Some Insights Into the Bureaucratic Culture in Eastern Visayas

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Introduction

Overview

In a society where the actions of government influence virtually every act that a citizen performs, the role of the organization that has a critical part in making the government a "going concern" is worthy of close evaluation. A major portion of this "machinery of men" which performs the implementing functions can also be called the "bureaucracy."

While this paper is not a very detailed assessment of the bureaucratic system of government in the Eastern Visayas Region, it delves on several "hot" and sensitive issues in the regional public affairs scene. This study probes into the opinions of national and local government executives in Region VIII on such current concerns as: decentralization, national-local government relations, private sector participation, planning, communications, and budgeting.

The focus on the leaders of the bureaucratic structure is in line with the assumption that the perception and observations of the leader and of policy- and decision-makers are determining factors in the type of decisions and consequent actions of government agencies. In addition, an analysis of these perceptions provides substantial insights into the patterns of behavior of the officials who occupy key executive as well as field positions in the bureaucracy.

What evolves in this study are insights into a bureaucratic culture that has its inner contradictions, its fluidity. It is a culture that reveals a flux, a change of attitudes influenced by the social, economic, and political environment.

NEDA Region VIII. Preliminary version of a Study on Managerial Perceptions of Government Executives in the Eastern Visayas Region being undertaken by NEDA, Region VIII.

Statement of the Problem

The Five-Year Eastern Visayas Regional Development Plan (1978-82) cites as one of the strategies for regional development, the "strengthening of administrative capability supportive of regional development" in national government agencies and local government units. The selection of this objective indicates that while present performance of government agencies is creditable, there is still room for improvement. The problem to which this paper is addressed is closely similar to the concern for improving administrative capability in Region VIII. Broadly, the problem that this paper seeks to answer is that of identifying the perceptions of government executives regarding major issues and practices of current concern which are relevant to the exercise of their official functions. These perceptions often become inputs into the preparation and implementation of development programs in the region. The findings in this study can also be used by the Regional Development Council in the formulation of resolutions that would improve administrative efficiency and provide national policy-makers with decision-making inputs valuable in shaping national policy.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are the following:

1) to evaluate the impact of major government reforms as they relate to the attainment of development goals and objectives;

2) to analyze the state of interagency and government private sector coordination;

3) to assess the administrative capability and needs of local and national governments; and

4) to analyze factors which influence the capability of local and national governments to carry out development programs.

This study attempts to achieve these objectives within the context of the Eastern Visayas Region.

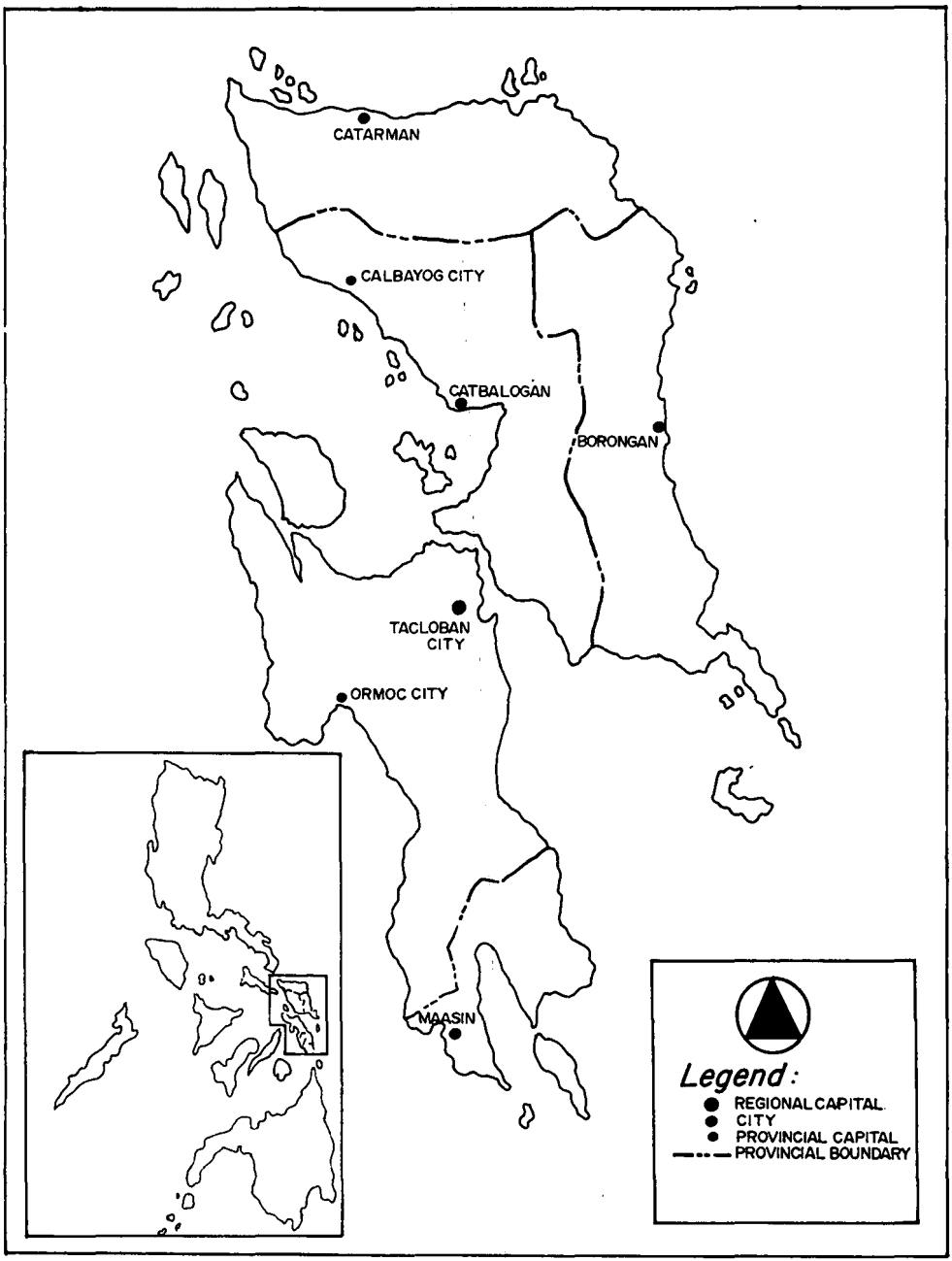
Definition of Key Terms

1) *Bureaucracy*. According to Weber, it is a concept of the most efficient form of organization that could be used effectively for complex organizations. The basic features of a bureaucracy are the following:

a.) division of labor based on functional specialization;

b.) well-defined hierarchy of authority;

Figure 1
LOCATION MAP, EASTERN VISAYAS REGION



c.) a system of rules covering the rights and duties of positional incumbents;

d.) a system of procedures for dealing with work situations;

e.) impersonality of interpersonal relations; and

f.) promotion and selection for employment based upon technical competence.

