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**Implementing Anti-poverty Programmes in
Mexico. The National Solidarity Programme
in the State of Campeche**

by

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**Submitted for the Degree of PhD in the
Department of Politics and International Studies**

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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	v
<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	vi
<i>Acronyms</i>	vii
<i>Summary</i>	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
The case for a study of implementation	1
The focus on Implementation	5
Objectives of the Thesis	5
Contributions of the Thesis	6
Methodology	11
Case study	11
Time span of the research	14
Field work	15
Interviews	16
Main Problems Encountered During the Field Work	16
Access to the information	16
Structure of the Thesis	17
Chapter 2: Social Policy and Anti-Poverty Programmes in Mexico	22
Introduction	22
The Rationale of Mexican Social Policy	24
The functionalist interpretation	24
The pluralist interpretation	29
The corporatist interpretation	32
Social policy in Mexico: a muddling through policy	34
Anti-Poverty Programmes in Mexico	38
The Integrated Programme for Rural Development (PIDER)	39
The Central Co-ordination of the National Plan of Economically Depressed Regions and Marginalised Groups(COPLAMAR) and the Mexican Food System (SAM)	41
The National Solidarity Programme-PRONASOL	44
Similarities and differences between the programmes	44
Mexican anti-poverty initiatives compared to international experiences	48
The Quest for Legitimacy and Pronasol	51
Conclusions	53
Chapter 3: Solidarity Municipal Funds-FOMUN: An Analysis of Implementation	56
Introduction	56
Background to FOMUN: Mexican Municipal Government	61
The federal system and municipalities in Mexico	62
Financial constraints	66
The planning system and municipalities	67
Administrative structure and municipal personnel	68
Public performance and political culture	72
Electoral cycles and political recruitment	77
Main features of Campeche	80

Historical Background to FOMUN	85
The presidency	86
The "technocrat" vs. "politicians" debate	88
The reform of the state	91
Economic reform: origin and use of the funds	93
Community participation	94
Pronasol and institutional reorganisation	97
Solidarity Municipal Funds-FOMUN	99
Objectives of the programme	100
Financial structure of FOMUN	103
General structure and procedures of the programme	104
New skills for programme implementation	108
Preliminary Evaluation of Fomun	109
Goal attainment and efficiency	110
Qualitative evaluation	111
The Theory and Process of Implementation	114
FOMUN and the tension between centralisation vs. decentralisation	116
FOMUN and the limits of centralisation	119
The limitations of the decentralisation of FOMUN	124
FOMUN's assets	130
FOMUN: the complexity of joint action	135
Conclusions	142
Chapter 4: The Children of Solidarity Programme: Lessons for Public Policy Implementation in the Education Sector in Mexico	148
Introduction	148
Background	151
Educational imbalances in Mexico	151
Poverty and schooling in Mexico	153
Educational structure and sectoral politics	157
Community involvement in schooling	160
The Children of Solidarity Programme	162
Objectives and guidelines of the programme	162
Operation of the programme	164
Jurisdiction	164
Actors in the programme	165
Allocation of funds	167
Selection process	167
Family's basic supply package	171
Medical attention	171
Reciprocal community activities	172
Securing programme implementation	173
Programme Implementation and Theory	173

Centralisation and decentralisation	173
Interorganisational problems	180
The complexity of joint action and clearance points	188
Street-level bureaucrats	194
Flexibility in implementation	195
Local politics and implementation	197
Piling-up	201
Contradictory objectives	203
Preliminary Evaluation and Conclusions	205
Chapter 5: The National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises-FONAES: The Need for Centralisation and the Limits to Decentralisation	215
Introduction	215
The Economic and Political Context of FONAES	218
The target population of the programme	218
The agricultural sector in Mexico	221
The National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises-FONAES	223
Objectives of the programme	224
Structure of the programme	225
Eligibility criteria	227
General rules for operation	228
Risk capital funding scheme	229
Guarantor funds scheme	232
Operating procedures	233
Cajas solidarias (cs)	234
Analysis of Implementation of the Programme	237
Actors and perspectives	237
Decision and clearance points	249
Political distortion of the programme	254
Centralisation as a means of successful implementation?	258
The analytical framework of FONAES	269
Conclusions	274
Chapter 6: Cross Comparative Analysis of Implementation of Three Programmes	279
Introduction	279
Comparative Methodological Framework	280
Variable oriented vs. case-study oriented methods	280
Comparing case study evidence	281
Testing Implementation Theory	282
Policy implementation in a federal system	282
Policy implementation in a centralised political system	282
Resources and interorganisational collaboration	291

The complexity of joint action	293
Participants, perspectives and sense of urgency	293
Implementation complexity and flexibility	302
Mistaken analytical framework	303
Backward and forward mapping	306
Institutional setting, adaptation and maximising discretion	307
An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Programmes	310
Comparing goal achievement, efficiency and qualitative evaluation	311
Explaining differences and similarities	317
Conclusions	321
Chapter 7: From Solidarity to the National Alliance for Welfare	327
Introduction	327
NAW's Political and Economic Framework	330
Zedillo's new federalism and decentralisation	332
The National Alliance for Welfare-NAW	334
Fund for Social Municipal Development-FSMD	336
Differences from FOMUN	339
The New National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises-FONAES	342
Differences with the old FONAES	343
The Likely Implementation of the NAW	345
Bureaucratic prevalence or mastery	345
Number of actors and perspectives	346
Presidential support	348
Conclusions	348
Chapter 8: The Mexican Context: Lessons for Effective Implementation	351
Introduction	351
Lessons of Implementation Theory in the Mexican Context	352
Institutional reform and political inertia	352
Community participation and social learning	355
Decentralisation: the case against	362
Incentives	363
Bureaucratic autonomy	365
Presidential power revisited: strong ideals, weak institutions	367
Conclusions	370
Chapter 9: Conclusions	375
References	389

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List of Tables and Figures

v

Table 1. Campeche's composite socio-economic index of marginality	84
Table 2. Campeche's municipalities index of marginality	84
Table 3. Participants and Perspectives of FOMUN in Campeche	136
Table 4. Participants and Perspectives of Children of Solidarity	192
Table 5. Participants and Perspectives of FONAES	237
Figure 1 The National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises (FONAES) Administrative Structure	226

Acronyms

ANMEB	National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education
APF	Parents Association
BANRURAL	Rural Credit Bank
CANACINTRA	National Chamber of Transformation Industry
CDS	Social Development Agreement
CNC	National Peasants' Confederation
CNOP	National Confederation of Popular Organisations
CNPA	National "Plan de Ayala" Co-ordinating Committee
CONASUPO	National Subsidised Staple Products Company
COPLADE	Planning Committee for State Development
COPLAMAR	Central Co-ordination of the National Plan of Economically Depressed Regions and Marginalised Groups
CTM	Confederation of Mexican Workers
DIF	National System for the Integral Development of the Family
FOMUN	Solidarity Municipal Funds
FONAES	National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises
FOSOPRO	Solidarity Production Funds
IMSS	Mexican Social Security Institute
INFONAVIT	National Fund for Workers' Housing
ISSSTE	Social Security Institute for State Workers
LOPPE	Law of Electoral Processes and Political Organisations
NAW	National Alliance for Welfare
NIS	National Institute of Solidarity
PEMEX	National Oil Company
PIDER	Integrated Programme for Rural Development
PRD	Party of the Democratic Revolution
PRONASOL	National Solidarity Programme
SAHOP	Department of Human Settlements and Public Works
SAM	Mexican Food System
SECOGEF	General Comptrollership of the Federation
SEDESOL	Department of Social Development
SEP	Department of Public Education
SMC	Solidarity Municipal Council
SNTE	National Union of Educational Workers
SSA	Department of Health

Summary

The subject matter of this thesis is the analysis of implementation of three of the programmes of the National Solidarity Programme-PRONASOL. A study of the implementation of PRONASOL is essential because the relationship between policy success or failure and policy implementation has been poorly studied for the Mexican context.

This thesis aims to provide a detailed analysis of the process of implementation of three of the programmes of the PRONASOL in the state of Campeche, Mexico, which will be used to test relevant theoretical assumptions about policy implementation.

In terms of policy implementation the dissertation explores empirically the link between individual behaviour and the political, economic and legal context in which the action takes place by considering contextual variables.

The thesis uses the case study method to test the adequacy of theory of policy implementation to explain the cases under analysis. This method was useful first, because it allowed to emphasise contextual conditions which may have significant influence on the phenomenon under study. Second, because the research aimed to describe cases in which the conclusions of national studies based on aggregated data were not helpful.

A contrasting strategy was used to extent the explanatory potential of the case study method which was achieved through the selection of programmes and also through the selection of municipalities and localities in which the study was carried out.

The dissertation contributes to the understanding of the link between concrete and immediate day-to-day decisions by particular actors with the long-term structural features of Mexican society and so, to shed light on the historical trends, institutional processes, and political decisions that are interwoven in the implementation of public policies.

Chapter 1

Introduction

THE CASE FOR A STUDY OF IMPLEMENTATION

The subject matter of this thesis is the analysis of implementation of three of the programmes of the National Solidarity Programme-PRONASOL. Analysis of implementation procedures and personnel adds to the information from previous studies which have adopted different perspectives. Formerly the emphasis has been placed on the political and economic implications in the national scene. The majority of studies to date have made inferences from the analysis of aggregated data which frequently do not characterise particular cases and the conclusions of which are not useful in explaining regional or sectoral variations. Furthermore, their level of generality does not allow, for example, an identification and understanding of the mechanisms through which a federal initiative like PRONASOL is implemented. Little is known about the actors involved in the implementation process or the changes which occurred in the programme from its original design to its final implementation. Most importantly, although many of the studies offer an evaluation of the programme, very little information has been provided about how actors and ongoing modifications influenced success or failure. Although these studies have provided valuable information for the understanding of one of the most important anti-poverty initiatives in the country, an analysis of implementation is still needed for the following reasons.

First, analyses of the implementation of projects are rather few in the Mexican context. In 1993¹ an anthology of key texts in the field was published. Up to then, two types of study prevailed in the area of public policy. The first one, is an analysis that has tried to explain the process by which a social problem gets onto the political agenda. The second, is evaluation studies which have assessed the impact of governmental programmes, mainly by contrasting their intentions with final results. However, very few studies have focused on the process which lies between intentions and final outcomes. Whether programmes failed or succeeded because of their analytical framework or due to technical flaw or bureaucratic lag is something that has not received the necessary attention. It is not known for instance, whether a centralised or decentralised strategy helps to increase the effectiveness of a policy, or whether a smaller or larger number of participant actors influences the achievement of the policy goals. The influence of these factors in the success or failure of policy is examined. The analytical framework of a policy may be the proper one to effect change in a given area of policy, but if the implementation process is not structured adequately the policy will fail regardless of an adequate design. A study of the implementation of PRONASOL then is essential because the relationship between policy success or failure and policy implementation has been poorly studied for the Mexican context (see Valadez and Bamberger 1994).

¹ See Aguilar Villanueva 1993.

Second, studies of implementation are useful in identifying the political, economic and administrative perceptions and values of the actors during the implementation process which can hinder the objectives of governmental programmes (see Grindle 1991). It is commonly assumed that once the policy has been designed, it will be implemented by government agencies according to its guidelines. Deviations from the original plan are considered then either as resulting from a lack of control from a lack of foresight which can easily be corrected with proper supervision. The fact that implementing agencies are managed by political actors whose values, perceptions and orientations influence the decisions and actions which in the end affect the way a policy is implemented has been too often disregarded. Regulations and institutions certainly restrict discretion, but a study of the implementation process will show the extent to which the manoeuvring of bureaucrats at all levels may influence the final outcome of a policy.

Third, the implementation of PRONASOL represented a break with the established bureaucratic pattern of public policy implementation in Mexico. This had more than simple administrative implications. The inclusion of actors who had traditionally been excluded from the decision-making and implementation of public policies gave the programme an important political and economic meaning. Economically, community mobilisation resulted in more cost effective implementation because participants had to contribute with work, materials and even money for the construction of public works. Politically, it was an effective way of bypassing the power of bureaucratic actors for whom the implementation of

public policy was an occasion for advancing their interests and resorting to patronage, corruption and clientelism. It is argued here that by the creation of new rules and through the participation of new actors, not only was implementation made more cost-effective, but also the political legitimacy of the government was increased, reliance on discredited bureaucracy reduced, and a process of political and social learning was encouraged by the designers of the programme.

Finally, a study of implementation of PRONASOL is important because it is contended here that by analysing the implementation of a public policy empirical information can be obtained to document political processes which cannot be easily identified at higher levels of analysis. By examining the political and economic context in which the implementation process takes place, and by identifying the actors, their perspectives, values and orientations, our knowledge both in the field of policy implementation and in relation to the performance of the Mexican political system can be extended.

