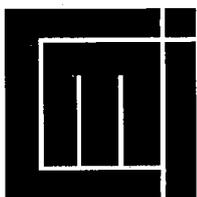


**Politics, Administration and
Agricultural Development**
The Case of Botswana's Accelerated
Rainfed Arable Programme

Kjetil Børhaug

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Politics, Administration and Agricultural Development

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Summary:

This is a case study of a large programme for arable farming in Botswana from 1985 to 1990. The focus is upon the organization of the programme. The study seeks to explain why the programme developed into an ineffective and costly modernization effort. The objective of the programme was to commercialize arable farming in Botswana. However, most participating farmers used it to subsidize their established mode of production, without moving in the direction of a more commercialized system. To explain the failure of the programme the analysis makes use of organizational theory as well as a ruling elite perspective.

Sammendrag:

Dette er en undersøkelse av et omfattende offentlig program for å utvikle jordbruket i Botswana fra 1985 til 1990. Studien tar for seg organiseringen av programmet. Den søker å forklare hvorfor programmet mislyktes. Den opprinnelige hensikten var å kommersialisere jordbruket i Botswana. Imidlertid brukte bøndene programmet som en kilde til subsidiering av eksisterende produksjonsformer, uten å legge om produksjonen i retning av mer kommersialisering. Analysen søker forklaringer på programmets fiasko i så vel organisasjonsteori som i en "styrende elite modell".

Indexing terms: Stikkord:

Agricultural policy	Landbrukspolitikk
Public administration	Offentlig administrasjon
Modernization	Modernisering
Organization theory	Organisasjonsteori
Botswana	Botswana

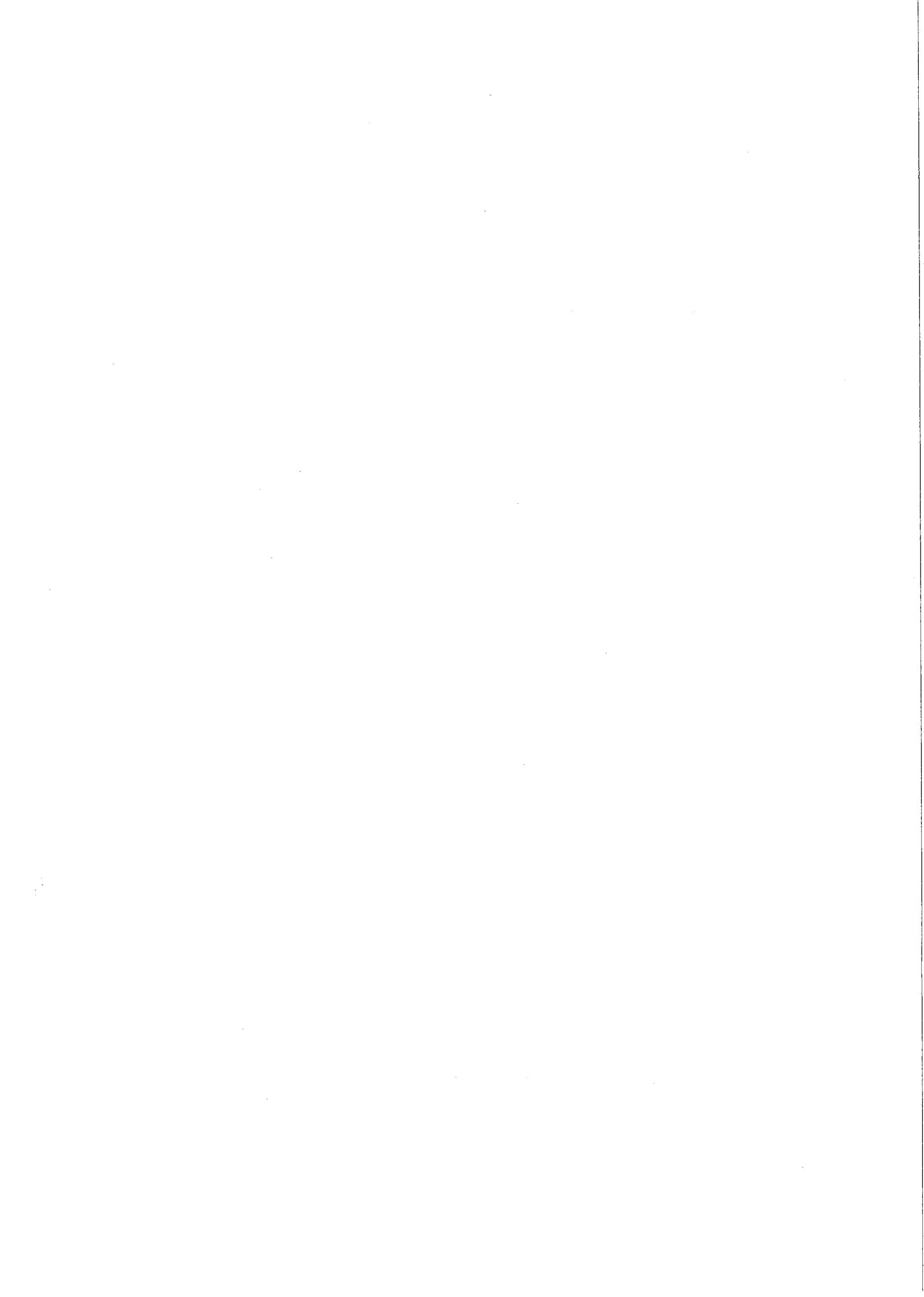
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Preface