The bureaucracy that we refer to in this paper is primarily constituted by the government agencies with offices in the Eastern Visayas Region.

2) *Bureaucratic culture.* The definition formulated by Fred Al. Clemente II in his study on bureaucratic behavior is adopted in this paper. Bureaucratic culture refers to the cognitions, attitudes, and beliefs that form the subjective orientation to the administrative system and its environment. The bureaucratic culture consists of two patterns:

a.) the idealized, formal, and abstract pattern which sets what the actors in an administrative system supposedly must do in specific situations; and

b.) the behavioral pattern which draws from the idealized obstruction the way the actor usually behaves in specific situations.

3) The three levels of management analyzed in this paper are the following:

a.) *top management*—composed of the regional directors of national government agencies and mayors of local government units;

b.) *middle management*—composed of the chief of divisions in the regional offices of national agencies; and

c.) *field management*—composed of the provincial, city, and municipal heads of national agencies.

Methodology

The questionnaire method was used in gathering data for this study. The respondents can be categorized into three managerial levels, namely:

1) Top management	(regional directors, mayors, and governors)
2) Middle managers	(division chiefs of regional agencies)

3) Field managers (head agency personnel in provincial, city, and offices of national agencies)

The respondents were chosen through a random sample. NEDA researchers personally delivered the questionnaires to respondents holding office in Tacloban City. Questionnaires were mailed to respondents holding offices outside Tacloban City. A stamped return envelope was attached to the mailed questionnaires.

The findings in this study are based principally on the responses made by randomly selected respondents. The number of respondents by management level are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Survey Respondents

Management level	Number
Top management	
National (regional directors)	7
Local (city and municipal mayors)	10
Middle management	21
Field management	22
Total	60

The responses were tabulated and a rank and percentage distribution analysis was used in arriving at the findings of the study. A comparison of perceptions among the three managerial levels was conducted. Opinions of national agency executives were cross-checked with the opinions of local government executives. This procedure resulted in several interesting and stimulating insights into the dynamics and quality of managerial interactions at the places where national agencies deliver their services to their respective clientele.

Scope and Limitations

Due to the critical nature of the subject of inquiry, there is a strong temptation to include in this study the whole array of bureaucratic practices and the factors affecting them. But such a comprehensive approach could result in a dissipation of efforts and a confused assemblage of findings. This paper, then, includes a selected group of issues and/or topics that are essential in

understanding the culture in the prevailing bureaucracy that operates in the Eastern Visayas Region. The aspects of the bureaucratic culture that are included in the scope of this study are the following: decentralization, communications, planning and budgeting, national-local government relations, coordination, private sector participation, administrative capability, and management style. The views of government managers on these issues provide feedback on the administrative reforms which have been implemented in the bureaucracy. Reactions to the field implementation of these reforms and of government programs provide key ideas on how to improve the effectiveness of government agencies at various levels in the administrative hierarchy.

This study is largely based on an opinion survey. Consequently, the findings are qualitative and based on responses which are very often subjective. The subdued consideration of quantitative factors, while resulting in a less comprehensive analysis, is possibly the approach best suited to a study of this nature— where the objects of inquiry are individual perceptions of key decision makers in a "regional" bureaucracy. This is not to say, however, that in this study no attempt is made to apply quantitative techniques of analysis. The use of rank and percentage distribution manifests the attempt to translate qualitative responses into quantitative measures.

The Survey Findings

The Survey Results in Detail

Decentralization

An issue posed to the respondents was about their assessment of the decentralization of national agency functions. Table 2 reveals that regional directors strongly agree that decentralization will help the government achieve a more efficient and effective delivery of services. However, the same opinion is not wholly adopted by top managers at the local government level. Ten per cent of the mayors even contend that it is uncertain whether decentralization will result in an improved delivery of government services. While field managers agree to the same proposition, a small segment (4.8 per cent) among the middle managers has doubts about the positive impact of decentralization.

Table 2. Comments on the Effectiveness and Efficiency of National Agency Functions, by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

	Management level[1]			
	Top management			
Comment	National	Local	Middle	Field
Strongly agree	100.0	30	71.4	81.8
Agree	—	60	23.8	18.2
Uncertain	—	10	4.8	—
Disagree	—	—	—	—
Strongly disagree	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

[1]Management Level:

National = Regional directors
Local = Municipal mayors
Middle = Division chief
Field = Provincial, city, and municipal heads

Source: NEDA Regional Office (NRO) VIII, Survey of Managerial Perceptions (SMP).
*Reflection of vested of top management levels?

When asked to comment on the way decentralization has been effected in their respective national agencies, not all regional directors feel satisfied, 14.3 per cent are uncertain although 28.6 per cent feel very satisfied. On the other hand, 10 per cent of local officials consider the present decentralization as very unsatisfactory (Table 3). Some of them feel that "there are still some regional offices that are not independent from the national agencies."

On the part of middle managers, there is a strong consensus that the existing pattern of decentralization is at least satisfactory. Of this group, only 14.3 per cent think that the manner of decentralization is unsatisfactory. A few of them feel that few functions have so far been decentralized and many believe that more functions should be delegated from the central office to the regional office particularly those involving financial and personnel management.

Field managers are generally satisfied with the existing decentralization of functions. However, 18.2 per cent of them feel otherwise. A significant comment was "decentralization has paved the way for some abuses especially on finances." Others complained that requested allotments are often delayed, and that matters which are better decided and implemented in the lower level are still handled by the top administrative level.