But although studies of implementation are needed for these reasons, it is in the field of anti-poverty initiatives that they are even more important. The thesis echoes the need for more research in the field of the implementation of anti-poverty policies, where 'more theory, conceptualisation and analysis of experience is required in the field' (International Labour Organisation 1995, p. 100).

THE FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION

An analysis of implementation rather than evaluation was chosen because a true evaluation of impact is only possible over the long term. For example, Children of Solidarity and FONAES were two programmes, the effect of which can only be assessed in the long term. Time must pass before it is possible to find out whether FONAES was capable of providing real jobs, or whether Children of Solidarity really changed family attitudes towards primary education. On the other hand, streets, pavements, public lighting and other examples of public infrastructure, provided first hand data for the assessment of FOMUN.

In sum, a study of implementation make possible the analysis of issues which are not explored by impact studies and provides important data for a future impact study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS

This thesis aims to achieve the following purposes. First, to provide a detailed analysis of the process of implementation of three of the programmes of the PRONASOL in the state of Campeche, Mexico, which will be used to test relevant theoretical assumptions about policy implementation.

Second, the thesis will try to fill a gap in the study of Mexican politics. Important processes of political negotiation take place between participating actors during the implementation process. Each group of actors uses formal and informal means so as to minimise the losses that the introduction of new policies or

programmes may cause them. Such negotiations may affect the final outcome of the policy and the struggle between the modernisers and traditionalist factions which has become apparent in the governing coalition in Mexico in the last 15 years. FOMUN in particular, exemplifies this situation and the clash between traditional bureaucratic actors and the new 'socio-technocrats' involved in the National Solidarity Program. 'The bureaucracy is a basic scenario for the political struggle between different interest groups in society; it thus represents a possibility for political negotiation between the diverse, and occasionally contradictory, tendencies within the state apparatus' (Aguilar Camín and Meyer 1993, pp. 255-256).

Third, the dissertation also addresses the 'challenge of contextuality' (O'Toole 1989, p. 202). This is a permanent concern in the thesis because quite frequently the conclusions or recommendations of studies based on aggregate data merely reflect political developments at the federal level, more particularly in Mexico city. They have a limited ability to explain regional or state variations.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS

The dissertation aims to contribute to the understanding of the link between concrete and immediate day-to-day decisions by particular actors with the long-term structural features of Mexican society and so, to shed light on the historical trends, institutional processes, and political decisions that are interwoven in the implementation of public policies. (Brachet Márquez, 1988, p. 228). In terms of

policy implementation the dissertation explores empirically the link between individual behaviour and the political, economic and legal context in which the action takes place (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1981).

The literature in the field of public policy implementation is riddled with apparent contradictions. For example what seems to be a breakthrough, for those who adopt the "top-down" approach, is regarded as flawed by those who prefer the "bottom-up" approach. These controversies take insufficient account of contextual variables. This study aims to shed light on these apparent contradictions by considering contextual variables. A principle that works in one of the programmes may not work in another. Decentralisation for example, might be useful in implementing a programme like FOMUN, but it may be inappropriate when implementing FONAES. In this respect, the research follows O'Toole's recommendation in the sense that one of the issues of the implementation agenda is to 'investigate systematically what patterns of implementation facilitate various types of problem-solving behaviour.' (1989, p. 203).

In terms of the implementation theory, the cases under analysis show the sort of institutional reforms needed to accompany a successful implementation. FOMUN, Children of Solidarity and FONAES could be implemented because of the change to the rules that the programme introduced. Such an institutional reform avoided the sort of problems that come with the high number of actors (FOMUN and Children of Solidarity) in the implementation of a policy. Contrary to what has been said in the field of policy implementation, it is demonstrated that

the inclusion of actors does not necessarily prejudice success. It is by reassigning responsibilities and giving access to actors who have a direct incentive in the effective functioning of the programme that implementation is improved.

Important too for the success of the programme, as it will be demonstrated with FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, is the generation of incentives for gaining collaboration and securing the success of the implementation process. Incentives facilitate collaboration and reduce local resistance in the implementation of programmes.

The dissertation also shows that current models of implementation, that is, "top-down" and "bottom-up", are not useful in explaining particular cases and particular areas of policy as in the state of Campeche. These lessons are then put in the context of the new anti-poverty programme of the current administration. It is argued in the thesis that the Zedillo administration is empowering bureaucratic actors and it is actually depriving the community of the presidential support which proved to be influential in the implementation of the Solidarity programme.

The dissertation also aims to clarify the debate regarding the purposes of the programme. On the one hand, many of the studies of the PRONASOL had privileged its political meaning, and therefore PRONASOL is either a merely electoral programme or a strategy to recover the political legitimacy of the government in times when it was badly needed. It must be remembered that the results of the general elections of 1988 which brought Salinas to government, were

seriously challenged by the main opposition parties and by the public opinion both national and international on the grounds of fraud. Therefore, it is not surprising that this interpretation had received much attention.

On the other hand, PRONASOL has also been studied from a policy perspective. This part of the debate claims that the communitarian approach in which Solidarity was based, had an important organisational and political meaning because of the social learning process which is implicit in the working of the programme. Its emphasis is not placed purely on the political implications of the programme, but on the organisational ones that may result in the future in terms of policy implementation. As it will be discussed later in this research, such a process of political and social learning has already shown some positive results for the implementation of anti poverty programmes in some regions of the country.

However, it is argued here that in reality, the debate is false. It is not a matter of this or that, but one of this and that. PRONASOL was both an innovative way of implementing public policies, particularly in the field of anti poverty programmes, but also an important political tool in recovering and fostering political legitimacy and gaining votes for the government. It is precisely the political meaning which is embedded in the functioning of the programme and the purposes it served, the one that will be referred here as the hidden political agenda of Solidarity and that will become apparent in the development of the chapters of this dissertation. In sum, it cannot be denied the political meaning of the programme, but is necessary to keep in mind that this is only one aspect of

Solidarity and that a comprehensive evaluation of Solidarity must include a policy analysis as well.

Finally, the dissertation advances a point of view regarding the aims and successes of PRONASOL as a policy. Politically the hidden agenda of the programme was only partially achieved. During the implementation of the PRONASOL it was clear that many obstacles and vested interests effectively counteracted the attempt of reforming the bureaucratic way in which policies have been traditionally implemented. In this respect, political support from the presidential office was essential to surmount the many obstacles for the implementation of Solidarity. Despite this, the way the programme was designed and implemented could not counteract the strong corporatist tradition deeply rooted in the functioning of the Mexican political system. Politically too, the programme could test its usefulness in gaining votes for the government and increasing its legitimacy. It was clear that the programme played an important role in recovering votes in places where the PRI had lost its electoral control (e.g., Chalco).

In terms of the social and political learning process embedded in Solidarity, it is not possible to know whether the experience of Solidarity will have a long lasting effect in those communities where the programme was implemented and whether it really produced a social and political learning process as a result. However, it was evident during the field work, that the implementation of the programme was relatively more successful in those regions where previous

government initiatives had tested communitarian strategies for their implementation and where political support, mostly from the presidential office, was also available.

In relation to the aims and successes of PRONASOL as a policy, the programme represented an effective way of building an impressive number of public works all over the country in a cost-effective manner. It also introduced new actors into the decision making process which helped to shorten the distance between community needs and expectations and public officials' perceptions. Most importantly, the social learning process implicit in the programme was reinforced by the institutional reform that the programme inaugurated.

METHODOLOGY

CASE STUDY

This research is based on a case study method. Although this method is limited in terms of generalisation and representativeness since it is not based on statistical inference, it was decided that it was the best method for achieving the objectives of this thesis. The case study method cannot produce generalisations in a statistical way but rather it tries to test the adequacy of any underlying theory to explain the case under analysis (Howard 1991).

The method was also useful for the following reasons. First, when contextual conditions may have significant influence on the phenomenon under study it may use a variety of means for data collection and analysis (Yin 1994). Second, the case study method was also preferred because the research aimed to

describe cases in which the conclusions of national studies based on aggregate data were not helpful. In this respect it helped to achieve two main research aims. First, the state of Campeche provided an opportunity to observe both political, economic, social and cultural interactions during the implementation process. Second, the causal links which appeared in real-life, too complex to explain by a survey or by experimental strategies, could be identified by the case study method.

Nevertheless to make the best of this study, a contrasting strategy was used to extent its explanatory potential. Contrast was achieved through the selection of programmes: Children of Solidarity, Solidarity Municipal Funds-FOMUN and the National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises-FONAES. Each represented a main area of action of Solidarity, Solidarity for social welfare, Solidarity for regional development and Solidarity for production, respectively. The selection of the programmes was not random but aimed to cover different areas of policy each politically distinct.

Contrast also guided the selection of municipalities and localities in which the study was carried out. The state of Campeche shows different levels of poverty and marginality. Of its 9 municipalities, two show low levels of poverty, the City of Campeche (capital of the state) and Isla del Carmen. Five more, Hecelchakán, Tenabo, Calkini, Champotón and Escárcega, have a medium level of poverty. Finally, the municipalities of Hopelchén and Palizada show the highest level of poverty and marginality in the state. Two of them are mainly urban (Campeche and

Isla del Cármen) and the remaining seven are mainly rural. This introduced more contrast to the case study.

But the selection of the state of Campeche is justified not only because this state remains largely unstudied, but also because of its peculiarity in the Mexican context. Economically poor despite its richness in natural resources and oil fields, politically, the state is still an undisputed electoral paradise for the PRI. It was not until the 1994 general elections that the PRI votes were less than the sum of the opposition parties. While the general political debate in Mexico is concerned with democratisation, modernisation and political reform, in Campeche elements of patronage and clientelism remain strong. Campeche is the fourth least populated state in the country and it is geographically located between the wealth of Yucatán and the poverty of Chiapas and Oaxaca, the home of guerrilla movements and militant politics. It also provides a refuge for those who wish to escape from problems over the border in Guatemala. It is a state where conservative values are deeply rooted but which is trying to adjust to the process of modernisation. All these features affected in a very particular way the implementation of the programmes. The research then attempts not only to increase the number of regional studies in Mexico, understood as a country and not as the capital city of the country, but also to test the validity and usefulness of current assumptions about Mexican politics and the field of policy implementation.

Finally, by analysing the state of Campeche as a case study, it was possible to identify values, attitudes and perceptions that otherwise would have been more difficult to trace and which represent active elements of its political culture.

The study provides empirical evidence and a basis for testing theoretical assumptions. However, the expense and time involved in interviewing and travelling in a state where some municipalities are 7 or 8 hours away from the capital city imposed important limitations on the research.

TIME SPAN OF THE RESEARCH

The time span of this research was originally intended to cover the period of Solidarity only, that is, the Salinas administration. However, it was decided to add a chapter not only to up-date the latest developments regarding the anti-poverty strategy of the Zedillo administration, but also to introduce more contrast into the research. It was hypothesised that the Zedillo administration would introduce radical changes to the programme, that is from a less bureaucratic form of implementation, to another in which bureaucratic actors recovered their influence in the implementation of the policy. This analysis was carried out by reviewing the manuals and guidelines for the new strategy. It lacks empirical evidence and field work like that employed in the analysis of Solidarity. However, a limited number of interviews were carried out with public officials by the electronic mail in an attempt to minimise this limitation.

FIELD WORK

The field work for the research was carried out from July 1994 to January 1995 in Mexico city and in the nine municipalities of the state of Campeche. This included elite interviews with public officials at the federal, state and municipal levels and with members of the community and Solidarity Committees. During the field work, a review of the literature was made in the National Library of the National Autonomous University of Mexico-UNAM, the library of the El Colegio de Mexico and in the library of the Metropolitan Autonomous University-UAM campus Atzacotalco. The literature review included books, newspapers, journals, magazines, and films as well as the review of television interviews given by officials of the programme. It also included the review of 146 official documents, more than a hundred political speeches of the former president Salinas, and a significant number of magazine and newspaper notes.

Another important source of information was two Courses of Basic Training for Mayors at the National Institute of Solidarity in August 1994, 5-8 and 9-10 respectively. Thirty eight municipalities of 23 states of the country participated in the first and forty five municipalities of 19 states in the second. These courses provided an image of the problems of the programme in other states than Campeche. But most importantly it was possible to observe the direct link that PRONASOL officials established with municipal authorities and community.

During the field work it was also possible to participate in the many events of the 5th National Week of Solidarity in the state of Campeche, which was useful in understanding the context for implementation.