This report is a revision of my thesis "Politics, Administration and Agricultural Development. The Case of Botswana's Accelerated Rainfed Arable Programme", submitted in November 1990 to the Department of Administration and Organization Theory, University of Bergen. CMI has provided financial support for this revision, in which I have aimed at clarifying the original analysis, considering additional policy documents, and improving some technical aspects.

Several persons and institutions are gratefully acknowledged for support and advice throughout the time I worked on the thesis. First, my two tutors, Thorvald Gran and Arne Tostensen. Furthermore, Bente Alver who gave valuable advice on data collection and interpretation. Thorvald Gran has also given friendly advice in the revision of the thesis.

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Finally, thanks to Espen Børhaug for much needed assistance in the very final stage of the work with the thesis.

Bergen, July 1992

Key facts and figures

Official name:	Republic of Botswana
Date of independence:	30th September 1966
Constitution:	Multi-party democracy
President:	H.E. Dr. Q.K.J. Masire
Official language:	Setswana and English
Area:	581,730 km ²
Mean altitude:	1000 m above sea level
Population:	1.15 mill. (1986 de jure estimate)
Rate of natural increase:	3.5 per cent
Population density:	2 per km ² (1986-estimate)
Life expectancy at birth:	56 years (1981)
Primary school enrolment, net:	92 % (1985)
Secondary school enrolment, net:	23 % (1985)
Gross domestic product (GDP):	P 1,524 mill. (1984/85 estimate) (approx. USD 950 mill)
Gross national product:	P 1,302 mill. (1984/85 estimate) (approx. USD 810 mill.)
GDP per capita:	P 1,430 (1984/85 estimate) approx. USD 890)
Principal contributor to GDP:	Mining: 47 % (1985/86 estimate)
Principal export:	Diamonds: 76 % (1985)

Principal trading partners (1985):	Exports	Imports
South Africa	6 %	74 %
Europe	85 %	12 %
SADCC and others	9 %	14 %

Currency: 1 Pula = 100 Thebe

Exchange-rates:	1975	1980	1985
USD per Pula:	1.2	1.3	0.5
NOK per Pula:	6.4	6.7	3.6

Foreign reserve cover: 16 months of imports, (1985)

Debt service ratio: 5.4 per cent (1985)

Labour force (1984/85): 368,000 (37 % of population)
of which:

employed, agriculture 33 per cent

employed, other 26 per cent

un- & underemployed 41 per cent

Population below absolute poverty income level:
(1980-estimates, cited by IBRD)

- urban 40 per cent

- rural 55 per cent

Consumer price inflation (per cent per annum):

1981-83	1984-85	1986-87 (first half)
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10.9	8.4	10.1
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Source: Granberg and Parkinson 1988

Map of Botswana

Source: Granberg and Parkinson 1988

Introduction

This study seeks to explain how Botswana's largest programme for development of arable farming developed into an ineffective and costly modernization effort. The Accelerated Rainfed Arable Programme (ARAP) was launched in 1985, and terminated in 1990. It will be described briefly below, and in the subsequent chapters be the main topic. The analytical framework applied is one that focuses on the interplay between administrative organizations, political authorities and target groups, assuming that in most public policy development all these factors and the interplay between them will influence how a policy is shaped.