Table 3. Comments on Decentralization of Agency Functions to Regional Offices by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Very satisfactory	28.6	20.0	33.3	31.8
Satisfactory	57.1	40.0	42.9	50.0
Uncertain	14.3	10.0	9.5	—
Unsatisfactory	0	20.0	14.3	18.2
Very unsatisfactory	0	10.0	0	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

It was observed earlier that the management of national agencies at the regional level strongly agree that decentralization will be a positive factor that will result in better governmental performance. When asked about the technical capability of their personnel to carry out decentralized functions, 28.6 per cent of them feel uncertain. (Table 4). Some of their middle and field managers even think that, in some instances, those who are assigned delegated functions do not possess adequate skills to successfully carry out those functions. Some local government executives also share the same view. Some field managers think that "personnel at the lower level are not yet fully aware of how a decentralized office should be run and what skills are required for this purpose." A field manager remarked that "more training and work experience are needed in the lower level." Several regional directors also had the same assessment.

Table 4. Comments on Technical Capability by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Strongly agree	57.1	30.0	33.3	31.8
Agree	14.3	30.0	47.7	50.0
Uncertain	28.6	30.0	9.5	9.1
Disagree	0	10.0	9.2	9.1
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

2. Communication

The survey revealed that regional directors are satisfied with the present interagency communication channels. However, top management of local government units have some doubts about these channels. Ten per cent of them even think that these are unsatisfactory. In sharp contrast to the assessment of their regional directors, many middle managers feel that the existing channels of interagency communication are unsatisfactory. They are of the opinion that in some instances there is a lack of communication and in other occasions, the transmittal of such communication is very slow. Generally, field managers are satisfied with the current status of communication flows. However, 13.6 per cent feel that these channels are largely "unsatisfactory, inadequate, and slow." A suggestion was made to the effect that "the managerial communication gap can be overcome through management by objective" (Table 5).

Table 5. Comments on Existing Interagency Communication Channels, by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Very satisfactory	—	20	4.8	18.2
Satisfactory	100.0	60	52.4	63.7
Uncertain	—	10	9.5	4.5
Unsatisfactory	—	10	33.3	13.6
Very unsatisfactory	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

Top management of national agencies feel that existing channels of communication between agencies and local government units are satisfactory. Many of their middle managers, however, think otherwise. Thirty three per cent of them disagree. A few of the field managers also disagreed (Table 6). This group stated that the public does not recognize the relevance of communications among agencies in the success of project implementation. A respondent stated that "it is the sponsoring agency's responsibility to communicate with other coordinating agencies."

management feels that the last ones to be approached on the matter are the central office of the Budget Commission and an IBP Assemblyman. Middle managers use almost the same channels except that they are bent on approaching primarily the central office, then the RDC Chairman, and then the NEDA Regional Executive Director. They would approach last a governor and an IBP assemblyman. Field managers follow the same communication avenues used and/or preferred by top management except that they have a relatively low regard for the influence of the RDC chairman in facilitating project implementation (Table 8).

Table 8. Communication Channels by Level, in Rank, 1978

Communication Channel	Management level		
	Top management	Middle	Field
Central Office of Agency	1	1	1
Governor	3	6	3
Central Office of Budget Commission	5	5	5
Regional Office of Budget Commission	2	4	4
IBP Assemblyman	6	7	7
RDC Chairman	4	2	6
NEDA	2	3	2
Others	7	8	8

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

On the side of local governments, top management prefers to approach the regional director concerned, the governor, and then the RDC chairman when proposing the implementation of major projects. After these channels have been approached, local chief executives would then seek the assistance of the NEDA regional executive director and an IBP assemblyman.

3. Planning and Budgeting

National agency executive predominantly feel that the present planning process in their respective agencies are satisfactory (Table 9). Some middle managers have reservations on the desirability of existing planning practices. In a few agencies it was suggested that planning functions be handled by a separate unit, implying the absence of separate planning units in some agencies. A respondent commented that their agency plans still come from their central

Table 6. Comments on Communication Channels Between Agencies & Local Government Units, by Levels, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level		
	Top management	Middle	Field
Strongly agree	28.6	52.4	18.2
Agree	71.4	14.3	63.7
Uncertain	—	33.3	4.5
Disagree	—	—	13.6
Strongly disagree	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

The management level of agencies operating in the region basically agree that the existing channels of communication are being utilized for the optimum achievement of regional development goals. However, some middle and field managers are of the opposite opinion (Table 7). They feel that there is a need for constant follow-ups to obtain favorable results. Some of them suggested holding seminar-workshops in order to strengthen communication links.

Table 7. Comments on Utilization of Communication Channels, by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Very satisfactory	85.7	0	4.7	27.3
Satisfactory	14.3	60	57.1	68.2
Uncertain	—	30	19.1	4.5
Unsatisfactory	—	10	19.1	—
Very satisfactory	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

For regional directors, the preferred communication channels for facilitating the approval and release of funds include primarily the central office of their respective agencies, the regional office of the Budget Commission, the NEDA Regional Executive Director, and the Governor of the province where projects are located. Top

office. Several middle managers suggested the conduct of more training in budget allocation and in the preparation of feasibility studies.

Table 9. Evaluation on Planning Practices, by Level, 1978

Comment	Management level (Percent distribution)		
	Top management	Middle	Field
Very satisfactory	28.6	19.1	36.4
Satisfactory	71.4	61.9	54.6
Uncertain	—	9.5	4.5
Unsatisfactory	—	9.5	4.5
Very unsatisfactory	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The majority of local government executives approve the existing planning procedures. Only (10 per cent) adopt a contrary view (Table 10).

Table 10. Evaluation of Planning Practices, Local Government, 1978

Comment	No. of respondents	Percentage distribution
Very satisfactory	1	10
Satisfactory	6	60
Uncertain	2	20
Unsatisfactory	1	10
Very unsatisfactory	—	—
Total	10	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

Regional directors feel that the existing budgeting process is satisfactory. However, many of their middle and field managers think otherwise (Table 11). The process often results in inadequately funded projects. Several field managers observe that in the present budgetary setup, there are occasions when funds are used up before the project is even started and that few projects are given to certain areas of the region.

Table 11. Comments on Budgeting Process, by Level, 1978

Comment	Management level (Percent distribution)		
	Top management	Middle	Field
Very satisfactory	28.6	9.5	28.6
Satisfactory	71.4	52.4	57.1
Uncertain	—	14.3	9.5
Unsatisfactory	—	23.8	4.8
Very unsatisfactory	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII.

Local government executives are generally satisfied with the budget process that is in effect in local government units (Table 12). But some of them observed the delay in the approval of budgets and that there is often no room for "collection incentives."