Interviews

This information was also complemented by 67 interviews. They were recorded when possible, and notes were taken when it was not possible to use the recorder. Interviews were carried out with officials of the agencies participating in the implementation of the programme as well as with members of the communities under study. They were conducted during the seven months of the field work. Although they were based on a basic set of questions, they were open ended so as to explore as many related issues as possible with individual interviewees. Interviews were used to clarify or exemplify certain points which had already emerged from published material about the topic and to assess its validity. The interviews are not representative in any statistical sense, nor were they even intended to be so. Each, however, reflects a personal view of some aspect of the implementation of the programme and their inclusion in the main body of the text is justified on that basis.

MAIN PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THE FIELD WORK

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Access to information was difficult because: first, the field work was carried out at the time of the election. Because of this, many public officials, particularly at the

federal level, were reluctant to make comments about the programme, more particularly because it was a presidential initiative. A second problem emerged with the ministerial changes that accompany all presidential transitions in Mexico. This made it particularly difficult to locate and interview officials of the programme.

Because the programme placed a lot of strain on many agencies and caused problems of jurisdiction and territory, public officials from other agencies different from SEDESOL, usually referred to the programme in ways that made it difficult to corroborate their information.

On the other hand, studies of the impact of the programme, some of them carried out by SEDESOL, were strictly limited and kept confidential. Nevertheless, some of them were obtained at the state level.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

After the introduction, chapter two is a discussion of the development of Mexican social policy. The chapter debates the different theoretical interpretations that explain the development of social policy in Mexico. Pluralist, corporatist and functionalist interpretations are reviewed, but it is argued that Mexican social policy can be better interpreted as following a 'muddling through' logic which is neither reactive nor preventive, as these theoretical approaches suggest. Emphasis is placed on the dynamic character of policy and how economic, political and institutional factors, orient values and perceptions of policy makers which shape policy development. The chapter also discusses some of the most important earlier

anti-poverty initiatives implemented in the country. Social policy and anti-poverty programmes are the two elements that constitute the background against which the implementation of PRONASOL is analysed.

Chapter three, describes the process of implementation of the Solidarity Municipal Funds-FOMUN programme. Firstly, it describes the essential features of municipal government in Mexico, as the political, economic and administrative framework in which FOMUN was implemented. Secondly, it describes the immediate historical background to the programme in the context of the Salinas administration. Thirdly, the chapter describes the FOMUN structure, procedures and objectives and in general, the norms of the programme as it was expected to work around the country. These sections are followed by an evaluation of the programme in section four, and in section five the analysis of implementation is carried out, where a contrast is made between FOMUN stated objectives and how it was implemented in reality. Influential ideas in the field of policy implementation are discussed and evaluated in this section, before drawing some conclusions in section six.

In chapter four the implementation of the Children of Solidarity programme is discussed. The chapter identifies first the political and educational background in which the implementation process took place. This section is followed by a description of the main elements of the programme, its structure, objectives, and bureaucratic setting. The implementation process is discussed in a third section and

finally, some conclusions are drawn concerning the degree of success of the programme.

Chapter five analyses the process of implementation of the National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises-FONAES programme. The chapter describes first the context of the programme, particularly the experiences and changes in the agricultural sector, and the context in which the programme was implemented. Then the structure of the programme is discussed, followed by an analysis of its implementation. Finally, the effectiveness of the programme is discussed and some conclusions are drawn.

In chapter six, a comparative analysis of the implementation of the three programmes is undertaken so as to draw some lessons in the field of public policy implementation. The chapter integrates new findings and offers alternative explanations resulting from the comparative examination. The comparative exercise introduces the element of contextuality as an indispensable element for the comparison. In the first part, the chapter presents the methodological approach used for the chapter. After that, it follows the comparison of the implementation of the three programmes. The comparison reviews the most important ideas in the field of policy implementation and assesses their usefulness in explaining the cases under study. Next, the chapter discusses the parameters for successful implementation and the resulting differences and similarities of the programmes. Then, the chapter explores some alternative explanations and finally some conclusions are drawn.

Chapter seven discusses the new anti-poverty initiative of the Zedillo administration, and how the current political and economic context has affected its design and implementation. The main differences with Solidarity are highlighted less in terms of procedures than in terms of the politics involved in programme redefinition. Some comments are offered on NAW's future.

Chapter eight summarises a set of propositions that have emerged from the analysis of the implementation of the three programmes and reflects on the kind of obstacles that future implementation will encounter and the changes required to improve the effectiveness of policy in the context of the Mexican polity. Emphasis is placed then on the political context and how it affects the implementation process.

Chapter nine, presents the conclusions of the thesis and integrates the findings both in the field of policy implementation and in relation to the performance of the Mexican political system.

Chapter 3, 4, 5 and 6, the core chapters of the dissertation, can be read independently. However, the thematic structure is logically placed so as to support the conclusions. It is necessary to stress that the sections analysing the implementation of FOMUN, Children of Solidarity and FONAES in chapters 3, 4 and 5, highlight the differences between the description of the programmes as they function from a bureaucratic perspective and their actual implementation as experienced by the author. It is in these sections where the different interpretations

and assessments of the programmes as perceived by the policy-makers, implementers and clients are contrasted. In a similar vein, a critical assessment of the programmes' objectives and structures, which come from official sources, is made in such sections. It is precisely in the comparative chapter where the critical appraisal of the three programmes is carried out in depth.

Chapter 2

Social Policy and Anti-Poverty Programmes in Mexico

INTRODUCTION

The creation of the National Solidarity Programme-PRONASOL in December 1988 inspired an intense debate regarding the rationale of Mexican anti-poverty programmes in particular and social policy in general.

Social policy is capable of several interpretations. For some, social policy merely performs certain legitimacy functions which are considered essential for the functioning of the political system. A second interpretation explains the development of social policy from a pluralist perspective and argues that it results from the pressure of powerful social groups who have successfully taken their interests to the public agenda. A third interpretation, the so-called corporatist one, gives the state and its institutions a preponderant role in the definition of policies. Policy-making then consists in a set of manoeuvres to hold power. Social policy in particular would merely serve the purposes of making more effective the means of control in a society.

Although the value of these interpretations may be useful in explaining social policy developments, at certain times, they are limited in explaining the evolution of social policy. It may be for example, that in the early stages of the development of any particular policy, specific groups are crucial in defining its content, e.g., oil workers, civil servants, armed forces. But later, those groups

might not exert the same pressure on the development of that policy, as compared with economic, political or institutional situation obtaining at the time. It may be the case that the creation of the Mexican Social Security Institute-IMSS in 1943 responded to pressure exerted by powerful groups whose role in the industrialisation of the country was crucial. But at a certain point, the centre of power shifted and different elements might be more appropriate in explaining, for instance, the dismantling of the Mexican system of social security.

The development of Mexican social policy may however be interpreted as following a 'muddling through' logic which is neither reactive nor preventive. The emphasis is placed on the dynamic character of policy and how economic, political and institutional factors, orient values and perceptions of policy makers which shape policy development. From this perspective, the origin of a policy could be explained by a group pressure; but the same policy could be explained later from a corporatist or functionalist point of view. This is so because the rationale of a policy changes with the passage of time and therefore its evolution cannot be explained using only one theoretical model.

Social policy will be seen to serve more than a single objective. Just as the education policy during the late 30s was useful in "building the nation" it was also a political tool used to undermine the power of the church. Such double purposes are precisely the source of the debate regarding the objectives and rationale of Mexican social policy.

The rationale of Mexican social policy and the variations of the social agenda across post-revolutionary regimes will be identified. First, the different theoretical interpretations that explain the development of social policy in Mexico, will be discussed and then some of the most important anti-poverty initiatives implemented in the country will be described. These two elements constitute the background against which the implementation of PRONASOL will be analysed.

THE RATIONALE OF MEXICAN SOCIAL POLICY

THE FUNCTIONALIST INTERPRETATION

The functionalist interpretation argues that social policy represents an attempt to 'keep the lid on' and to contain the social problems that the economic process creates (Nord 1994). For Nord, the development of social policy in Mexico is primarily oriented to make the workforce efficient and to create political stability. Its main beneficiaries are those groups of the population who have performed vital functions for the nation in terms of economic infrastructure or political processes. In achieving this objective, social policy follows an affordability and conflict logic, namely that any social initiative depends on the availability of resources and if they are available, their allocation is a function of conflict. But when conflict exceeds government possibilities, co-optation and coercion are exerted.

Following O'Connor's (1973) main propositions, Ward (1993, p. 628) also holds that social policy in Mexico has been useful in palliating the worst effects of capital accumulation. For him, although the objectives of social policy namely

political mediation have not changed, the means for achieving these have changed. For Ward, political mediation by means of social policy, can be divided in four main phases. The first phase, political mediation through *laissez-faire*, is characterised by the primacy of the economic model based on a "grow now-distribute later" and "trickle-down" logic. Social provision was determined on "ad-hoc" basis and articulated through patron-clientelistic relations exchanging social benefits for political support for governmental initiatives.

This was followed by a second phase in which political mediation was achieved through state intervention and populism. This was the case roughly from 1976 to 1982. Although based on the same clientelistic and populist logic of the previous phase, the nature and extent of state intervention changed, embracing housing, land, sanitation and infrastructure, replacing the "ad-hoc" basis of the previous phase. There was a proliferation of social welfare agencies, which in turn, increased opportunities for patronage. The aim of this phase was not only to mobilise popular support for the government in a period characterised by the political activism of the left, but also to recover the legitimacy lost as a result of the students bloodshed of 1968.

The third phase, the routinisation of social welfare, roughly from 1982 to 1988, was characterised by a more administrative regime of management and efficiency and more decentralised basis of decision making. The rationale was to use scarce resources appropriately through more routinisation and less partisan delivery. Finally, Solidarity represents the fourth phase of welfare delivery in which

social policy has returned to patronage and clientelism. Ward (1993, p. 628) suggests that either through clientelism or a more effective application of technical routines and procedures, Mexican social policy represents a 'key element in statecraft and of papering over the cracks of social inequality.'

There are some problems in explaining the development of Mexican social policy from this perspective. First, although social policy may be used to palliate the process of capital accumulation and to act as a cover-up to legitimise the government, such a characterisation should not be exaggerated. There are some other areas of government action, e.g., electoral reform, which are also essential in improving the government's legitimacy and sustaining the political system. According to this perspective, for instance, the political reform introduced in 1977 which legally recognised the Communist party in Mexico, would merely represented a condescending concession of the state to legitimise the system. From this point of view, there seems to be no room for the influence and political pressure that certain social groups exerted, particularly during the late 60s, in shaping political reform. Actually, from this perspective all policies would serve to increase government's legitimacy. Thus it is not clear what makes the social policy different from other policies which are also effective in improving the government's legitimacy.

There is another problem related to this approach. It does not provide a satisfactory explanation of those periods in which legitimacy is achieved by other means. Following the logic of this approach, the development of compensatory

programmes should appear in periods in which the state has privileged and supported an economic model prone to capital accumulation. However, some periods in Mexican history show that social programmes were relegated during administrations where capitalist development was privileged, for example during the Miguél Alemán administration (1947-1952) when social programmes were severely reduced (Nord 1994, p.6). A more dynamic argument has been offered to solve this inconsistency. It is argued that the capital bias shown by some Mexican governments is not necessarily accompanied by social programmes. It has been the case that other administrations have had to implement social programmes to compensate the class bias of the previous one. According to Nord, for example, the administrations of Cárdenas (1934-1940), López Mateos (1959-1964) and Echeverría (1970-1976) expanded the social commitment of the state to compensate for the capitalist excesses of previous administrations. The problem however, is that this argument assumes the existence of a homogeneous governing coalition with long term economic and political projects which is capable of adjusting itself to particular contingencies, which seems inconsistent with what we know of the Mexican political system. Furthermore, if the formula accumulation-legitimacy is correct, then it follows that social policy can be relegated in periods in which there is no threat to the stability of the system or when legitimacy can be achieved by other means.

Actually, social programmes have been at the margin of national priorities in times when legitimacy was badly needed. For instance, during the period that

followed the end of the Mexican revolution of 1910, very few social programmes were created. The period spanned nearly two decades in which political consolidation and stability were the priorities and during which the implementation of social programmes would have served the purpose of bringing political stability to the country. Nevertheless, scattered 'social programmes' were introduced in a rather irregular way. For example, although during the administration of Plutarco Elías Calles (1928-1934) public works grew, a Federal Labour Law granted concessions with regard to hours and holidays and the 1933 Six Year Plan set up minimum wages and collective bargaining (Knight 1990), the state's social commitment was rather slipshod. In terms of health, for example, up to the late 30s, health services were not a responsibility of the state, but depended on public charities and private initiatives. When the state committed itself to national health programmes, they were either in the form of sanitary campaigns against yellow fever and malaria, or medical assistance (López Acuña 1982, p. 102). If there was a time to prove the popular character of the Revolution, but also to increase government legitimacy, it was then. A more recent example confirms this, the Zedillo administration could benefit enormously by implementing social programmes that could boost the legitimacy of his government. But the National Alliance for Welfare-NAW instead of serving this purpose, has been implemented in a rather humble way. His commitment is not as clear as that of Salinas to Solidarity.