The main relevance of the present analysis lies in the importance of the ARAP programme itself. It was a major programme, and it is an important topic in the debate on Botswana's development problems. However, the chosen analytical framework will also allow for a discussion of the relevance of alternative models for explaining rural development policy in Botswana.

The Programme in brief

ARAP was a set of subsidies intended to encourage arable farming among all groups of farmers engaged in rainfed arable production. The design of ARAP was to give grants in cash to the farmers who destumped, ploughed, row planted and weeded their fields. The amount of cash paid to participating farmers increased with increasing field size, up to 10 hectares. In addition, seeds and fertilizers were distributed for free to the farmers, and 85 per cent of costs for fencing of fields were covered by the Government. Farmers could utilize one, a few or all of these assistance components according to their own choice. These offers were provided to farmers repeatedly for 5 years, from the 1985/86 season to 1989/90.

The objective of the programme can be summed up as an attempt to commercialize the arable farming of Botswana farmers.¹ Historically, arable farming had predominantly aimed at the subsistence needs of the

¹ The word *Tswana* is the core of a variety of forms. Botswana is the name of the country, while *Setswana* is the name of the *Tswana* language. A person of *Tswana* origin is labelled a *Motswana*, while the plural form of *Tswana* persons is *Batswana*.

households, and in many households crop production was even below subsistence needs. ARAP was designed to encourage the farmers to expand their arable production by means of improved methods, improved inputs and expansion of arable field sizes. In combination, this should give household farming a decisive assistance: Adoption of all the methods and inputs provided by ARAP would enable farmers to produce a surplus that could be marketed and generate cash incomes. This surplus, it was envisioned, would enable farmers to reinvest in continued commercial arable farming. Ministry of Agriculture's stated objectives were to increase arable production to a level of national food self-sufficiency, to increase rural incomes generated from arable production and to optimise rural income distribution (MOA 1988: 1).

ARAP was open for all farmers, and as most farmers in Botswana are rather poor, ARAP became a major means to alleviate poverty problems in the rural sector. All farmers were given the opportunity to escape poverty by entering commercial crop farming. During its implementation period, ARAP was by far the largest programme for arable agriculture development, and reached more poor farmers more than any other programme.

ARAP did reach all farmers with assistance, but the developmental effects of the programme are rather doubtful. According to a sector study carried out for NORAD in 1986, it is "doubtful whether ARAP contributes significantly to the development of the arable sector" (Øygaard et al. 1986). As a modernization effort, ARAP sought to influence and change the production profiles of Botswana farmers. However, most participating farmers used the programme as a subsidy of their established system and level of production, and continued mainly in the same type of low input production, which does not even cover subsistence needs for most farmers. The main change caused by ARAP was that average field sizes increased, but in most households the increase was definitely not enough to expand production beyond subsistence levels. Finally, without ARAP, field sizes are likely to become smaller again.

The Ministry of Agriculture states that "crop yields despite the very favourable 1987/88 cropping season [of good rainfall] are still very low to sustain arable production" and furthermore, "household income has not been significantly improved [by ARAP] nor is it likely to be sustained" (MOA 1991: 20-21). Those farmers who had already adopted improved methods and production input continued to apply them, but the adoption rates did not increase significantly among ARAP beneficiaries (Farrington 1987; Rashem 1987). The changes achieved were thus modest, and their sustainability without continued ARAP support is questionable.