Table 12. Comments on Budgeting Process, Local Government, 1978

Opinion	No. of respondents	Percentage distribution
Very satisfactory	1	10
Satisfactory	7	70
Uncertain	2	20
Unsatisfactory	—	—
Very unsatisfactory	—	—
Total	10	100.0

Source: NRO VIII.

According to the regional directors, their agencies involve local governments in planning and budgeting primarily through the verbal identification of proposed projects or through informal consultations. Local involvement also occurs in the submission of project proposals and socioeconomic data. Only on a few occasions do they involve local governments in actual plan formulation (Table 13a and 13b). Middle and field managers share the same view. However, local government executives predominantly feel that they are actually involved in plan formulation in addition to providing inputs into the planning process.

Table 13a. Involvement in Planning and Budgeting, by Level, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Yes	4	4	11	13
No	3	6	10	9
Total	7	10	21	22

Table 13b. Involvement in Planning and Budgeting by Management Level, Percentage Exposure, 1978

Comment	Management leve			
	Top management			
	National n/7	Local n/10	Middle n/21	Field n/22
Submission of written project proposal	42.8	20	23.8	31.8
Verbal identification of proposed projects and information consultation	57.1	50	33.3	40.9
Submission of socioeconomic data	42.8	90	23.8	22.7
Actual involvement in plan formulation	28.5	20	14.2	27.2
Others	—	—	—	22.7

Source: NRO VIII.

Top management of national agencies operating in Eastern Visayas are satisfied with the present linkages between planning and budgeting in their agencies. Their lower level managers, however, do not totally share the same view (Table 14). A few of the chiefs of division who responded to the survey feel that the existing linkage is unsatisfactory. There is a feeling that there is often a discrepancy between plans and budgets. Plans are based on actual needs while budgets are based on available funds. A few ventured to say that budget allocation per program is largely the prerogative of bureaus in the central office.

Table 14. Planning and Budgeting Linkages, National Level, 1978

Opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage distribution
Very satisfactory	2	28.6
Satisfactory	5	71.4
Uncertain	—	—
Unsatisfactory	—	—
Very unsatisfactory	—	—
Total	7	100.0

Source: NRO VII, SMP.

Local government executives are generally satisfied with the planning and budgeting linkages in their respective areas. Only 10 per cent adopt the opposite view (Table 15).

Table 15. Planning and Budgeting Linkages, Local Government, 1978

Opinion	No. of respondents	Percentage distribution
Very satisfactory	1	10
Satisfactory	7	70
Uncertain	1	10
Unsatisfactory	1	10
Very unsatisfactory	—	—
Total	10	100

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

4. National-Local Government Relations

The management of Region VIII generally shares the observation that the local governments in the region are fully doing their part in coordinating with and supporting national agencies in project implementation. But while no local chief executive have a dissenting view, some regional directors (14.3 per cent) and middle managers disagree (23.8 per cent).

The relationship that points to the other direction, this time—support of national agencies to local governments—is judged as satisfactory. No regional director subscribes to the statement that national agencies have been rendering unsatisfactory support to local governments. However, some of their middle and field

managers have an opposite view. Local chief executives generally have the same view as the regional directors. Only a small 10 per cent think otherwise (Table 17). But a significant comment was "some representatives of the national agencies are not as sincere and interested in the optimum result of project implementation as the local representative." Several middle managers of national agencies observe that local governments are not regularly consulted. A common practice is "situational consultation."

Table 16. Coordination and Support in Project Implementation, by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Strongly agree	14.3	40	4.8	13.6
Agree	57.1	40	47.6	68.2
Uncertain	14.3	20	23.8	18.2
Disagree	14.3	—	23.8	—
Strongly disagree	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

Table 17. Support and Tie-Up Undertakings, by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Very satisfactory	14.3	10	9.5	22.7
Satisfactory	71.4	60	57	68.2
Uncertain	14.3	20	24	—
Unsatisfactory	—	10	9.5	9.1
Very unsatisfactory	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

NRO VIII, SMP.

5. Coordination

Regional directors and their field managers predominantly feel that present practices in interagency coordination are satisfactory. The opposite view is held by several local government executives and national agency middle managers (Table 18).

Table 18. Interagency Coordination Practices, by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978.

Comment	Management level			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Very satisfactory	14.3	10	4.8	72.8
Satisfactory	71.4	60	61.9	13.6
Uncertain	14.3	10	4.8	13.6
Unsatisfactory	—	20	28.5	—
Very unsatisfactory	—	—	—	—
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

Even as areas of coordination are being satisfactorily performed, still the management level in the regional bureaucracy are one in saying that coordination in some areas should be strengthened. Top management in national agencies identify planning as the priority area which needs more coordination followed by monitoring, budgeting, research, and then project management. Middle and field managers share the same view except that for middle managers, coordination in budgeting does not need much strengthening whereas for field managers, coordination in research is the area which does not urgently have to be strengthened (Table 19).

For local government executives, planning is likewise the area where coordination needs urgent strengthening whereas coordination in research does not have to be strengthened.

Table 19. Areas of Coordination, by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Planning	33.3	21.2	28.4	25.0
Budgeting	16.7	21.2	13.3	20.5
Project management	11.1	19.2	20	22.7
Monitoring	22.2	19.2	23.3	22.7
Research	16.7	19.2	15	9.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

6. Private Sector Participation

Over one-half (57.1 per cent) of the regional directors in Eastern Visayas are uncertain whether the private sector is adequately participating in the planning and implementation of government programs while a few (14.30 per cent) even believe that such participation is inadequate. Relatively more (38 per cent) middle and field managers have the same reservations. Most field managers either are uncertain of the issue or totally disagree to the contention that private sector participation in government program implementation is adequate (Table 20). Some of them feel that the private sector is not sufficiently involved in the planning process while a few believe that "some agencies join organizations just for prestige, resulting in a lack of commitment during the implementation process." Still, there are others who feel that "the consultation with private entities should just be situational, depending on the nature of development thrusts." Another comment is that the private sector is usually on the "wait and see side of participation."

Table 20. Involvement of Private Sector in Government Programs, by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Strongly agree	14.3	30	4.8	13.7
Agree	14.3	30	28.6	22.7
Uncertain	57.1	40	23.8	31.8
Disagree	14.3	–	38.0	22.7
Strongly disagree	–	–	4.8	9.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

Table 21 shows that the management level of the bureaucracy in the Eastern Visayas region believes that the private sector should be more involved in government activities, primarily in plan formulation. Regional directors place top priority on the need for more private sector involvement in policy making which local chief executives feel there is no urgent need of. Other areas where more private sector involvement are needed are project implementation, monitoring, and research. A field manager believes that the private sector should be

involved in budgeting, particularly for programs concerning the whole community.