THE PLURALIST INTERPRETATION

According to the pluralist interpretation, the development of the most important social institutions and policies in the country is the result of the pressure exerted by powerful social groups who have made their interests part of the public agenda. Mesa-Lago (1976, p. 228) has described the main groups in shaping social policy in the country. They are 1) all branches of the military and the police whose power is based on coercion and its access to arms; 2) the civil service at both the federal and state level (although the latter is less privileged than the former) whose power is exercised through political and administrative control; 3) the powerful economic groups in industry such as railroads, electricity, petroleum, sugar, metallurgy, mining, auto industry, telephone, and transportation and whose power is exercised through the market and, finally, 4) the bulk of the labour force composed mostly of urban blue and white-collar workers whose power is based upon and exercised through unionisation and the recourse to violence.

This model seems to provide an adequate explanation of the development of some welfare institutions related to important groups in Mexico, for example the creation of the Mexican Social Security Institute-IMSS in 1943 which covered in general the workforce during the years of industrialisation, or the creation of the Social Security Institute for State Workers-ISSSTE which covered the federal and state civil service in the 60s. But one must be cautious in adopting this interpretation because it leaves out the influence of economic factors in the shaping of policy and also because the development of certain social programmes can be

better explained by the action of the state and not by the pressure of certain groups. In the first case, for instance, it is difficult to say whether the boom in welfare programmes that came with the industrialisation process in the country resulted from the pressure of certain groups or rather from the need to integrate the bulk of the workforce in the industrialisation process. In fact, the so-called industrialisation convergence hypothesis (see Midgley 1984, p. 172) argues that it is precisely the process of industrialisation which determined the development of social programmes.

In the second case, important programmes for education and health were developed more in response to the initiative of the state than to the pressure of certain groups, reflecting the importance given to education and health by the Cárdenas administration. His commitment to education for instance, was reflected in the allocation of a one percent annual increase in the educational budget, which raised it from 15 percent to 20 percent of total spending between 1934 and 1940 (Knight 1990, p. 27). Projects such as the programme for rural schools, the establishment of Teachers Rural School, Cultural Missions, Special Army Schools and special efforts to reach the Indigenous population proliferated during the Cárdenas administration.

In terms of health and social security, in 1931 the Cárdenas administration amended the Constitution to include a programme of professional risks that was oriented to all the worker population (Mesa-Lago 1976, p. 137). In 1937 Cárdenas created the Secretariat of Public Assistance to initiate formal intervention in

matters related to social needs and the health of large groups of the population. In 1939 a law was passed which made social security obligatory in the form of a workers' compensation programme which protected the workers against disability, unemployment, sickness and accidents. This required the state along with large industries to make provision for housing, schools, infirmaries and public services. The same law established the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration that settled all disputes between labour and employers and which included representatives of workers, employers and the state, the latter having the greatest number of votes and reinforcing its regulating role. It is clear then, that the role of the state in developing social initiatives is equally to, if not more important than that played by powerful groups in society as the pluralist interpretation would suggest.

This approach has some other weaknesses. First, it assumes that the state remains passive and neutral under the control of the most powerful groups in society (see Malloy 1979). But in the case of Mexico rather than a passive state we find a highly interventionist (activist) one. Second, in empirical terms, changes of policy over time can not be fully explained by reference to the activities of groups. According to this model, since social programmes respond to the pressure of certain groups, the modification of those programmes would be challenged by strong reactions from those groups who promoted them in the first place. But as the privatisation of the system of social security in Mexico shows, this seems not to be the case. Third, when transformations in policies and institutions appear, it is difficult, in empirical terms, to identify the groups that are displacing or reshaping

such institutions and policies. It is not possible to identify clearly for example, the groups that pressed the government to extend social security to rural areas during the 70s. Finally, because this approach puts the emphasis on groups, the analysis of the policy loses importance and therefore, the mechanisms through which it is designed and implemented seem to be less important.

In sum although the pluralist interpretation helps in understanding the influences affecting social policy, it fails to explain and describe the active role of the state in the process.

THE CORPORATIST INTERPRETATION

This approach explains the development of social policy as a process by which social programmes are provided by a powerful state for certain groups in exchange for political support. This is done through a vertical system of affiliated organisations which are loyal to the state. Particularly in the Mexican case, the corporatist approach assigns a central and authoritarian role to the state and the party, particularly the Institutional Revolutionary Party-PRI, in this process of political control (see Craske 1994). Due to the role of the PRI and its affiliated organisations (the Confederation of Mexican Workers-CTM, the National Peasants' Confederation-CNC, and the National Confederation of Popular Organisations-CNOP) in structuring political power in the country, Mexican corporatism is based on a principle of clientelism by means of which favours are traded between the state and its affiliated organisations. Social programmes and material improvements then, result from this exchange, and they are primarily

oriented to those groups who support state actions. The development of the social policy then seems to depend on this system of favours and on the state's willingness and ability to deliver social benefits.

Although the model is highly influential and useful in explaining some elements of the Mexican political system, it exaggerates the importance of the role of the state and minimises that of other elements in explaining social policy development. Its first defect is that it assumes that social groups are weak and powerless in influencing policy shape. When social pressure is seriously considered, the state response to it appears as a 'clever manoeuvre for manipulating basically weak and disorganized foci of social dissent which can be controlled by repression and co-optation.' (Brachet-Márquez 1992, pp. 98-99). It gives but marginal room for social groups or independent unions that have actually achieved benefits from the official corporatist channels by their independent action. As with the functionalist approach, the role of social groups and their importance in influencing the policy process is completely neglected in this kind of explanation. Although the centrality of the government in the design and implementation of social policies cannot be overlooked it fails to explain the mechanisms through which social threats to the stability of the system translate into public policies.¹

A second weakness of this approach is that it does not explain why a presumably strong state has implemented reforms that have actually affected the

¹For a critique of this approach see Dunleavy and O'Leary 1987.

interest of certain groups inside the governing coalition. It does not explain satisfactorily for instance, the short history of political reforms that have made room for the political participation of the Mexican left. As Brachet-Márquez (1992, p. 99) points out, it fails to explain the pressures for change outside the corporatist channels, and the openness of a presumably 'highly entrenched system' which ultimately, is unlikely to be the architect of its own dissolution.' In fact, as this study of implementation will show, the state and its institutions are weaker than the corporatist tradition assumes. While it is true that this interpretation can explain some developments in terms of social policy, it is important not to ignore other factors.

SOCIAL POLICY IN MEXICO: A MUDDLING THROUGH POLICY

The following analysis will attempt to show that the rationale of social policy in Mexico has been shaped by immediate and pragmatic political and economic considerations rather than by the compensatorial activity of a ruling coalition or a powerful state or by the pressures exerted by powerful groups in society. This is not to say that keeping the peace or the search for consensus is not a consideration in the design and implementation of certain social initiatives of post-revolutionary governments in Mexico. It certainly is, but such a concern is limited to the immediate political and economic projects of each administration. Whether political unrest arises out six years later or not is not a concern for Mexican presidents. They are concerned with political stability during their administration. The objective of political stability is driven by a short-term oriented rationale rather

than by a historical and institutionalised one as the functionalist or corporatist interpretations implicitly maintain. As Streeten notes, just because politicians live in the short term, it does not mean that their actions will have a limited impact on poverty alleviation. For Streeten (1994, p. 137), short term interventions on behalf of the poor have an important impact on poverty reduction, and therefore, a 'concern for the short term is not only politically but also intellectually respectable.' Even in prospective terms, it is debatable whether social policy achievements would "keep the lid on" making the job of future administrations easier and maintaining political stability for the system as a whole or for a coherent and homogeneous governing coalition.

Social policy has a much more pragmatic meaning for Mexican politicians and particularly for Mexican presidents. It has been useful in balancing social inequalities in the country and at the same time, in advancing the political and economic projects of the administration. But it has been shaped in a 'muddling through' (Lindblom 1959) manner. Indeed, economic, political and institutional considerations are important constraints, but ideological perceptions, values and motivations of Mexican politicians have also played a significant role. It is true that many of the social actions during the Cárdenas administration resulted from coincident circumstances rather than autonomous decisions (see Knight 1990, p. 51). But it is also true that Cárdenas, as well as Calles or much later, other Mexican presidents, had values and perceptions of how the country should be and more importantly options through which to implement these options. While for

Calles, for example, agrarian reform had been finished, for Cárdenas it was a means of transforming the nation (Knight 1990, p. 19). The point is that although circumstances are highly influential in deciding policies and government actions, decision-makers can also determine policy outcomes (see Grindle and Thomas 1991). As Shapiro (1995, p. 5) notes, policy makers are not 'the mere playthings of group pressures but are also purposive actors bent on achieving their own visions of public values.'

Similarly, the implementation of the Social Security System during the Ávila Camacho administration (1940-1946), was not merely an attempt to placate the labour force for the discipline imposed on it by the new administration, nor the result of the pressure exerted on the government to introduce the system. Instead, both processes contributed to its creation. The economic developments of the period provided the context but certain political issues influenced its particular shape. It was created because of the process of industrialisation but it also served the purposes of consensus building in dismantling the 'red' initiatives of the Cárdenas administration.

And it is precisely because of this influence of values and conditions that social policy has served more than a single objective. It is contended here that social policy serves the purposes of developing the nation, but also as a tool to balance the distribution of power in a given society, either by delivering welfare benefits to social groups or by counteracting political interest that may endanger the functioning of the system as a whole. Be it the land reform and education

policies of the 30s, or the social security programme of the 40s, or even the rural development of the 70s and the Solidarity programmes of the early 90s, social programmes clearly represent this twofold use of social policy.

But the development of social policy is not only influenced by values and perceptions but also by institutional factors. The Constitution also has widened social rights and prerogatives that create legal channels to allow social demands to be transformed into specific programmes. For example, the amendments to Article 3, which made education socialist during the Cárdenas administration, were so entrenched, both politically and administratively that it took the whole administration of Ávila Camacho to eradicate. Or again with the land reform policy which has been the classic example of social justice policy over several decades, the situation was the same.

Finally, because social policy is tied to values and perceptions of Mexican presidents, the priority given to a particular area of the social agenda, varies from one administration to another, according to the political and economic project of the administration. This has resulted in short-term and pragmatically oriented social programmes such as COPLAMAR, PIDER, SAM, and now Solidarity. But even normal long term oriented social policies such as education, health or housing, depend on the political perceptions and needs of the moment. For instance, while Cárdenas emphasised rural education, the Alemán administration was committed more to urban education because he promoted a more industrialised and urban country.

Although this short term oriented rationale has prevailed in shaping social policy, more recently economic constraints have diminished the room to accommodate social concerns in the public agenda. Nowadays, economic constraints coupled with the ascendancy of neo-liberal ideas are re-shaping Mexican social policy in the way of a more residual model in which market oriented policies are displacing those which grew, first, under the import substitution model of the 40s, and later, under the so-called 'stabilising development' and 'shared development' strategies. While some areas of social policy are being privatised, namely pension funds, at the same time, new anti-poverty programmes have been created, to fill gaps created by a former lack of coherence in social policy and which in the end increased social stratification and inequality.

ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMMES IN MEXICO

The systematic subordination of social policy to other priorities, has increased social needs to a point where social policy as such is incapable of solving urgent needs. Anti-poverty programmes have played an important role in the Mexican public agenda of the last decades because of their effectiveness in improving targeting and meeting urgent social needs. They have provided both political credit by ensuring that 'government cares about poverty' (see Harrop 1992), as well as targeting solutions to social groups which deserve urgent attention.

Four main anti-poverty initiatives deserve attention in the Mexican case. The Integrated Programme for Rural Development-PIDER, the Central Co-ordination of the National Plan of Economically Depressed Regions and Marginalised Groups-COPLAMAR, the Mexican Food System-SAM and the PRONASOL.

THE INTEGRATED PROGRAMME FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (PIDER)

One of the first anti-poverty programmes in Mexico was the Integrated Programme for Rural Development-PIDER. A World Bank funded programme, it was a multisectoral programme created in 1973 under the direct control of the Department of the Presidency. It aimed to co-ordinate the myriad national projects of rural development. Approximately US\$ 2 billion was invested in 139 microregions and about 9,000 thousand communities, considered the poorest in the country (Cernea 1992, pp. 5 and 13). PIDER was made up of small projects aimed at benefiting small villages or subgroups within these communities by the construction of feeder roads, irrigation works, and fostering peasants organisations, training and welfare (Gates 1993, p. 37). According to Cernea (1992, p. 14), PIDER projects were grouped into three main types: productive projects (agroindustry units, small-scale irrigation schemes); economic support projects (construction of stores and warehouses in rural areas, rural electrification, development of local markets), and social infrastructure projects (construction of schools, health centres, water supply and sewage systems).