Even if it was clearly popular among farmers that the government financed farming operations for which they would normally have to carry the costs themselves, the group benefiting most was the wealthiest farmers. This small group of farmers often own tractors. ARAP subsidized ploughing also when the ploughing was done by a contractor, which opened up a huge and profitable market for tractor owners.²

The modest achievements were reached at a very high financial cost.³ Furthermore, ARAP has had negative side effects. Scarce implementing capacity was concentrated upon ARAP, and other presumably important programmes suffered (Farrington 1987; Granberg and Parkinson 1988: 238, 240). ARAP has hastened long term developments of deforestation and soil erosion, and accelerated the movement of arable farming westwards into more fragile areas of mixed grazing and farming land (Eskeli 1989; Stange et al. 1990: 7-8).

The analytical approach

It is generally recognized that the civil service plays a crucial role in the making of public policy. The analytical perspective has to account for this and focus on what factors determine civil service action and attitudes. Not least the Botswana civil service is often pointed out as a key actor in policy making processes. Gunderson makes this a central point to the extent that he labels Botswana "The Administrative State" (1970), in which the civil service in reality is unchallenged in its influence on public policy's objectives and means. Also Polhemus (1983) underlines the bureaucratic dominance in policy making processes of Botswana.

However, any attempt to explain agricultural policies in Botswana should take into account the political importance of the rural, agriculturally dominated areas. The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) which has won every election since 1965, has the rural population as the core of its electorate. It is important for the regime to demonstrate that it has the welfare of the rural poor in mind (Holm 1988b: 198). The welfare services for the poor that have been developed are an important component in this strategy of mobilizing political support in the rural areas. Increasingly,

² Over the years 1985 to 1989, approximately P60 mill. were spent by the Government on ploughing subsidies (P1 = NOK 4.0 1985). A large proportion of this ended up as income for tractor owners, acting as ploughing contractors.

³ The total costs reached about NOK. 400 million over the five years ARAP was operational, calculating 1 Pula to about NOK 4.0. (Granberg and Parkinson 1988; MOA 1991).

agricultural modernization programmes for the poor farmers have also played a role for purposes of political stability. The extraordinary economic growth Botswana has experienced has not reached the rural peasantry very significantly, and this is increasingly becoming a political problem.

It is commonly acknowledged that implementation processes often changes the content of programmes and projects. If money, personnel, expertise and technical equipment are not provided it will change the policy or at worst, it will prevent the policy from materializing at all. Furthermore, most policy statements, guidelines and directives that the implementing agencies receive from decision makers as orders to implement are open to many interpretations. It can often be interpreted in many ways what emphasis to place on various elements in the policy, how to combine elements that are partially inconsistent, and what things really mean. These interpretation processes are significant factors that affect the outcome of policy implementation. Finally, there is the problem of mobilizing the target groups. Hyden (1983) talks about the "uncaptured peasantry", pointing to the experience that the peasantry is difficult to engage in modern structures of state and market, both because they often do not perceive such engagement as attractive, and because they have an alternative economy to base themselves on. Even if his theory about peasant autonomy is a controversial one, it refers to the central problem that implementation depends on the target group's perceived rational interests, and the choices they make according to these interests and rationalities.

Finally, the influence of donors is an important factor when analyzing how public policy is made in Third World countries. Donors are heavily engaged in Botswana, and might well have a considerable influence on the planning and implementation of programmes in which they engage.

An analytical perspective is needed to account for how policy making is influenced by the complex structures and processes indicated in the above sections.

The policy making process that developed ARAP has not been examined by other writers. But many observers in Botswana offered their opinions about why ARAP became as outlined above. Two ideas seemed to dominate. The first was that contrary to how policy is normally developed, in the case of ARAP, the ruling elite of politicians and civil servants acted in too much of a hurry and did not plan things as well as they should and could have done. The other explanation was that ARAP was not really meant to be a modernization effort, but was solely meant as crisis relief since there was a severe drought in Botswana from the early eighties. This explanation argued that to look for the modernization achievements of ARAP would be to expect it to be something else than it really was. Both

of these explanations have a grain of truth, but they can not explain ARAP, and on some points they are wrong.

These two perceptions about why ARAP went wrong are based on varieties of a ruling elite perspective. In the first version the ruling elite did not perform effectively enough, whereas in the latter version, it did perform effectively when considering its "real" intentions.

The idea of a ruling elite in control of public policy is a quite widespread one in Botswana, and major scientific works are elaborations of it.

