1992 p.19-20).

⁴⁹⁸ As an example it can be mentioned that only 11% of 62 women interviewed in a study undertaken in the CMDT area were able to distinguish between the three most cotton varieties used in the area (Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 29, see also Toukara, 1994 p. 29)

unable to tell the names of the agencies working in their village (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 2). The women interviewed explained that they got virtually all their information on agricultural production from their husband and other relatives, while government agencies were reported to play an insignificant role (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 32). This has been confirmed by a more recent study in which none of the 62 women interviewed reported to receive any information from CMDT agents. Instead they cited relatives as the most important source of agricultural information (Dembélé, 1997 p. 30-31).

Even indirect relations of women to government agencies seem limited. The study by Coulibaly et al. found that only a minority of 11% of the men interviewed used to discuss issues of importance to the household with their wife before a meeting in the AV, whereas 18% of the men would give their wife a report after the meeting⁴⁹⁹ (Coulibaly et al., 1993 p. 39).

The only major exception to the general lack of contact between government agencies and women is the women's programme run by CMDT. After having totally ignored women during the first decades of its activities, the CMDT initiated a women's programme in 1983. In the period 1987-1990 it was strengthened under the name of PAAF (Projet d'Appui à l'Animation Féminine) and after 1990 it has been known as PROFED (le Projet Femmes et Développement). It has three main fields of activities: 1) activities meant to ease the work load of women (introduction of millet grinding mills, improved water supply, improved stoves, etc.) 2) activities supporting the income generation of women (credit provision, gardening activities, small-scale livestock raising, etc.) and 3) educational activities (literacy courses, health education, etc.). Although in theory women have access to credit via the AV, in practice their access is extremely limited. Since 1987 the women's programme has provided short and medium term credit to women for income-generating activities (Zuidberg & Djiré, 1992 p. 28; De Groote et al., 1995a p. 21-22). While the programme has previously been criticized for being limited in scope and its activities said to be too scattered to have any real impact on the situation of women in the region (Zuidberg & Djiré, 1992 p. 39; Rondeau, 1994 p. 213-223), recent changes aim at an integration of gender aspects into all activities undertaken by CMDT (Dembélé et al., 1997 p. 5).

In addition to this CAC has small gardening and sheep-fattening projects for women in a few villages in the region, funded by the Test Zones programme.

⁴⁹⁹ Interestingly, the study found that men who reported to their wife were usually from households without other male members (Coulibaly, 1993 p. 39). This supports the view of Chantal Rondeau that women in small households have more influence on their husband than women in extended families (even if Rondeau mainly refers to the influence of women on their working hours in the common field) (Rondeau, 1994 p. 198).

THE 'TEST ZONES PROGRAMME'

Because the 'Test Zones programme' was used as an entrance point to the study of the four agencies and because the project is affecting the results of the village survey reported in chapter 10, a brief presentation of the project is made in the following.

The 'Test Zones programme' ('Le Programme Zones-Tests') was an environmental project funded by Norway through the World Bank. It was officially initiated in late 1990, but due to the turbulence after the change of regime activities only started during 1993. The funding stopped in 1995. In addition to Kadiolo and Koutiala cercles in the Sikasso region the project had activities in the Djenné cercle in the Mopti region (N'Djim et al., 1993 p. 4-5).

The idea of the project was to assist a total of 20 villages in the three cercles to prepare local land management plans - the so-called 'schéma d'aménagement de terroir'. This demanded a coordinated effort by the forestry service, the livestock service, CMDT and CAC that were supposed to undertake joint extension sessions in the villages involved and share a common budget for the activities funded by the project. It made part of the ambitions of the programme to improve the integration of efforts by the various agencies, increase the discretion by the arrondissement level, and change the traditional top-down approach by government agents into a role as advisors to the rural population (MAEE, 1992a).

In its early phase reference was sometimes made to the project as an example of a new and promising approach to collaboration between the agencies in MDRE and even as a pilot test of the institutional reform of MDRE (ref. chapter 9.1) (e.g. World Bank, 1992a p.12-14). The project, however, was characterised by a wide range of problems and can hardly be described as a success. Based on my participation in August 1993 in a World Bank review of the project and on interviews carried out with staff from the four agencies in late 1994, the following account of the main problems can be made:

First, instead of providing an example of how to improve the collaboration between the various agencies, the 'Test Zones programme' was itself suffering from the compartmentalised structure of MDRE. It turned out to be very difficult to make the four agencies meet, let alone carry out joint extension sessions at village level. The major interest of the agencies was to get access to project funds dedicated to accompanying activities ('mesures incitatives') meant to increase the interest of the population in the project and thereby facilitate the introduction of the idea of land management plans. Rather than being used for joint activities, a major part of the funds, therefore, was shared between the agencies and used for ordinary activities in their various fields (e.g. the forestry service used the funds for tree planting, the livestock service used it for cultivation of fodder crops, etc.). Exceptions to this picture were a few positive examples of close collaboration between the agencies in the Kadiolo cercle where some field staff experienced a hitherto unknown work satisfaction by working in teams for a common cause.

Second, instead of granting increased discretion to the arrondissement level, the project was caught in the traditional hierarchical structure of the ministry, and front-line staff had a very limited say on project activities. The project was prepared by the central level, and lower level staff were simply told to carry it out. Information to those supposed to execute the activities on the objective of land management plans was very scarce, and many front-line staff never grasped

the idea. For those who did, it was a source of constant frustration that their reservations with regard to time schedules and priority of activities were usually neglected. When for example they insisted that it would be impossible to hold meetings with farmers to prepare land management plans in the middle of the cotton harvest, they were just told to do as it had been decided in Bamako.

Third, the project by no means managed to establish a new relationship with farmers, but government staff addressed farmers in the usual top-down manner. The population in the selected villages were never asked if they were interested in preparing land management plans. When they very clearly said that they were not but wanted only the 'mesures incitatives', this did not make the project management in Bamako change its mind. Instead of an active participation by the population in the preparation of the plans, government staff did most of the tasks themselves, and consequently the sketchy plans developed were of very limited use.

Fourth, the project ran in to many of the problems so often related to donor-funded activities. There was no real ownership of it in the ministry, and the coordination unit responsible for its implementation had no power to make the various agencies cooperate. Cumbersome funding procedures by the World Bank repeatedly blocked activities in the field and created animosity by disappointed populations. And in the preparation of the project priority seems to have been given to getting the activities off the ground rather than ensure that an appropriate project design was made. While official criteria for selection of villages considered geographical and agro-ecological conditions, the project management accepted that real criteria were purely political. The position of the village chief in the former unitary party, UDPM, appears to have been decisive for the choice of villages which implied that the majority of villages included in the programme were very little suited to the preparation of land management plans: e.g. one village had no land itself but had borrowed from a neighbouring village, in one village situated close to a mine the population were not interested in agricultural activities at all, several villages were so affected by internal conflicts that it was impossible to prepare a common plan, etc.

The various problems implied that achievements in terms of environmental improvement by the project have been negligible. However, it provided some much needed funding to three of the four agencies otherwise crippled by a difficult financial situation (viz. the forestry service, the livestock service and CAC). It was possible for the agencies to finance activities part of their regular programme by funds for the 'Test Zones programme', and the project provided them with transport and allowances for visits to the village. It is this impact of the project that is reflected in the village survey presented in chapter 10.

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