According to Gates (1993, pp. 36-37), the programme was created in response to the food crisis that resulted from the importation of large quantities of basic foods at the beginning of the 70s, and to calm the related rural discontent 'expressed in land invasions and violent conflicts between peasants and landowners'. Agricultural policies during the period 1970-1976, were oriented to the provision of high-yielding seeds, fertilisers and agrochemicals, equipment, credit, and technical assistance. All this was accompanied by the proliferation of governmental agencies. It was assumed that, in the long term, the programme would produce social and economic development and thus a more equitable distribution of social benefits.

A distinctive feature of the PIDER programme was that its implementation was based on a community approach. Previous development programmes were managed by local elites and bureaucratic agencies, but the PIDER programme bypassed them by directly targeting the rural population. Consequently, PIDER had to introduce important adjustments in the way state agencies had traditionally implemented rural development programmes. According to Cernea (1992, p. 14) PIDER practised an innovative bottom-up planning system which took into consideration local views and needs in deciding which projects to implement bypassing local bureaucracy.

For some (Fox 1994, p. 163), the community involvement was merely rhetoric because in the end the whole implementation of the programme remained under the control of reformists. Its effectiveness has also been questioned. Gates

(1993) notes that the level of production achieved under the programme did not match the debts that resulted from the peasants' acquisition of capital goods. In the end, she argues, rural unemployment persisted and only those more enterprising *ejidatarios* became well-off. The main beneficiaries were 'the merchant middlemen, the distributors of fertiliser, farm machinery, and other new agricultural inputs, purchasing agencies and processing industries, together with the government officials, independent brokers, and large landowners, who are in a prime position to benefit in both the formal and underground economies from the numerous opportunities for personal enrichment offered by rural developments on this scale.' (Gates 1993, pp. 38-39).

Despite this, PIDER also produced positive outcomes. As Fox (1994, p. 163) reports, PIDER not only offered sources of employment in regions where opportunities were few, but also diminished the power of regional bosses. Equally important is the fact that PIDER not only offered the opportunity to test a bottom-up planning system, but also increased the bargaining position of the target population with government agencies (Cernea 1992, pp. 15 and 22)

THE CENTRAL CO-ORDINATION OF THE NATIONAL PLAN OF ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED REGIONS AND MARGINALISED GROUPS (COPLAMAR) AND THE MEXICAN FOOD SYSTEM (SAM)

During the administration of José López Portillo (1976-1982) the Central Co-ordination of the National Plan of Economically Depressed Regions and Marginalised Groups-COPLAMAR was created as a multisectoral agency that

worked by 'subcontracting a number of welfare programmes to other agencies.' (Brachet-Márquez 1988, p. 228). Under the direct control of the office of the presidency, COPLAMAR established co-ordination agreements with other public agencies to deliver welfare benefits to marginalised groups. They in turn had to contribute to the construction of buildings or in the maintenance of finished premises as a condition of access to the services.

Rural roads, health centres, schools and food stores were some of the projects implemented by COPLAMAR. In terms of rural roads, for example, an agreement was made between the Department of Human Settlements and Public Works-SAHOP and COPLAMAR to build rural roads and facilitate access to remote zones of the country. In terms of health, the IMSS-COPLAMAR agreement aimed to increase health coverage by the construction of health centres in which community participation played an important role. The programme constructed over three thousand primary health care units and dozens of rural hospitals (Brachet Márquez 1988, p. 228). In terms of education, an agreement between the Department of Public Education-SEP created the SEP-COPLAMAR agreement to tackle the problem of high school dropout rates. The aim was to construct more schools in isolated zones and by doing so facilitate access by isolated communities. In terms of food, the CONASUPO-COPLAMAR agreement implemented an 'extensive network of village food stores designed to weaken local monopolies over staples in remote rural areas.' (Fox 1994, p. 164).

Although community involvement in the programmes varied, some of them successfully involved the community in the implementation of the policy. As Fox (1994, p. 164) points out, the CONASUPO-COPLAMAR programmes did not systematically make political support a condition of material benefits and even promoted the creation of democratic regional consumer organisations which challenged corrupt private and bureaucratic elites.

The Mexican Food System-SAM was created by a presidential initiative almost at the end of the José López Portillo (1976-1982) administration. Redclift (1981, p. 1) reports that the SAM represented the most important effort to deal with agricultural development and nutrition since the 40s. The funds of the SAM came from the revenues of the boom in oil production during the late 70s. According to Gates (1993, p. 44), the programme represented a system which subsidised production, agribusiness, and consumption to expand rural employment and purchasing power through a concentrated attack on poverty.

Characterised as a subsidiary and populist programme, because of the partnership between the state and peasants in sharing production risks, it confronted many of the interorganisational problems common to the implementation of multi-agency programmes and in a sense, it was unrealistic because it was aimed at solving a structural problem by temporary means (Redclift 1981, p. 5).

THE NATIONAL SOLIDARITY PROGRAMME-PRONASOL

The latest effort in the field is PRONASOL. Based in a philosophy of community participation and building on the experience of PIDER, COPLAMAR and SAM, it was an anti-poverty programme that encouraged local participation and leadership. With an impressive amount of resources it was the most ambitious programme of all. It was divided into three main areas: productive projects, social welfare actions and regional development programmes. As with PIDER, COPLAMAR and SAM, its actions were under the direct control of the presidency, this time, via the Department of Social Development-SEDESOL. What made PRONASOL different from its predecessors is its significant political role and the indisputable amount of public works implemented in the country.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PROGRAMMES

The programmes have some features in common. The most evident perhaps is the use of community participation for their implementation. As Midgley (1995, pp. 114 and 115) notes, community approaches are based on the belief that by means of co-operation and shared purposes, people ensure that their basic needs are met, their problems are solved and opportunities for advancement are created. This type of community participation differs from other community approaches which either are more radical and challenge the government or those which are based on gender issues and women's contribution to welfare.

The community approach used in PIDER, COPLAMAR and PRONASOL resembles that used by the British in colonial times. As Midgley (1995, p. 116)

notes, although many governments around the world used this approach during the 60s as part of the conditionality of aid programmes introduced by the US Alliance for Progress, in essence the community approach is the same. The main characteristics are: construction of community works with local participation in their implementation; enhancement of community identity; strengthening of democratic participation and fostering self-help and self-determination.

A second important feature shared by the programmes is that they have received strong political support for their implementation. They all have been presidential initiatives. Redclift (1981, p. 3) notes that in the case of the SAM, the programme's final design was based on eight of twenty studies that the presidential office commissioned between 1976 and 1980. PIDER also received top level political support. As Cernea (1992, p. 19) notes, the implementation of a multi-agency programme like PIDER required negotiation among the participating agencies, which could only be done with the help of top leaders. COPLAMAR enjoyed direct presidential support as well. The programme co-ordinated the efforts of the participating agencies with the support of the presidential office. This gave the programme enough power to establish agreement between CONASUPO, IMSS, SEP and SAHOP. PRONASOL only overcame local vested interests and bureaucratic inertia with presidential support. The delivery of public works by the president himself all over the country, not only reinforced his personal image, but also sent the message that he would take care personally of any problem that

would obstruct the implementation of the programme, thus reinforcing the personal link of the president with PRONASOL.

A third characteristic is that all of the programmes were given enough resources. Redclift (1981, p. 5) notes that the once prestigious PIDER, stood at only \$ US 180, 000, 000 in 1980 compared with SAM which had \$US 3 billion in 1980 and another '\$US 5 billion to be allocated to agricultural investment by both the public and private sector, and crop insurance.' PRONASOL also stands out in this respect. Its budget allocation grew from 0.32 percent in 1988 to 0.74 percent of GDP in 1994. Similarly, Solidarity spending as a share of public spending on social development grew from 5.23 percent in 1989 to 7.32 percent in 1994. During the six years of operation of the Solidarity programme, 60 percent of its resources were allocated to rural areas (OECD 1996, p. 72 and 73).

The programmes were based on a 'partnership' between the government and the target population, particularly in the productive branch of the programmes. The idea of shared risk (*riesgo compartido*) refers to the fact that the risks involved in the production of crops or goods by communities are shared by the government as well as the producer. This was one of the main components of the SAM programme and the philosophy of the productive component of PRONASOL, namely the Credit on Word programme (*crédito a la palabra*), the Solidarity Production Funds (Fondos de Solidaridad para la Producción-FOSOPRO), and the National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises (Empresas de Solidaridad-FONAES). The same applied to COPLAMAR in which, even

though community participation in the construction of health centres was required, medical attention was given even if some community members were not willing to or could not contribute with their work.

In terms of policy implementation, the programmes also share important features. All of them used incentives either to foster collaboration from participating agencies or from the community for effective implementation. Redclift (1981, p. 9) notes that the SAM programme gave a 'boost to some government agencies which were given priority under the programme...[particularly to CONASUPO which]...assumed a much more central role under the SAM.' As far as PIDER is concerned, Cernea (1992, p. 9) notes that if PIDER achieved institutional collaboration it was because it was able to 'take the necessary organisational steps to translate the desirable participation into practice, and to provide economic gains to the people expected to participate.' In the case of PRONASOL, the lax interpretation of some of the rules of the programme had effective results in accommodating a myriad of interests that in the end improved the implementation of the programme.

Because all the programmes were multi-agency initiatives, they all encountered interorganisational problems. As Redclift (1981, p. 9) reports, the SAM showed serious difficulties in bringing together the many agencies involved in its implementation. Similarly, Cernea (1992, p. 17) reports how during its initial stages the PIDER programme, had to confront political opposition from vested interests, and the stifling routines of entrenched bureaucracies that used to be the

only actors in the implementation process. The same problems were confronted by COPLAMAR and later by the PRONASOL. As described in the following chapters the National Solidarity Programme required a great deal of political leadership to co-ordinate its implementation. In many situations, such leadership could not cope with bureaucratic inertia at the federal, state and municipal level.

MEXICAN ANTI-POVERTY INITIATIVES COMPARED TO INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

There are also important similarities between Mexican anti-poverty programmes and international ones. Graham (1994) presents a comprehensive study of such efforts in Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America. In reviewing anti-poverty programmes in other countries the most evident element is that they emerged during periods of economic adjustment. According to Graham (1994) and Van der Hoeven (1994), these programmes are aimed at palliating the social and economic costs of economic restructuring. PRONASOL appeared at the same time as the structural changes in the Mexican economy, namely privatisation, fiscal reform and the opening up of the economy.

Internationally too, community involvement is common to all programmes (see Jespersen 1994). As Graham (1994) notes, community participation not only enhance economic potential but gives political voice to groups who have traditionally been excluded from the planning process in the solution of their most immediate problems. Furthermore, as the Micro Project Units in Zambia show, by including communities in the operation of the programme, political sustainability for economic reform is enhanced. Conversely, when community participation has

been excluded from the implementation process, political sustainability has not been effective because of popular suspicion that the programme merely benefits the government clientele, as happened with the DIRE programme of Senegal (Graham 1994, p. 313).

At this point, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of community participation for the purposes of this research. It will be used not in a sociological way, but in a much more restricted sense, that is, at the level of neighbourhood, at the level of the people with particular needs and who can benefit from the implementation of the programme. Therefore a political interpretation of community participation as a politically proactive and dissenter "civil society" should be avoided. Further reference to this topic will be made in the following chapter where the political use of the concept is briefly discussed.

Another common characteristic of international anti-poverty programmes, is that their success has been related to their ability to separate their image from the government. As Graham (1994, p. 313) reports, the AGETIP programme, a World Bank assisted programme implemented by the government of Senegal, succeeded because it was set up as an independent agency with a private sector director. On the contrary, the DIRE programme, also funded by the USIAD and the World Bank, worked with clientelistic criteria in the disbursement of loans, created an image of a programme dominated by the governing party and produced poor results with no impact on poverty alleviation. Although a separation from the government seems to be essential in improving a programme's image and

effectiveness, it seems that PRONASOL has capitalised politically well as became clear after the 1991 elections (Molinar and Weldon 1994 and Bruhn 1996). This suggests that the link between the president and the programme influenced its success.

The success of PRONASOL despite its governmental sponsorship can be explained as follows: popular belief in Mexico in the genuine commitment of the state to this anti-poverty programme was sufficient, and in any case, no alternative and credible organiser was available. The Mexican state continues to enjoy a degree of popular legitimacy which many third world states lack.