Table 21. Areas of Participation in Rank, 1978

Area of Participation	Management level			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Policy-making	1	5	3	4
Plan formulation	2	1	2	1
Project Implementation	3	2	1	3
Monitoring and data-gathering	4	4	4	2
Research	5	5	5	5

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

7. Administrative Capability

The region's managerial level officials are almost unanimous in saying that the bureaucracy in this part of the country is presently capable of administering the different programs of the government. Only a small percentage (4.8 per cent) of middle managers consider existing administrative capabilities as unsatisfactory. However, a significant portion of local government executives are uncertain about the matter. Some mayors feel that there are personnel in the bureaucracy who are "misplaced or who do not belong to their proper field of assignment" while several observe the need for improving administrative skills (Table 22). Several field managers note that "favoritism and communication gap are still common" and that "implementation (of government programs) is not so adequate due to the lack of technical manpower".

Table 22. Comments on Technical Manpower, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Very satisfactory	57.1	60	19	27.3
Satisfactory	42.9	10	71.4	72.7
Uncertain	—	30	4.8	—
Unsatisfactory	—	—	4.8	—
Very unsatisfactory	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

When asked to assess the administrative capability of other agencies, the assessment cited above had few changes. Most of the region's bureaucrats who occupy management positions consider as satisfactory the existing state of administrative capability. The "uncertain" and "unsatisfactory" comments were again articulated by the middle managers. And while local government chief executives felt very satisfied with the state of administrative capability, they now modified their comment when asked to assess other government agencies. They shifted from "very satisfactory" to "satisfactory" (Table 23). Several field managers feel that "decentralization has eased up the problem of following up at the central office."

Table 23. Administrative Capability, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Comment	Management level			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Very satisfactory	—	10	9.5	28.6
Satisfactory	100.0	60	57.0	71.4
Uncertain	—	30	24.0	—
Unsatisfactory	—	—	9.5	—
Very unsatisfactory	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

Managerial incumbents are unanimous in citing project management which need to be improved. Regional directors feel that personnel administration should come next while their middle and field managers believe that financial management should receive top priority in terms of improving administrative capability. The other area cited was records management (Table 24).

8. Management Style

At a time when modern management practices are increasingly being adopted by organizations, it is surprising to note that some top and middle managers in Eastern Visayas feel that the autocratic form of management is most useful in running their respective bureaucratic units. Most top managers in national agencies prefer the autocratic-participative style while the rest subscribe to the

supportive-participative combination. This type is also a favorite choice of middle and field managers. Most local government chief executives prefer the participative style (Table 25).

Table 24. Improvement Needed in Administrative Aspect by Management Level, in Rank, 1978

Administrative Capability	Rank (Management level)			
	Top Management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Record management	3	4	4	4
Financial Management including Budgeting & Taxation	4	2	1	1
Project Management	1	1	2	2
Personnel administration	2	3	3	3

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

Table 25. Most Useful Management Style, by Level, Percentage Distribution, 1978

Style of Management	Management level)			
	Top management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Autocratic	—	12.5	4.2	—
Custodial	—	12.5	4.2	—
Supportive	—	12.5	8.3	12.5
Participative	—	43.7	25	33.3
Autocratic-Custodial	—	—	—	—
Autocratic-Supportive	—	—	—	—
Autocratic-Participative	57.1	6.3	12.5	—
Custodial-Supportive	—	—	—	—
Custodial-Participative	—	—	12.5	—
Supportive-Participative	42.9	12.5	20.8	54.2
Participative-Supportive-Autocratic	—	—	4.2	—
Participative-Supportive-Custodial	—	—	8.3	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

9. Sources of Pressure

All regional managers feel that the pressure from within the bureaucracy, including the influence of higher level managers and existing procedures, has the most telling impact on decision making. For top and field managers, the source of pressure which comes next to that of the bureaucracy is political. However, middle managers feel that the clientele is the next most influential factor, followed by family relations and by pressure from friends. To this group, political pressure has minimal impact (Table 26).

Table 26. Impact on Sources of Pressure, by Level in Rank, 1978

Sources of pressure	Management level			
	Top management			
	National	Local	Middle	Field
Bureaucratic	1	1	1	1
Political	2	2	5	2
Clientele	3	3	2	3
Family Relations	5	5	3	4
Friends	4	4	4	5

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

10. Impact of Government Programs

The question on impact of government programs based on observed socioeconomic effect was posed to local chief executives. Road construction was selected as the program with the highest impact, followed by education, crop production, health services, nutrition, and family planning. Technical and financial assistance to industries, forest development, and agrarian reform were observed to have the least positive socioeconomic effect (Table 27).

Summary of survey results

The survey findings reveal differences of opinion and bureaucratic behavior among the three managerial levels included in the study. In many instances, top managers present favorable comments while their middle and field managers adopt views which indicate deficiencies in the regulations, processes, and actions in the existing bureaucratic system. Perhaps this is a case of misinformation and should, therefore, be lightly regarded. In some instances, however, there is reason to believe that deficiencies do

Table 27. Impact on Government Programs, Local Government, 1978

Government programs	Weighted score	Overall score
Family planning	64	6
Nutrition	71	5
Road construction	118	1
Crop production	95	3
Fisheries development	64	7
Livestock and poultry production	62	8
Education	96	2
Agrarian reform	40	10
Health services	76	4
Social welfare	50	9
Technical assistance to industries	34	12
Financial Assistance to individual	35	11
Forest Development	31	13

Source: NRO VIII, SMP.

exist such as those on the linkage of planning and budgeting, in the participation (or lack of it) of the private sector, and in the very important issues on interagency coordination and national agency-local government relations. Many comments and suggestions are worth noting particularly those which refer to the need for training in project management and monitoring as well as in personnel and financial management. These comments are admissions that the existing bureaucratic culture which is the basis for the behavior of employees, can be enhanced through skills training in key aspects of management.

By including top managers at the local government level in the survey, it was possible to check and/or compare the views of national agency leaders with local government leaders. In most instances there were disparities in opinions and practices. For example, local officials observe the need for increasing administrative capability in the national agencies more than the managers of these agencies.

From the standpoint of personal interest, such a stand of top managers is easily understandable. However, even as these top managers feel that the offices that they supervise have "very satisfactory" or at least "satisfactory" administrative capability, they still accept the need for improving this capability.

Even as differences in perceptions exist among the three managerial levels, there are common views on certain aspects of bureaucratic behavior and perceptions. It is commonly felt that coordination in development planning need to be strengthened although existing practices in this regard are already satisfactory. Moreover, most managers adopt the supportive-participative style of management which refers to a managerial orientation that supports the performance of employees and considers their views in decision making.

The socioeconomic impact of government programs as executed by the region's bureaucracy is typically judged by local leaders in the context of the pressing needs of their constituents. For instance, the inadequacy of the existing basic amenities in the region leads many of them to propose road projects, crop production projects, more schools, and more hospitals. They therefore attribute more socio-economic effects to projects which answer the need for these basic amenities. Low impact is given to agrarian reform and technical/financial assistance to industries. These views are signals to the bureaucrats concerned with the implementation of programs which fall under, "low-impact" category.

Regional Development Scenario

In analyzing the results of the survey in the context of regional development, it is essential to consider briefly some indicators of development potentials and challenges in the Eastern Visayas Region.

Development Indicators

The Eastern Visayas Region is one of the most socially and economically underdeveloped areas of the country. The indicators of development shown in Table 28 reveal a gloomy situation.

Per capita output in Region VIII or Eastern Visayas is only ₱594.90 while that of the Philippines as a whole is ₱3,375. Another indicator—output per worker—shows that workers in the region are less productive than many other workers in other parts of the country. Output per worker in Region VIII is barely one-half of the national output per worker (₱2,326 compared to ₱4,704).

Agricultural indicators also present a sorry picture. Low productivity continues to be a major barrier to the region's development. In coconut production, yield per hectare is .74 metric tons while that of the country as a whole is .79 metric tons. A

Table 28. Economic and Social Indicators of Existing Development (Eastern Visayas and Philippines)

Development Indicator	Eastern Visayas	Philipi-pines	Dif-ference
Per capita output (₱)[1]	594.9	3,375	2780.1
Agricultural Productivity (Yield/Hectare(2			
Coconut	.74 M.T	.79 M.T.	.05
Palay	30.3 sacks	32.0 sacks	1.7
Corn	13.1 M.T.	16.7 M.T.	3.6
Sugar	6.03 M.T.	6.09 M.T.	.06
Abaca	.47 M.T.	.74 M.T.	.27
Output per worker (₱)[3]	2,326	4,704	2,378
Malnourished preschoolers, Percent of total[4]	80.52	44.6	35.92
Life expectancy (in years)[5]	58.59	60.0	1.41
Literacy rate (in per cent)[6]	77.6	83:4	5.8
Population 10 years old and over			
School Participation Rate[7]			
7 — 12 years old (elementary)	107.8	98.0	9.8
13 — 16 years old (secondary)	41.5	56.0	14.5
17 — 21 years old (collegiate)	9.6	17.7	8.1
Kilowatts generated/1000 persons[8]	2.95	74.0	71.05
Road density[9] (km. of roads/ sq. km. of land area(	0.25	0.33	.08
Percent of population bene-fiting from safe water sources[10]	5.46	24.4	18.94

[1]Eastern Visayas: Per Capita GRP; Phils.: Per Capita GNP, 1977. [2]1975 figures. [3]1975 figures. [4]1976 figures. [5]1976 figures. [6] to [7]Eastern Visayas Figure, 1977; Philippines, 1978. [8] to [10]1975 figures.

Sources:

1. Eastern Visayas in Perspective: A Socio-economic Profile.
2. Five-Year Philippine Development Plan, 1978-1982.
3. Five-Year Eastern Visayas Development Plan, 1978-82.
4. Crop Statistics 1975, BAEcon.
5. Eastern Visayas Region Perspective Plan, 1978-2000.

hectare of rice field in Eastern Visayas yields an average of 30.3 sacks, slightly lower than the national average of 32.0 sacks. The same pattern holds true for corn, sugar, and abaca.

Social indicators also present a depressed state. Eighty per cent of preschoolers are malnourished whereas, the national situation

reveals only 44.6 per cent. Life expectancy is a low 58.59 years while that of the country is 60.0 years. The literacy rate in Region VIII is 77.6 per cent, lower than the national rate of 83.4 per cent. School participation rate is high in the elementary level due to the presence of overaged pupils who entered school late or who dropped out in earlier years. In the secondary level, the region's school participation rate is only 41.5 per cent (i.e, only 41.5 per cent of children 13 to 16 years of age are actually attending school) while the national rate is 56 per cent. The situation is worse in the collegiate level with a school participation rate of only 9.6 per cent, a far cry from the national rate of 17.7 per cent. Infrastructure/utilities indicators also reveal that the region lags behind many other regions of the country. Energy generated per one thousand persons is a low 2.95 kilowatts for Region VIII but a high 74 kilowatts for the entire country. Road density is only 0.25 in Eastern Visayas but 0.33 for the Philippines. Only 5.46 per cent of the population of Region VIII benefit from safewater sources, while that of the country is 24.4 per cent.

In sum, the present socioeconomic conditions of the region is dominated by the gloomy realities of poverty and underdevelopment. The critical question that comes to mind is this: What hope is there for the development of the Eastern Visayas Region? The answer to such a question is aptly described by the indicators of development potential shown in Table 29.

Development Potentials

There are 886,077 hectares of arable land in the region. Irrigable areas have a total of 111,998 hectares with only 32,781 hectares or 29.3 per cent presently irrigated. Identified potential energy from geothermal and thermal sources reach 295 megawatts. Medium-sized hydro-electric sources can generate another 38.4 megawatts while micro hydro-electric generating potentials is at 1,200 kilowatts. There are eight large fishing grounds surrounding the region. Many of the region's agricultural and industrial products can still undergo further processing even locally. Notable among these are copra, logs, copper ore, coconut oil, and abaca. The region has a sizable labor force of 948,000 persons.

Challenges for Regional Development

Given the current status of development and potentials for growth described earlier, what then are the crucial challenges which have to be surmounted in order to improve the quality of life in this part of the country?

Table 29. Indicators of Development Potentials, Eastern Visayas Region

Indicator	Information/data
Arable land[1]	886,077 hectares
Irrigable area[2]	111,998 hectares
Identified potential energy	
Geothermal and Thermal	295 Megawatts
Hydro-Micro	1,200 Kilowatts
Hydro-Medium-sized	38.4 Megawatts
Fishing grounds (8)	Maqueda Bay, Visayas Sea Carigara Bay, Leyte Gulf Samar Sea, Sogod Bay San Pedro Bay, Camotes Sea
Agricultural Production that can undergo further processing[3]	
Coconut oil	12;253.793 M.T. (metric tons)
Muscovado	213.3 M.T.
Abaca	28,686.4 M.T.
Lumber	1,277.36 bd. ft.
Copperore/concentrate	11,661.56 D.M.T. 9dry metric tons)
Pyrite concentrate	28;085 D.M.T.
Pellets	7,137.750 M.T.
Copra	292;071 M.T.
Bentonite clay	1,896.69 D.M.T.
Ribonucleic acid concentrate	9,653 M.T.
Logs	38,725.992 M.T.
Fish (catch)	94,814:28 M.T.
Labor force[4]	948,000

[1]41.3% of total land area.

[2]This ncludes indentified and surveyed areas only as of 1975.

[3]Figures for Muscovado, Abaca and Fish catch were gathered in 1975; Lumber and Copra production are for 1976; all the rest are 1977 figures.

[4]1977 figures.

Sources:
1. Eastern Visayas in Perspective; A Socio-Economic Profile.
2. Annual Reports from government agencies and the private sector.
3. Five-Year Eastern Visayas Region Development Plan.

The Eastern Visayas Five-Year Regional Development Plan, 1978-1982 cites the following challenges:

1) generating employment opportunities at the rate of about 22,080 new jobs per year;

2) increasing agricultural productivity;

3) improving the transportation network and facilities;

4) providing sufficient power primarily to propel industrial growth;

5) providing basic services to a rapidly urbanizing society; and

6) improving the peace and order situation in areas with subversive elements.

The bureaucracy has a crucial role in improving the relatively low quality of life in the region. As the implementing arm of the government, it has to play the lead role in transforming the region's potential into realities that would bring benefits to the regional community. The challenges can be surmounted by a bureaucracy that is able to function to its fullest. The extent to which the bureaucracy can live up to its billing and mandate as a principal change agent in society can be deduced from the behavior and perceptions of those who occupy managerial positions.

The task at hand is, therefore, that of relating the regional development scenario described in this section with the perceptions observed in the survey findings in the previous section. This is discussed in the next section of this paper.

Implications On Regional Development

The insights into the perceptions of management in the bureaucracy that operates in the Eastern Visayas region are useful in the improvement of planning and implementation of government programs. While the findings do not specify managerial practices in specific programs, they provide knowledge on the dynamics of bureaucratic behavior as they occur in the conduct of a broad array of government projects. The implications of such managerial perceptions on regional development efforts are described below.

Decentralization

The favorable acceptance of decentralized functions falls well into the generally accepted situation that those who are geographically nearer the cause and/or source of the problem are in the best position to act on them without reference to higher authorities. Such a situation is made more meaningful by the fact that Eastern Visayas is a "new" administrative region. The provinces in the islands of Leyte and Samar were previously included in the Eastern Visayas region with Cebu City as its capital. As a new region, technical constraints serve as obstacles to the smooth operationalization of decentralized responsibilities. Taking the cue from the local

government executives, there is a need to enhance capabilities at the subregional levels to improve the effects of decentralization so that these government offices at these levels will benefit from decentralization as much as their regional-capital based counterparts. Hence, there is an emerging view that decentralization must not stop at the regional office. Several administrative and substantive functions can further be decentralized to the provincial, city, and municipal levels of the bureaucracy.

Communications

Weaknesses in the existing interagency communication links are apparent from the survey findings. The rugged geographical configuration of the region possibly accounts for the slow intra-regional flow of communications. Development opportunities and fast action at the time of need are often missed due to physical obstacles in communications. The need to improve this situation is closely tied up with gains that will be attained in road construction and telecommunications.

A study conducted by a research team from UP Tacloban concluded that in the Eastern Visayas region, all the known channels of communication can be utilized to transmit messages from the communicator to the communicatee. Thus the sender of development-oriented messages has a wide range of available media channels to choose from. The results of the survey for this study revealed that there might be a need to qualify this conclusion with due reference to the inadequacy of such channels in terms of quantity and quality.

Improving internal communication processes of specific agencies will need the installation and utilization of management techniques such as Management by Objectives and Management Information Systems. Further training in the implementation of these techniques are necessary and can remedy certain causes of misunderstanding among personnel of specific agencies and among the various units of the regional bureaucracy. Trainings on these techniques would be in line with the findings of another study on executive leadership conducted by UP Tacloban in 1975 which stated that "the executives in Eastern Visayas realize the need for a more intensive training in administration and management."

Planning and Budgeting

An innovation in the budget process of Philippine bureaucracy is the increasing regard for the necessity of synchronizing financial

resource allocation and development planning. There is a widespread feeling among the managerial level of the region's bureaucracy that the present planning and budgeting procedures are satisfactory. However, the process is far from perfect. Some agencies in the region do not have regular planning units. To others, the preparation of plans is a central office activity. This situation exposes a weakness which has repercussions on the conduct of government programs. Activities of the bureaucracy which are not based on locally-generated plans are often off-target and prone to be irrelevant to regional needs. Without the benefit of carefully planned tasks, the bureaucracy can hardly be expected to effectively deliver the services needed in the region. There is a need to hasten the full implementation of the provision of LOI 448 directing the formation of planning units in all regional offices of national line departments.

Present consultative arrangements between national agencies and local governments appear to be satisfactory. There is a generally accepted feeling among the local government executives that they are actually involved in the preparation of agency plans. It is, however, surprising to note that what the local leaders identify as actual participation may only be indirect participation through informal consultations, as cited in the survey by regional directors. These top managers also note that at present actual participation of local governments in agency plan formulation is minimal.

The situation is far from ideal. The effectiveness of agency plans that have little inputs from the communities where they will be put into effect is open to serious doubt. Communication channels have to be opened along this line, if the bureaucracy is not to be isolated from the mainstream of community needs. More local government participation is called for. Existing arrangements should not only be on paper but should be translated into action. For instance, the Provincial, City, and Municipal Development Councils should be utilized more extensively in drumming up local government participation in the planning process. Further training on applicable planning and budgeting skills will also be a step in the right direction. These skills are part of modern bureaucratic practices. As Reinhard Bendix notes:

Modern bureaucracy is characterized by the development of administrative autonomy due to the importance of technical skills. In the sense that these skills make the higher authorities irreplaceable, a modern governmental bureaucracy holds a monopoly of skill.

National-Local Government Relations

Based on the survey findings, there is generally a harmonious relationship between representatives of national agencies and those of local governments. There are, however, deviations from this normal condition. Some top and middle managers of national agencies feel that the local government units are not contributing their best effort to joint national-local projects. On the other hand, some local leaders think that the national agency representatives are not fully committed to put their best effort to joint projects. These deviations from the normal situation deserve a close look. Areas of cooperation have to be clearly defined. Each "camp" must understand its responsibilities. Possibly, the root cause of conflicts like this is the actual field implementation of government programs. Top managers should, therefore, evaluate and provide better guidance to their field managers in sensitive activities which require joint involvement.

Coordination

The complex nature of regional development thrusts frequently require a high degree of interagency coordination in planning, implementing, and evaluating government programs. At the regional level this necessity has led to the formation, by presidential mandate, of Regional Development Councils and the sectoral Task Forces attached to them. Other interagency committees have cropped up to such an extent that many quarters observe the overproliferation of committees. At the national level, the Commission on Reorganization is even seriously considering the pruning down of national committees. A similar evaluation could be done at the regional and subregional levels. Existing coordinative structures can be examined so that these can be strengthened and revitalized.

From the survey responses, the need for more coordination in planning especially at the subregional levels is very evident. Better synchronization of activities is also needed in project monitoring, in the preparation of budgets, in research and in project management. It has been noted by Marshall E. Dimock, a noted scholar on bureaucracy, that the tendency toward separation and lack of integration—if left unchecked due to the failure of leadership—results in unresponsiveness, confusion, and delay.

Private Sector Participation

Involvement of private groups in regional development thrusts is insufficient. This is a salient feature of present practices in the

regional bureaucracy which can be enhanced through innovations in organizational structures and procedures. For example, it is felt in the various managerial levels that there is inadequate private sector participation in the formulation of development plans. The implied remedy, at the regional level, of this weakness in the planning process would be the inclusion of representatives of private sector groups in the membership of the Regional Development Council. At the moment, no such membership exists although effort have been initiated along this line. However, membership alone will not necessarily fill in the need for more private sector involvement. The quality of such participation would be a crucial factor.

Opening the RDC membership to private enterprises is expected to usher in more participation not only in plan formulation but also in policy-making, monitoring, and research. The performance of this function will lead to an indirect influence on project implementation.

Administrative Capability

Individuals occupying managerial positions can hardly be expected to give negative answers when queried about the adequacy of administrative capabilities in the offices that they supervise. Conscious of this natural reaction, it is surprising to note that some managers indeed accept the fact that administrative capabilities are unsatisfactory on certain points. Project management and personnel administration are commonly identified as the aspects of administrative competence that needs to be enhanced. An implication that can be deduced from the recognition of the need for improving administrative capability is that hand in hand with the implementation of regional development programs, a determined drive has to be conducted along the line of improving skills in project management, personnel administration, financial management, and records management. Failure to undertake activities in this area of technological innovation as applied to bureaucratic behavior can jeopardize the effectiveness and efficiency of government programs.

Management Style

A deeper analysis than the one made in this paper might be necessary in fully evaluating the preference of some government executives for the autocratic method of management. Nevertheless, some implications can be presented.

The autocratic style of handling subordinates is a situation where management thinks and employees obey. In the context of the present state of regional development coupled with the popular desire for participation and coordination, the adoption of authoritarian managerial practices can undermine and even negate efforts toward improving the quality of life in this part of the country. It is widely believed that autocratic management practices lead to a low degree of employee morale and motivation resulting in weak performance. Moreover, only the leadership styles which provide freedom for member participation in group activities show concern for follower welfare and comfort which are consistently related to group cohesiveness. The existence of autocratic management practices needs to be corrected primarily by higher authorities who exert regulatory functions over these managers. The end in view in these remedial measures is the infusion of participative management techniques into the actions of present day authoritarian government officials occupying key supervisory positions. Various approaches can be used to achieve such transformation. Among them are formal training, office circulars, and on-the-job individual coaching. Changes in the style of management will have repercussions on many of the issues and practices mentioned earlier such as those on communication and coordination.

Sources of Pressure

Several factors come to bear in the decision-making functions of managers in the regional bureaucracy. The primacy of bureaucratic and political factors, as revealed in the survey, is similar to the findings of Fred Al. Clemente II in his study on bureaucratic behavior conducted in 1971.

Political considerations cannot be completely detached from entering into the process of decision-making. From the standpoint of regional development, formulation of decisions on the basis of rules and procedures of the bureaucracy ensures, to a large extent, the objectivity of such decisions. Inputs from the clientele, as cited in the survey by middle managers, will further augment the creation of decision-making processes that result in the implementation of projects beneficial to the majority and not to specific interest groups. There are other sources of pressure such as those exerted by the family and by friends. The existence of these sources of pressure is possibly explained by the multiplicity of roles performed by an individual in the government service as noted by Dr. Raul P. de

Guzman and his associates in their study on the problem of self-discipline in the government sector.

Impact of Government Programs

Bureaucratic culture and its consequent behavioral components are not the only determinants of the quality of government services. Availability of resources and attitudes of the community are also fundamental factors which influence the performance of the bureaucracy. An analysis of the local government feedback on the socioeconomic effects of government programs should, therefore, not attribute deficiencies of government services solely to bureaucratic culture and behavior. Nevertheless, it can be safely stated that if certain aspects of that culture and certain patterns of that behavior are modified, then the impact of government programs would be significantly improved. The discussion of aspects of bureaucratic culture made earlier provide insights on the deficiencies of the regional bureaucracy. Several proposals were made for the purpose of strengthening and transforming the bureaucracy into one that would be a more potent vehicle for achieving the goals of regional development in this part of the country. These proposals need further evaluation. Hopefully, if they are carried out in a manner suited to regional conditions, then the impact of government programs would, very possibly, be enhanced.

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