Gunderson (1970) and Picard (1980; 1987) have formulated the clearest general ruling elite models for the case of Botswana, and the ruling elite idea permeates much of the debate on Botswana politics in general. This model focuses on a ruling elite of power holders, and examines its interests, strategies and consequent actions. The ruling elite model tends to consider the administrative organizations as mere tools, implying that they are neutral and can be put to use for any politically defined purpose, which is not a realistic assumption. Furthermore, the ruling elite model tends to ignore that the ruling elite members are themselves members not only of an elite, but also of institutions, and influenced by this. In the concluding chapter, these problems of the ruling elite model will be discussed, based on the case study of ARAP.

The structure of the report

In chapter 1, an analytical framework along the lines sketched in the above will be outlined, drawing on the works of Knut Dahl Jacobsen (1964; 1967). In chapter 2, methods of research and the data material will be described. The rural economy, the role of agriculture within it and a description of agriculture itself will be the topics of chapter 3. An outline of agricultural policies since in the years prior to ARAP will also be given. Chapters 4 to 6 will outline the administration's influence on ARAP (ch. 4), the political interventions in the planning process (ch. 5) and the implementation of ARAP (ch. 6). Chapter 7 will discuss somewhat more broadly the effects ARAP has had. Chapter 8 will sum up the analysis and go on to discuss the implications of it for the agricultural sector, and the case study will be related to the ruling elite model that will be presented, suggesting some added dimensions to that mode of analysis.

1. Theoretical framework. Political-administrative system, policy-making and implementation

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an analytical framework will be elaborated upon, drawing on Knut Dahl Jacobsen's works (1964; 1967). The motivation of this choice of perspective is to enable the analysis to examine the interplay among administrative actors, the political authorities, and the target groups. Conceptualizations of these principal elements as well as of the relationships between them are needed.

1.2 Open systems

Jacobsen's approach to the explanation of public policy focuses on a three-component structure; administration, political authority and clientele (Jacobsen 1964: 3-10). The point of departure in Jacobsen's model is the concept of open systems, where the environment gives support and makes demands on the system. This concept applies at different levels. The political-administrative system, or the state, is in need of support and therefore it has to respond to demands. Not least the political authorities are important at this level.

Also the administration as such is seen in the same perspective; as open and dependent on support. The support needed has to come from the political authorities, but also the clientele and donors might be important here. This open perspective links Jacobsen's model to the tradition within organization theory focusing on organizational dependencies and their capabilities to adapt to a changing environment (Scott 1981).

1.3 Governmental administrative organizations

Jacobsen rejects the idea that administrative organizations are neutral tools that can be put to use for any decided purpose. On the contrary, administrative organizations are basically political phenomena. He makes

it a general point that the interests of social groups are best attended to by the state when they are made routine considerations in administrative organizations (1964; 1967). This is so because administrative organizations are, in most cases, biased in their perceptions of what are important problems, tasks, values and what are acceptable solutions. This bias leads to attention to the interests of some groups and to the ignorance of others. Jacobsen labels these perceptions problem structures with corresponding models of actions, underlining their stability and structured occurrence.

The problem structures and models of action are important in policy analysis because of the influence administrative organizations have in determining public policy. In most cases, the tasks that the administration has to solve are general objectives set by political authorities, and these goals normally have to be operationalized and specified by a professional administration. The problem structures and models of action determine the administrative organization's specific action to solve any task it is told to solve. Agreed, general goals will be specified into concrete public policy by the administration, and the way this is done will imply further political choices. Politics is, in Jacobsen's perspective, about who has their interests attended to in administrative organization's stable problem structures and models of action.

Most administrative organizations are biased, but they are so in a rather disguised way. Even though the organization's views are presented as technical and neutral premises, in most cases these premises are selectively biased to the benefit of some social interests and to the detriment of others. This does not imply a rejection of administrative organizations' ability to activate in what is perceived as clearly political matters. Here, however, we are concerned with the political implications of what is framed as professional and administrative issues. Professional assessments and views are often presented as correct, according to professional standards, but they often imply political choices. Or to use another formulation, administrative organizations have an interest profile relative to society implied by their professional approach. The terms to conceptualize this politicized professional approach are problem structure and models of action.

The models of action and problem structure are interrelated. Problem structures will influence what are seen as appropriate means. But available means might also often influence problem structures so that the administrative organization's means become relevant.

Organizational units as such do not have problem structures and models of action, but the people who populate organizational units do. The incumbents of organizations are the carriers of problem structures and models of action. However, problem structures and models of action are

maintained by organizational means. Socialization and organizational control reinforce and reproduce them (Lægveid and Olsen 1978; Njoroge 1983). The individual actors of the organization will then behave in ways strongly influenced by these organizationally maintained problem structures and models of action. If the civil servants in an administrative organization depend on this organization for their careers, i.e. do not want to leave or have no alternative career path, the strength of these factors controlling individual behaviour will most likely be increased. Thus, problem structures and models of action are not easily changed as they entrench the whole organization. Furthermore, when definitions of problems and appropriate actions are framed as professional values, it is not legitimate to change these when the reasons for such a change are not professional, but demanded by outsiders.

Jacobsen suggests a connection between problem structures, models of action and organization structure, in particular, how the administrative organization organizes its relationship to the clientele. We will return to this in section 1.6. But the general point should also apply for the structuring of the other parts of the organization. In Jacobsen's analysis of the Norwegian agricultural administration in the last century, the administrative organization is fairly small at the central level. In the case of Botswana's Ministry of Agriculture, we face a much more complex organization, and this has consequences for the understanding of the concepts introduced above. Some concepts will be presented in order to facilitate the analysis of Ministry of Agriculture's (MOA) internal mode of operation and the impacts this had on ARAP.

Egeberg (1984) points out two basic features in the structuring of modern governmental organizations: specialization and coordination. He points out that hierarchy is the most common coordinating mechanism in governmental organizations. I will use the concept of administration in this somewhat wide sense: the specialized and hierarchical formal governmental administrative organizations of professional civil servants, biased in their professional approach to outside problems and tasks.

Specialized organizational units concentrate their attention on a limited set of problems in the organization's total task environment. Within organizations there are thus formed specialized sets of perceptions of problems and ways to handle problems. Influenced by formally defined goals and means, formal rules, profession, experience, organizational history and by adjustments to the environment, problem structures and models of action are developed in a semi-autonomous way in various parts of the organization, and they might be more or less consistent (Egeberg 1978).

In the case of planning major programmes, these will often be of a complex nature, affecting many different issues on the administrative organization's agenda. Consequently, major programmes will affect the tasks of quite a number of organizational sub-units. If a programme is not designed and planned in an adaptive way to various issues seen as important, the programme might have negative consequences for issues deemed important by the organization or parts of it. The linking together of various organizational units in a coordinated process thus becomes a means to secure effective policy making and planning.

Coordination is more than a mere question about time, capacity and well designed planning routines. We have seen that the organizational units that have to be coordinated may have interests and values at stake that are difficult to combine. Coordinating policy-making processes is often difficult because it requires compromises and trade-offs.

Some actors might find that the best way to solve the tasks they are in charge of is to avoid cooperation with others. Or they might find that problem resolution requires control over what others do. Thus the coordination in specialized organizations is influenced by tactical considerations. The ability to control who is linked to decision-making processes or de-linked from them gives one power to influence the contents and interest profiles of policy-making.

Coordination, i.e. linking and de-linking, is often attempted through hierarchical means, like formal rules of participation and procedures to link units together in decision-making processes. Such a control of an hierarchical organization will often have limited effects. First, it will hardly ever be complete, there will normally be some room for choice at lower administrative levels. Secondly, hierarchical control has a limited ability to facilitate mutual trust, cooperation, innovation and joint problem solving.

When a policy is decided upon and ready for implementation, new problems of control arise: the ability to control the activities in the implementing parts of the organizations. Often hierarchical control measures are applied. Reporting procedures and evaluations are important tools. Control of the careers of lower level staff is also an important control mechanism.

The administration, according to Jacobsen, is dependent on support and it faces demands from the environment. The support from the political authorities will be important for most administrative organizations. But also the clientele is a category that administrative organizations depend upon. The success of administrative organizations depends on their ability to realize their objectives, which are often dependent on certain clientele responses. In many Third World countries, the peasantry is not a potent