Top level political commitment is another feature that emerges from the review of the programmes. As in the case of PRONASOL political commitment, in this case directly from the office of the presidency, guarantees not only the availability of resources but also the necessary administrative priority for their implementation. The role played by political leadership in the programmes is also essential in 'fixing the game' (Bardach 1977) as bureaucratic lag and vested interests appear during the implementation of the programmes. Political commitment in the case of PRONASOL also served the purpose of institution building. As Graham (1994) notes a significant element in the success of anti-poverty programmes is related to institutional autonomy, not only to separate these efforts from the governmental image, but also to increase their effectiveness by working with NGO's or the community directly and to guarantee their continuation for more than a single administration. Although bureaucratic institutions in Mexico

appear and disappear as administrations come and go, and the rule of law is in many cases empty talk, the institutionalisation process started by the Salinas administration in the case of PRONASOL, is noteworthy (Serrano 1996). This is not a guarantee that the process will be continued by the Zedillo Ponce de León administration, but an important element in advancing the political capacity and social learning processes of communities that should not be disregarded.

THE QUEST FOR LEGITIMACY AND PRONASOL

No other social policy or anti-poverty programme in Mexico has received so much attention as Solidarity. Although the debate surrounding the programme has taken different directions, it is a political interpretation the one which has attracted more supporters. Such an interpretation suggests that the programme merely responds to an electoral logic and that it has acted as a compensatory programme to palliate some of the costs of the economic reform of the Salinas administration. Although there is a tendency to conceive the programme from a merely political viewpoint and to overlook its policy implications, there are convincing reasons to favour this interpretation. Even before taking office, Salinas had to confront pressing economic, political and social challenges. Economically, he had to extend De la Madrid's liberal reforms of the economic system which created a new economic environment and brought to the economic agenda a significant process of privatisation and the reduction of the role of the state in the economy. The problem was that the implementation of such an economic model, required strict austerity

measures that would put a great deal of strain on the satisfaction of social needs, which had traditionally been solved by an irresponsible fiscal policy (see Craske 1994, p. 4).

Politically and socially, Salinas faced equally complex problems. As Cornelius (1991, p. 1) notes, Salinas was the first president that had been elected with less than half of the votes cast in 1988 (48.7%), a situation that was further complicated by his pronouncement in the sense that the era of the virtual one-party system had ended. This created legitimacy and credibility problems not only among the leadership of the PRI who interpreted his message as a sign of an unfolding political liberalisation process in which the old structure and practices of the PRI could not fit, but also among public opinion, due to the "crash" of the computing system for counting the election votes. The political leadership of Salinas had to be reinforced too because the votes were not enough to keep the overwhelming PRI majority in the Congress, only 260 out of 500 seats (Cornelius 1991, p. 2). Finally, the political situation was further aggravated by the political ascendance of the opposition, mainly of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the Party of National Action (PAN). The "era of the virtual one-party system" was indeed something more than empty talk. The election results showed that a more demanding and politically active society was emerging, one that had already escaped from the traditional mechanisms of political control in which the PRI had based its political dominance in the country.

It is because of these reasons that the political interpretation of Solidarity has been favoured leaving its policy implications to one side. From this point of view, Solidarity represents a clever manoeuvre to gain the legitimacy and credibility lost right after the elections and to palliate the effects of the neoliberal economic model initiated by De la Madrid, one that Salinas was committed to deepen. Therefore, following this line of argument, the communitarian approach in which Solidarity was based, its attempt to introduce new actors into the decision making and implementation processes and its strong popular appeal, fostered from the presidential office, were merely aimed at producing political legitimacy in times when it was badly needed. But this is only one aspect of Solidarity.

As it will become clear in the following chapters, both economic and post electoral problems, certainly demanded a legitimacy building exercise in which Solidarity would play an essential role. This legitimacy building exercise which included new actors, also helps to explain why PRONASOL encountered tensions between the policy makers and the different actors on the ground and why the government wanted to engage in a self-help community oriented programme as a means of counteracting the resistance and tensions of its implementation and how community acted as an essential ally in the process.

CONCLUSIONS

Social policy in Mexico is not merely a clever manoeuvre to legitimise the government or to keep the peace. It performs functions that are essential in the

development of a given society and is useful in building the nation and delivering social justice, both through means of land reform, education, the development of social security systems and developing community attitudes that could increase their bargaining position with authorities. But because its development depends on a set of circumstances, as well as on values and perceptions of Mexican politicians, its political uses are many. It may bring legitimacy to the government or serve as a pork-barrel policy in gaining votes and demobilising opposition, but this could hardly be its only purpose.

It is precisely because of the different purposes social policy has served, that it is difficult to explain its development according to one single theoretical approach. It has been suggested that some of the models which offer sound interpretations of the development of social policy do so only at certain points in time. But they are limited in explaining its evolution because through time, the centre of power determining the evolution of social policy changes. Therefore, the explanations given by these models are not always coincident with social policy developments in Mexico, which seem to be oriented by short-term and more immediate reasons. That is why, pluralist interpretations and long term conspiratorial theories are limited in explaining the development of social policies in Mexico.

It can be argued therefore, that in order to understand the dynamic character of Mexican social policy, a muddling-through model offers a better standpoint in explaining its development. It allows an examination of the origins of

a social initiative, and explains its evolution without adhering to one single interpretation. It also allows an understanding of social policy as a political process by means of which it is possible to balance the distribution of power in a given society, either by delivering welfare benefits to social groups or by counteracting political interests that may endanger the functioning of the system as a whole.

This brief description of the main Mexican anti-poverty programmes stresses their differences and similarities and then compares them with international experiences. The review shows the importance acquired by communitarian approaches in their implementation; the need for incentives to increase their effectiveness, and possible obstacles and interorganisational problems that might appear as this proceeds. The rationale of social policy and the characteristics of anti-poverty initiatives in Mexico and abroad, constitute the framework within which the analysis of the implementation of the Solidarity programme will be carried out.

Chapter 3

Solidarity Municipal Funds-FOMUN: An Analysis of Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Confronted with severe economic limitations, complex political scenarios and a large deficit in the provision of social services particularly those aimed at poor groups, the Salinas administration explored an innovative approach to the implementation of social policies. The National Solidarity Programme¹-PRONASOL, the most important component of Salinas' social policy, was aimed at reducing the gap between public demands and public provision. Created as an all-encompassing strategy to fight extreme poverty, it covered a wide range of areas such as health, education, housing, productive activities, public works, and many others. Focusing mainly on the rural and urban poor, as well as Indigenous groups, the Solidarity strategy eventually developed into nearly 40 specific programmes, distributed in three main areas of action: a) solidarity for social welfare, b) solidarity for production, and c) solidarity for regional development. The latter includes Solidarity Municipal Funds (FOMUN), which was aimed at building up small basic public works all over the country by increasing the amount

¹Since the beginning of his term at the head of the Federal Executive Branch, Carlos Salinas de Gortari presented Mexicans with three national resolutions to promote development within the country aimed at extending democratic rule and recuperating the sustained growth of the economy through price stability and productively raising the standard of living of the population.

of finance available at the municipal level. Its actions covered public lighting, pavements, sewage systems, roads, drinking water systems, irrigation, infrastructure for agricultural and agribusiness activities, septic tanks, boring wells, hanging bridges, rural electrification, rural telephone lines, administration of solid waste, school rooms, some sporting facilities, health centre refurbishment, and others.

Fighting poverty is not new in Mexico, neither are the strategies used. In the past presidential initiatives had explored innovative ways to target poor groups. The Integrated Programme for Rural Development-PIDER-a programme supported by the World Bank and the Central Co-ordination of the National Plan of Economically Depressed Regions and Marginalised Groups-COPLAMAR, for example, were some of the first anti-poverty efforts that included popular mobilisation for goal achievement. Nevertheless, the PRONASOL, differed from previous efforts because it emphasised community participation in the decision-making process and aimed to fight poverty by redefining institutions, rules and the role of bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic actors involved in the implementation process.

Because of its notoriety, PRONASOL originated an important debate in which political and economic issues were predominant. The comprehensive work of Cornelius, Craig and Fox (1994) for instance, covers a wide range of topics, from historical to ethnographic research, and quantitative analysis of aggregate data. Craske (1994) has also explored the political implications of Solidarity in

redefining corporatist political arrangements in Mexico. Other works have stressed the economic angle of the programme and have analysed its usefulness in reducing poverty (Trejo and Jones 1993). Fewer works have studied the programme from a public policy perspective (Bertranou 1993). There are also innumerable articles in magazines and newspapers which had dealt with the programme. In general, all of them show a concern for the changing character of the Mexican political system and political developments on the national scene. Very few of them, have analysed the programme from a public policy implementation perspective. While it is true that the importance of economic and macropolitical issues involved in the programme can hardly be exaggerated, it is also true that much less attention has been given to the cluster of dispositions and the limitations imposed by the bureaucratic and political activity that surrounds the implementation of a policy.

This is not a simplistic organisational study. As it will be shown in the chapter, the implementation of a policy is by its very nature a political process which affects political and economic interests and is therefore, subject to political negotiation. It is contended here that policies fail not only because of the gap between what is decided on the drawing board and what is actually implemented. They also fail because during their implementation process vested interests are affected. Public policies will achieve their goals in a more effective way if it is recognised, from the beginning, that due to its political nature the implementation process is subject to the balance of political power and negotiation. That is why the analysis stresses the identification of the main actors involved in the

implementation process so as to distinguish their political orientations and what effect they produce on policy implementation. By means of this, it will be possible to describe the politics surrounding the implementation of the FOMUN programme in the state of Campeche. It is contended here that this study of implementation offers a different perspective that other works have not stressed enough. It will also be useful in reviewing some of the most influential propositions both in the field of public policy implementation and the Mexican political system as well.

It will be shown that changes were made, both to the means and to the goals of the policy, during the implementation process because local actors have significant room for political and administrative manoeuvring. To some extent, this view dissents from that which suggests that overwhelming centralism in the country, mainly around the institution of the presidency and federal agencies under its control, has nullified state and local powers, transforming them into mere executors of federal policies (Needleman and Needleman 1969; Molinar Horcasitas 1993).

Although it is undeniable that the Mexican political system has been built in an authoritarian, presidentialist and corporatist way (Cornelius and Craig 1991; Camp 1993) that has contradicted the federal spirit embedded in the Mexican Constitution, it is also true that state and local powers have developed strategies that bestow them with a margin of political and administrative manoeuvring. In practice this has altered not only the content of a policy, but also its implementation, and in particular cases it has even made it possible not to

implement a policy at all. Such autonomy does not result from a genuine federal system, but from the way political power and political recruitment are structured in Mexico. But Mexico can hardly be described as a weak presidential system. In general, what the chapter shows is that in the implementation of the FOMUN programme, presidential power has been relatively successful in imposing a reformist programme that by its very nature might otherwise have failed. Important in this success was the fact that it had the proper political allies at the local level that helped to curb political resistance.

The chapter also discusses some conditions which are indispensable for effective policy implementation. In particular, it is argued that political and personal commitment to the programme, as well as the actors' calculation of possible compensations, are determinants for effective policy implementation.

The chapter demonstrates too that the inclusion of additional actors does not necessarily result in a less effective implementation. This is so because the addition of actors during the implementation of FOMUN was accompanied by an institutional reform that changed the rules under which participants interact with each other. Therefore, it is not the addition or elimination of actors which is directly related to the effectiveness of policy, but rather who the actors are and the institutional frame which regulates their interactions.

Finally the chapter shows that the implementation of FOMUN was successful not only because of its procedural nature, but also because of the

presidential support it enjoyed, the impressive amount of resources it was given and the community participation strategy on which it was based. Together, they provided FOMUN with enough power, adequate financial resources and the ability to produce allies during the process.

The chapter is divided into six sections. The first, describes the essential features of municipal government in Mexico, as the political, economic and administrative framework for what follows. The second, describes the most recent historical background of the programme and the third, describes FOMUN structure, procedures and objectives. These sections are followed by an evaluation of the programme and in section five the analysis of implementation is carried out. The main ideas in the field of policy implementation are discussed and evaluated in this section, before drawing some conclusions in section six.

BACKGROUND TO FOMUN: MEXICAN MUNICIPAL²GOVERNMENT

In describing and explaining the programme and the way it was implemented, it is necessary to characterise Mexican municipal government and how it affected FOMUN's implementation. This section also describes the main characteristics of Campeche, as the context in which the implementation process took place.

²Municipalities are local jurisdictions which are often a mixture of rural and urban areas. They are similar to "districts" or "counties" in other countries.

THE FEDERAL SYSTEM AND MUNICIPALITIES IN MEXICO

Mexico's political system works according to written and unwritten rules. While the system of balance and checks among powers is granted by Article 49 of the Constitution, the decision-making process is highly centralised in presidential hands. Although there have been recent changes in the composition of both federal and state legislatures, the legislature, continues to rubber stamp the president's will. The same is true of the judicial system because the designation of most important judges is actually a presidential privilege.

The federal structure of the Mexican government works too with formal and informal rules. Although its federal structure is granted by Article 40 of the Constitution, a genuine federalism is far from reality. Most states and municipalities are under strong control from the centre because of their dependency on federal funds.

Mexican federalism stresses the role of *municipio* as a level of government with the ability to control its own affairs, as described in Article 115 of the Mexican Constitution. In practice, this autonomy is merely formal because its competence in administrative, economic and political terms has been minimised by the overwhelming presence of the federation and state governments. Historically, municipalities have confronted direct intervention of federal and state agencies in municipal jurisdiction, presumably because they lack the economic, political and administrative abilities necessary to take care of their own affairs.

Although several attempts have been made to reverse this situation and to reinforce their political, economic and administrative presence in their territories it was not until 1983 when an amendment to the Article 115 of the Constitution, introduced significant changes at this level of government. First, the Constitutional reform attempted to eradicate a common practice by which governors nullified municipal councils or removed any of their members in a discretionary way. With the reform, the dissolution of municipal powers became an exclusive prerogative of state legislatures and it can only be done after a highly complex procedure. This action gave more security to municipal authorities and protected them, to some extent, from discretionary decisions of state governors.

The Constitutional reform of 1983 also introduced new changes in the Law of Electoral Processes and Political Organisations-LOPPE that allowed municipal councils to be made up from representatives of more than one party elected both under the principle of proportional representation and relative majority. In essence, what the reform made possible was the participation of opposition parties in the composition of municipal councils.

Administratively the reform of 1983 allowed municipalities to formulate administrative and internal ordinances for municipal self-government. Before the reform, municipalities were dependent upon the approval of governors or state legislatures, for the formulation of internal manuals and ruling instruments. Furthermore, it was not until the Constitutional amendment of 1983 that municipal responsibility for the provision of drinking water, drainage systems, public lighting,

collection and destination of solid waste, markets, cemeteries, slaughter houses, streets and pavements, parks and public gardens, public security, fire brigades, urban transport, etcetera was clearly established.

Economically, the constitutional amendment introduced two important changes. The first, made council tax an exclusive municipal responsibility as well as the right to charge for the provision of certain public services. The second, assigned municipal councils full legal power to approve annual budgets, a prerogative traditionally exerted by state legislatures.

However, the efficacy of the reform has been doubtful. In administrative terms its impact has been sensibly diminished because many municipalities in the country lacked not only skilled personnel to implement the reforms, but also because in some of them there was no administrative structure. In these conditions it is not surprising to find that even today many municipalities in the country have not created internal regulations and administrative manuals to regulate their procedures.

Politically, the reforms have not been able to balance the distribution of competence and power in many municipalities in the country. The introduction of the formula of proportional representation in the make up of municipal councils, where the PRI holds a majority, has not been able to counteract the political power of the mayor and PRI representatives who were elected by a relative majority and who hold a majority in many municipal councils. Decisions are still controlled by

the use of a simple PRI majority (*mayoriteo*). The situation is different when the mayor and council posts are occupied by representatives of opposition parties. However, they represent a small proportion in comparison with those controlled by the PRI.

Economically, the changes introduced to the Fiscal Co-ordination Law of 1980, have not increased municipal resources by the amount necessary to meet their obligations. The federal sharing system formula implied in the Law still represents 80 percent of the total income of municipalities in the country. Only 20 percent of their income results from municipal taxes, rights, and other products. Council tax is the most important source of income at this level of government. Nevertheless, the administration of this tax is not entirely managed by the municipalities. State governments retain on average 20 percent of such tax as a payment for printing its bills. In addition, the allocation of funds does not consider the increase in costs for maintenance and the natural depreciation of equipment for the provision of public services which on the whole weaken the municipal finances and autonomy even more.

In sum, although constitutional changes have been introduced to strengthen municipal governments in administrative, economic and political terms, in practice severe constraints still exist that undermine the autonomy of the municipality compared with that of the state and federal governments.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Financial limitations are the most significant obstacle for municipal autonomy and the main reason behind the poor provision of public services. While the federal and state governments have increased their tax wealth, municipal governments have been losing theirs. For instance, in 1982, municipal governments received the lowest percentage of public revenue in modern history, only 1.0 percent. In 1929 they received 7.7 percent; in 1932, 8.9 percent (the highest in history); in 1940, 5.3 percent; in 1950, 3.3 percent; in 1960, 2.8 percent; in 1970, 1.6 percent and in 1980, 1.1 percent (Gutiérrez Salazar 1993, pp. 85-86).

It was not until 1989 that the Fiscal Co-ordination Law was revised again to redistribute resources from richer to poorer states. According to the World Bank (1994, p. 4), the changes to the Law benefited the four poorest states and altered the amount of federal transfers from 3:1 in 1989 to 2:1 in 1992. Despite this, federal superiority of resources is still an effective strategy to control and exert political power over the states (see Vicencio 1994, pp. 5-7). Not surprisingly, the same mechanism is used by some governors in relation to the municipalities under their jurisdiction. That is why, even if the federal government increases federal transfers to the poorer states, it is up to them to allocate these resources among their municipalities. Although clear criteria should govern the allocation of resources (levels of poverty, population, and deficit of public services), discretionary decisions still play an important role in the process. Therefore, even if there is a redistribution of resources among states, this does not mean that they will

reach municipalities because the state can still operate in ways that are not intended by federal authorities. This is one of the problems FOMUN was designed to deal with.

THE PLANNING SYSTEM AND MUNICIPALITIES

The enormous deficit in the provision of public services at the municipal level can also be explained by the minor role of this level of government in national planning activities. Planning in Mexico is a relatively new activity. The first attempts to structure what can be called an economic national plan emerged during the 30s with the so-called first *plan sexenal* (six year plan). As many other activities, planning in Mexico also reflects the rather centralist, short term and politically oriented characteristics of other elements of the Mexican political system. For a long time it has been considered as an exclusive federal prerogative and the inclusion of states and municipalities in the planning process has been merely formal. As a result, national plans rarely reflect the needs of communities. Many attempts have been made to reverse this situation (see Bailey 1994). Nevertheless, these attempts have been rather ineffective.

On the whole, planning has been a clientele-based activity, short term oriented and defined according to the economic and political climate in turn. The first attempts to redistribute wealth during the period 1970-1982, were based on economic investments that could not steer private investment away from rich regions towards poor ones. In addition, planning is also characterised by a bureaucratic mechanism in which decision-making power remains in federal

ministries in charge of budgeting and planning, and whose leaders are the principal negotiators in matters of federal spending. As a result, economic or technical decisions are bound to discretionary decisions, reinforcing a subtle clientelist structure. Finally, recent efforts to direct more resources to states and municipalities have been limited, mainly because funds for regional development represent a small proportion compared with those for normal federal programmes that still represent by and large, the main source of public investment in states and municipalities.

FOMUN also introduced important changes in this respect. Bailey (1994, p. 110) notes that the most important changes are the PRONASOL legal mechanisms that were created to 'permit the federal government to legally transfer funds through and around state governments to the municipalities'. For him, Solidarity differs from previous planning attempts in more than one respect. First, because its implementation bypasses state governors in the delivery of public services. Second, instead of national, state and municipal plans, the programme is based on a multiplicity of community projects, and because of this, Solidarity not only had more resources but these were also better targeted. This way of operation proved not only to be more effective in targeting poverty pockets in the country, but also in altering traditional channels for the transfer of resources.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL

Bureaucratic lag and personnel recruitment have also affected municipal governments. Mexican municipalities consist formally of the Municipal Council

(*Ayuntamiento*), presided over by the Mayor (*Presidente Municipal*); councillors (*sindicos* and *regidores*), who act as a local legislature, and the so-called auxiliary authorities (*autoridades auxiliares*), particularly in those cases where geographic isolation and population distribution are a major problem. With the exception of auxiliary authorities, all of these are elected for a period of three years.

But in addition to the popularly elected authorities, every municipal government has an administrative structure that varies from one municipality to another, depending on its size, needs and resources. On the whole, municipal governments of capital cities are better off and tend to have more resources not only because of their political importance, but also because the bulk of the population is concentrated there. Salaries of municipal officials tend also to be better and consequently the administrative structure of these municipalities is usually made up of more qualified personnel. In the poorest states of the federation however, some municipalities lack the minimal administrative structure to fulfil their responsibilities. There are some cases where although the Municipal Council is formally elected and installed, the mayor does not have a salary, something that has forced some mayors to leave the country during the United States' harvest season to earn some money.³

³Interview with Lic. De la Torre, J. M., Director of Municipal Programmes at the Federal Department of Social Development-SEDESOL. August 2, 1994 (SEDESOL Central Offices Mexico, D.F.).

These problems are aggravated by the fact that the recruitment of municipal staff is riddled with the same patronage pattern of recruitment that frequently takes place at the federal and state levels. Patronage may take the form of personal links with the mayor, people who obtain a job as a suggestion from an influential person (*recomendados*), nepotism and the *camarilla* (see Cornelius and Craig 1991; Camp 1990) process of political recruitment, as well as the absence of a civil service, have riddled municipal administrative structure with poorly qualified personnel.

The absence of competence affects not only ordinary procedures but policy goals as well. Although the municipal staff is partially renewed each three years after the new mayor takes office together with his closest group of people, or *camarilla*, it is not possible to get rid of the employees at the lowest level of the bureaucratic structure, who in general, have been there for more than a single administration. This is for practical reasons. These public servants, know the procedures and community problems very well, but most importantly, they control information indispensable in solving every day questions and situations that new officials do not know. The mayor's *camarilla* may or may not undertake new policies, but in any case they will have to rely on these bureaucrats whose only training comes from their administrative experience gathered over years. They are not concerned with new programmes or whether their goals are achieved, for them, new bosses merely mean a process of adjustment to new procedures and new ways of interaction with citizens, but mainly with their new chiefs. They perceive their

jobs only as a source of income and there is a real lack of commitment to what they do.

Generally, their working conditions are the worst inside the bureaucratic structure, and their salary scarcely reaches 50 pounds per month⁴. They are the operators of most of the procedures at the municipal level; their expectations for future promotions are rather few, not only because of their limited skills but also because, the better jobs are reserved for the mayor's camarilla. Therefore, they do not really care about new policies and goals; even more, new programmes simply mean a challenge to adjust the way they deal with the workload and a quite frequently bureaucratic delay is their response to the threat of change. These attitudes and perceptions are a decisive issue when analysing programme implementation. They not only affected programme success, but also they have created among the community an image of indolent of public authorities which any programme would have to surmount.

Community involvement in the programme was a response to this situation. The programme was not designed to work under the clientelist style that still prevails in the country and therefore, policy designers considered that by creating community participation in the implementation of the programme, the inertia and patron-oriented response to public demands, which on the whole characterises municipal bureaucracy, would be counteracted and the implementation of the

⁴Some variations may exist according to each state's economic situation.

programme would be more effective. This was the hidden agenda of the programme. Formally, by including community participation, it would be possible to close the gap between what the people needed and what they received; to legitimate government actions; to encourage the efficiency of municipal authorities and staff; to produce an honest management of the resources of the programme and to increase the number of public works around the country. For former president Salinas, community involvement was the cornerstone of the programme and was aimed to guarantee that it would not fail. He did not make any attempt to conceal this. As he noted, 'institutions and civil servants have to understand that this great popular mobilisation demands from them a new attitude. There are some who have already responded to this new logic of work; there are some others who have not; but I am sure that they will learn fast to adapt to those new circumstances, because if they do not, popular mobilisation itself soon will overtake them' (Salinas de Gortari 1990a).

PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND POLITICAL CULTURE

Far from a homogeneous national political culture differs from institution to institution, from region to region and it depends on socio-cultural conditions. In the same way, levels of education may alter the way Mexicans perceive their political institutions. Educated people tend to be more critical of current political institutions such as the PRI and its affiliated structures (CTM, CNOP, CNC) than people in the rural areas where these organisations still have an important political

weight in creating and reproducing clientelist and patronage political structures and values.

However, there is something about which all Mexicans seem to agree, that is, their widespread popular distrust of almost every political institution in the country (see Camp 1993, pp. 56 and 71).

With the exception of the presidency, almost every political institution in the country lacks credibility. This differentiation between the presidency and the remaining political institutions in the country is interesting. The presidency is still viewed by many Mexicans as 'the embodiment of paternalistic, [but] authoritarian rule in Mexico.' (Cornelius and Craig 1980, p. 353). Consequently, this has not only reinforced a centralised pattern of policy making in the country, by assigning huge, formal and informal, prerogatives to the executive branch, but also it has reinforced the belief that only by reaching the top levels of the public administration is it possible to obtain solutions for particular problems. Paradoxically, if solutions for a particular problem are not offered, the responsibility falls to other actors, in particular, those officials in lower levels of the bureaucratic structure. As Cornelius and Craig note (1980, p. 353), even if 'government aid is not forthcoming, the citizen is likely to absolve the president of blame, attributing these failures of performance to corrupt, incompetent subordinate officials who thwart his will.' (p. 353).

Generalised corruption is one of the reasons for the widespread distrust of political institutions. People's perceptions have been constantly confronted with the situation of municipal authorities deviating funds to other purposes than those of serving public needs. Particularly in Mexico, and in the case of creating public works at the municipal level, the 'project by contract' scheme has been one of the most important ways for the deviation of funds and generation of corruption. In general, large-scale projects, as well as some others, where state or municipal government lacks the skill or technical resources to implement public works, have traditionally been put out to public tender. The idea behind the scheme is to give private firms the opportunity to compete among themselves, by offering a combination of a low price and good quality to be allocated the contract. However, the scheme is riddled with corruption. Generally, contracts are offered to those suppliers who collude with authorities and who are willing to 'share' the benefits of the contract. The problem is aggravated by the fact that 'cheap' is not necessarily 'better' and quite frequently the favoured firm employs low quality materials to reduce costs and increase its profits.

It was only recently that an attempt to counteract such irregularities was established during the presidency of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988). With the creation of the General Comptrollership of the Federation-SECOGEF. Several measures to prevent and eradicate patrimonial attitudes in public institutions were then introduced but despite these efforts, there has been a more visible impact at the federal than at other levels.

With this in mind, FOMUN designers developed the most important elements of the programme. First, it was clear for them that one of the ways to counteract the corruption generated by the 'project-by-contract' scheme in the implementation of public works, was by assigning to the community a significant role in the decision as to what kind of works should be carried out in their communities. This was a significant step forward in comparison with normal programmes in which bureaucrats decide the needs of the community. In this situation, communities are generally provided with public works that are not coincident with community priorities. As noted by a member of a Solidarity Committee, 'in the past you have chosen what is good for us and you have committed mistakes; now it is our turn to commit our own mistakes'.⁵ For a particular community, for instance, a basket-ball court is a priority, compared with the introduction of public lighting, because sport activities represent for this community a better option to redirect youngsters' energies from drugs or alcoholism to other activities. One may not agree with their priorities but community satisfaction will be greater if they are adopted, than if officials decide what is beneficial for the community.

Second, by promoting community involvement in the implementation of such works, but most of all, by conferring on the community the management of the resources as well as vigilance and supervision activities, a positive impact on

⁵Interview with Sr. Casanova, M., November 4, 1994 (Municipality of Escárcega, Campeche).

community attitudes towards public institutions may be achieved, and in particular, a sensation that something is really changing may be generated. Therefore, for policy makers popular involvement in the implementation of FOMUN, would not only increase the effective use of public funds, by reducing to some extent the deviation of funds and by better allocating resources according to targeted public needs and priorities, but also would be helpful in recovering political legitimacy by allowing the community to handle and manage resources and influence policy.

There is evidence that the strategy worked. During the field work it was evident that people tended to identify the programme mainly with the president and not with any other political actor or political party. As noted by a resident in the municipality of Champotón, 'since Lázaro Cárdenas I have not seen such a good president as this one (Carlos Salinas)'.⁶

Nevertheless, it is also true that the way the programme was designed was also beneficial for other political actors, mainly state governors and mayors, who could have gained political credit by leading the implementation of the programme. For instance, according to a preliminary impact evaluation conducted by SEDESOL (1994, p. 8), more than two thirds of a sample of 8,652 Solidarity Committees, considered their mayors performance as 'good' or 'excellent'. Ten percent of the sample described this performance as 'bad' or 'very bad', and nine to seventeen percent of the sample, according to the particular programme, said

⁶Idem.

that the mayors were the main obstacle to a proper performance of the programme. The learning process embedded in the programme however was not restricted to the community. Municipal public officials soon realised that a change in their performance was required. Some of them responded positively. As expressed by the Secretary of the municipal council of Hopelchén, 'with Solidarity we had to change our procedures not only to meet programme requirements but also to match the increased community demands that came with the programme. We have also learned something from this experience.'⁷

In sum, by allowing people involvement in the implementation of the programme, an important cognitive process took place.⁸ Just as cynicism was learned by Mexicans as a result of a constant and frustrating interaction with public institutions, new lessons can be learned from interacting with programmes like FOMUN, and eventually, this could lead to the transformation of perceptions and beliefs about public institutions.

ELECTORAL CYCLES AND POLITICAL RECRUITMENT

Municipal elections take place every three years. A new mayor and council are elected under the constitutional principle of 'no re-election'. Therefore, during each six-year state term of office, there are two different municipal administrations.

⁷Interview with Lic. Chávez, J., Secretary General of the Municipal Council of Hopelchén, October 17, 1994 (Municipality of Hopelchén, Campeche).

⁸For the purposes of this research, political culture is defined as the 'the set of cognitions, perceptions, evaluations, attitudes, and behavioural predispositions through which member individuals and/or subgroups order and interpret political institutions and processes, and their own relationships with such institutions and processes' (Craig and Cornelius 1980, p. 340).

The formal procedure states that PRI ruling party candidates are selected from within the party, following democratic procedures and according to their militancy and representativeness in the community. However, the general rule is that each PRI candidate for the municipal government is hand-picked by a complex negotiating process between the governor, leading members of the party, local interests, federal government 'sponsors', and by the president himself who has the final word. The governor in turn, has the chance to "secure" political support from the candidates he selects. Nevertheless, some of the eventual mayors may not be directly supported by him, but by other powerful political actors. This particular selection process, may or may not increase the margin for political manoeuvre of mayors depending on the way they were chosen. When they are hand-picked and supported mainly by leading members of the PRI, or by national political figures, with the acceptance of the governor, their margin for political manoeuvre vis-à-vis the governor is wider. This gives them the chance to act more independently of state governments. In these circumstances, political confrontation between governors and this kind of mayor is limited mainly because it would erode governor's political relationships with the mayor's supporters. On the contrary, when candidates are designated mainly with the governor's endorsement and through a local network of interests, the mayor's political commitment is strongly tied up with his or her 'sponsors' and as a result, his/her margin of political manoeuvring decreases.

The same situation arises when PRI governors are elected. They are nominated by a negotiating process between state interest, leading members of the PRI, top level federal officials and most importantly, by the direct decision of the president. Again, the governor's margin of political manoeuvre, will depend on the way he or she was selected. As at the municipal level, the electoral cycle varies from state to state and there is the situation where a federal administration takes office when some state governments are in the middle of their legal period of administration. Therefore, the president has to deal with governors he did not choose and whose political convictions and commitment to presidential programmes and initiatives, will rely mainly on legal bases instead of a combination of the latter and political commitment and gratitude to the president who elected them. In the end, both mayors' and governors' responsiveness to their electorate is more tied up with informal but highly effective political powers than with their citizenry. By supporting or vetoing elected politicians, regional political coalitions still exert significant influence in determining the result of national policies. It has been only by means of the development of institutions in the country that national policies have been implemented. As Knight (1993, p. 33) notes 'state bosses and cliques still wield great influence in Mexican politics to the extent that incumbent governors are neither autonomous political actors nor the representatives of a party or a broad constituency but rather representatives of a tight clientelistic network, which links regional elites to the central government.'

FOMUN was also confronted with this situation. The programme had to deal with governors sympathetic to the programme but also with those who perceived it as a threat to their interests. The situation differed depending on whether governors and mayors belonged to the same or opposing parties. While the programme received support from some PRD mayors in the state of Michoacán and PAN governors in the state of Guanajuato, in others particularly in Oaxaca, the programme was considered to reproduce patronage and clientelistic practices, common in Mexican politics.

MAIN FEATURES OF CAMPECHE

Although the elements described in previous sections show the sort of problems the programme had to confront, there are still other issues that have to be taken into consideration to better understand the implementation of the programme. Regional differences are important because they represent political and social arrangements in which varying regional governing coalitions shape policies according to the balance of power in relation to the federation. This section deals with important elements of Campeche's socio-political conditions that affected the implementation of the programme.

Being one of the less populated states in the country, with 535,185 inhabitants, the state of Campeche is made up of 9 municipalities (.37 percent out of 2,403 in the country), Campeche, Isla del Carmen, Calkiní, Tenabo, Hecelchakán, Champotón, Palizada, Escárcega and Hopelchén. The state developed its main economic and socio-political profile during the 40s,

characterised predominantly by agricultural activities with a limited range of products. Moreover, the late development of the infrastructure of communications and roads, during the 50s, had important consequences. It produced: a) a high dependency on the exploitation of very few products; b) the formation of a complementary export sector made up of primary products (honey, chewing gum, and wood) characterised by its immoderate exploitation as well as its low added value; c) a marked orientation to the satisfaction of the local market, and d) an inward oriented policy that in the end, reinforced the isolation of the local economy from the national context (Gobierno del Estado de Campeche 1992, pp. 22-23).

From the 50s to 70s, growth of the shrimp industry gave a positive impulse to the local economy due to the high price of the product in the international market. But because of its unstable price, this impulse was ephemeral. During this time, large groups of the population moved from rural to urban areas, located on the coast (the most attractive being the municipalities of Campeche, capital of the state, and Isla del Carmen), generating the abandonment of vast areas of inner land. As a result, the main cities in the state developed important urban infrastructures leaving rural areas with a growing deficit of public services which accounts for the current regional disparities. By the end of the 70s, the state of Campeche actively participated in the oil boom, mainly through the exploitation of large oil fields in the Sound line of Campeche (*Sonda de Campeche*) which produces 70 percent of the total oil production of the country. This had a significant, but brief and limited, impact on the state's economy that lasted until the oil crisis in 1982. The oil boom

merely produced localised development in Isla del Carmen, with little impact in the rest of the state.

This situation has not dramatically changed. Nowadays, the economy depends on a group of disconnected activities that obstruct the creation of a multiplier effect on the employment and the living standards of the population. A complementary export sector still remains, based on primary products with low added value and highly dependent on international prices. Agriculture tends to serve the local market and continues to use traditional methods. Most important perhaps is that economic isolation is reinforced by applying policies that discourage investment entrepreneurs from outside the state. This has exacerbated even more the state's separation from the regional and national context.

Public investment has had a significant role in reversing this situation, by providing basic infrastructure to support private production. However the impact has been minimal, mainly because resources were merely used to cover bureaucratic expansion and therefore, the state government had to increase its participation in the local economy, mainly in the area of rural development. The growth of public expenditure, however, did not have a positive effect on income distribution, making deeper social inequalities, regional isolation, increasing poverty and accentuating even more the differences between the rural and urban areas. Nowadays, nearly 40 percent of all communities in the state remain entirely

isolated for more than four or five months during the year⁹, because of floods and lack of roads and communications. Therefore, many of the states inhabitants have been deprived of regular access to public services and other welfare benefits. For instance, health, education and employment indicators, although poor, are better in the main two cities of the state, Campeche and Isla del Carmen. That is why they show a major demographic concentration, turning them into economic centres, and consequently putting stress on public efforts and resources and leaving the remaining municipalities in a difficult situation.

In terms of the composite index of socio-economic marginality, Campeche is considered as a state with a high level of social marginality and it is ranked tenth in the national context.

⁹Floods and storms frequently cover and destroy roads in several regions of the state during the raining season which also damage communications infrastructure. Palizada, one of the municipalities of the state with the second highest level of marginality, every year has to drag ditches along the main road of access to the county due to the high rainfall which completely covers large sections of road.

Table 1.
Campeche's composite socio-economic
index of marginality

Indicator	
Population	535,185
% of analphabet population	15.40
% of the population who did not finish primary school older than 15 years	44.82
% of occupants per house without drainage and toilet	24.80
% of occupants per house without electricity	15.02
% of occupants per house without tubed water	29.52
% of houses with multiple inhabitants	65.03
% of occupants per houses with floor made of soil	24.16
% of the population in localities with less than 5000 inhabitants	36.21
% of the population occupied with an income inferior to the minimum wage	68.07
Index of marginality	0.480 High

Source: Dirección General de Estudios de Población 1993

Two of its nine municipalities, Hopelchén and Palizada, have the highest levels of marginality. Five (Calkini, Tenabo, Escárcega, Champotón and Hecelchakán) are ranked as 'medium', and the remaining two, Campeche and Isla del Carmen, show the lowest index of marginality.

Table 2. