



Summer 1978

## **Administering Agricultural Developing in Asia: a Comparative Analysis of Four National Programs**

George E. Radosevich

### **Recommended Citation**

George E. Radosevich, *Administering Agricultural Developing in Asia: a Comparative Analysis of Four National Programs*, 18 NAT. RES. J. 696 (1978).

Available at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol18/iss3/17>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Natural Resources Journal by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

# ADMINISTERING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOUR NATIONAL PROGRAMS

by

RICHARD W. GABLE and J. FRED SPRINGER

Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado 1976

398 pp., \$20.00

This book is an effort of Messrs. Gable and Springer to describe in accurate detail how the administrative machinery affecting rice production in four Asian countries operates, and why, in comparison to each other, the programs progressed as they did. It is a unique attempt at comparative analysis of internal factors in the decision making process of agricultural development programs.

Two basic objectives were pursued by the authors. The first was to provide a descriptive knowledge about the administration of the rice production programs. The second objective was to provide theoretical knowledge derived from a comparative analysis of the administration of such programs. It is asserted there is a need to discover how national development can be accelerated by administrative means. The farmer is still the central figure in any agricultural production program, and rice was selected as the commodity produced because of its inseparable importance to people in many Asian countries. Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea and Thailand were selected to test their design of comparative empirical research. It is an approach of exploratory research and analysis with the aim of discovering theory, not confirming it.

From all the discussion of their methodology, the important point is that Gable and Springer choose to describe the four administrative systems based upon collecting and analyzing perceptions of agency administrators themselves, and not from collecting data and making their own assumptions of the systems. The dimensions of their "perception" interviews with these officials were: discretion and authority, adaptiveness and creativity, hierarchical relations, intra-agency cooperation and legislative relations, work load, efficiency, morale, communications and orientations toward clientele. In order to realistically conduct their examination of rice production programs of the four Asian countries, they limited their study to partial systems in each country and to a single point in time: 1970 to 1971. The analysis was conducted at three levels within the administrative system: the individual was the lowest level, the agency within which he worked was the intermediate level and the highest level was the rice production program. The "partial systems approach" selected pre-

vented the authors from investigating the entire agricultural program or the national administrative system. A basic assumption was that the administrative culture of an agency or program is partially the product of the perceptions of the personnel who work in it.

Chapter 1 goes into lengthy detail on the methodological approaches examined by the authors, and why they chose to approach them. The chapter is long but complete, and it sets the stage for the remaining text.

Immediately, in the second chapter, Gable and Springer "let you in" on their perception of the agricultural development issue, and on a position with which I fully agree. They state:

Myths and misunderstandings have grown up about the farmers in poor countries which mask the real problems and sometimes mislead policymakers. Traditional agriculture is not wholly static; farmers are not inefficient in using the agricultural factors of production they have at their disposal; they are not poor because they are incompetent and irrational nor are they unresponsive to price changes when they have the means to respond.<sup>1</sup>

The authors go on to say that it is necessary to generate an ecologically adapted and economically viable agricultural technology in each country as well as to modify the social, political and economic institutions to utilize these technologies if a rapid expansion in agricultural production is to be achieved. Realizing this is easier said than done, they give as the most elementary steps to introduction of new technologies: discovery, adaptation, acceptance, adoption and adjustment.

Again I am in full agreement with the authors as they emphasize the necessity for less developed countries (LDC's) embarking upon agricultural development programs to formulate comprehensive policies that clearly spell out the goals and also to provide administrative systems to implement the policies. They hypothesize that a nation without such policies and implementing machinery is unlikely to succeed in creating a modern agriculture. Observing the many experiences in Asia, Gable and Springer note that the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) in Taiwan concluded that fabricating improved technologies is not the tough part to economic development; the challenge is the organizational tasks of recombining human behavior under new rules to put the more effective technologies to widespread use.<sup>2</sup> These are the tasks of the administrative system.

---

1. R. GABLE & J. SPRINGER, *ADMINISTERING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOUR NATIONAL PROGRAMS* 47 (1976).

2. Joint Comm'n on Rural Reconstruction, *Agri-Development and Its Contribution to Economic Growth in Taiwan*, ECON. DIG. (April 1966).

Interestingly enough, this observation by the JCRR in 1966 has not significantly impacted the agricultural development programs and research efforts of many international and national funding agencies. The authors cite from other works and proceed to illustrate the remaining seven chapters of their book, and as this reviewer has likewise observed in many developing countries and the Western United States, that it is easy to develop improvement programs for agricultural production, water quality control, etc., but to combine the technology with the foresight in designing an appropriate administrative system to implement the program is where post-project evaluations show the real challenge exists.

In chapters 3, 4 and 5, the reader will find a thorough description of each country's rice production program, the economic background leading to the program adoption, program policies, administrative structures, research efforts and incentives to farmers to adopt the programs. After describing the programs and administrative structures, Springer and Gable go into the personal histories of selected rice program personnel, their background, education levels, degree of mobility, etc. Unfortunately, the reader is not clearly informed as to what job position these officials hold, i.e., chief administrator, field staff, etc.

Quoting from Raphaeli, the authors note that the administrative culture is an extension of the greater social culture.<sup>3</sup> Therefore it was considered crucial that attitudes of the personnel be examined in great detail, and in such a manner that the results were a reflection of these attitudes and not the perceptions of the authors. Time perspective, authority consciousness, and misanthropy were the three broad categories of attitudinal evaluations. Among the personnel findings of interest are that males make up the rice program employees in all four countries, except that in Thailand 1 out of 5 employees are women, and that these employees are generally from the lower middle class, born in a village, and with the exception of Korean personnel, belong to one or more social groups. It was also noted that Indonesian and Korean employees are dissatisfied with their salary levels.

In evaluating the rice production programs, Gable and Springer placed much emphasis upon administrative capability or productivity, i.e., "The ability of an organization to respond to felt needs in the environment, mobilize necessary resources and utilize them to provide goods and services that produce desired outcomes."<sup>4</sup> Their

---

3. R. GABLE & J. SPRINGER, *supra* note 1, at 165.

4. *Id.* at 278.

interviews provided data on the "best" and "worst" administration in three categories of concern: instrumental, programmatic and socio-political environment. The results showed that over one-half of Indonesians, Filipinos and Thais were concerned with how the government administered its programs, adequate budget, simplicity in organizational procedures, corruption and coercion. The Koreans, on the other hand, focused more on programmatic concerns—government policies and rural objectives. Likewise, with the exception of the Indonesians, personnel in the other three countries are optimistic over their rice production programs and the Koreans especially feel their government's program comes close to their own expectations.

Special credit must be given for the authors' efforts in the final chapter; a well written synthesis of what is, what ought to be, and what is needed to succeed in agricultural development, based upon their research and observations. They note their research subjects took two different policy strategies to hopefully achieve the same goal—increased rice production. Indonesia and the Philippines selected a science and technology strategy, introducing the green revolution and its associated new biological technologies. Korea and Thailand, on the other hand, adopted a resource-based strategy. They attempted to increase rice production by improving upon existing production methods. This classification cannot be strictly applied, because some overlap into the other strategy exists in all four countries.

The results were interesting. In the first half of the 1960's, a higher production rate occurred in the technology-based strategy, then tapered off during the second half of the decade. The production rate in the resource-based strategy improved greatly in the first half of the 1960's, although not as high as the technology-based policy, but by the end of the 1960's, it was clear that Korea and Thailand needed more technological oriented inputs into their program to keep up with the expanding population.

Administrative performance is explained in great detail, but one point that appears most significant is that political support and commitment of resources is a big reason for greater production in the Indonesian and Filipino programs, although there are wide differences in accomplishment between these two programs for various other reasons. The authors conclude by observing that there are many effective approaches and strategies to the problems of development in LDC's. But whatever strategy selected, it is essential to have a "deep understanding of the administrative system within a specific country." Furthermore, any successful development program must

recognize and incorporate social objectives, organized opportunities and individual abilities.

To summarize, this book is a well written, valuable account of the role of administration in development programs, based upon a comparative analysis of four nations' rice production programs. Some parts read slowly as the authors' expanded upon the data synthesis; but in general, this book will serve for some time as an excellent reference. It is highly recommended to officials in international and national funding agencies, to researchers working in LDC's and government and agency officials in developing countries contemplating program initiation or changes. The reviewer finds that too often development programs are conceived, designed and initiated by officials or researchers with a strong technical background. Thus success is perceived as the installation of a canal or turnout, leveled field or introduction of a seed variety, without consideration of the long run program operation, maintenance and constant rehabilitation. Gable and Springer demonstrate the need for a balance in any agricultural development program between technology and institution building.

GEORGE E. RADOSEVICH\*

---

\*Attorney and Associate Professor, Colorado State University.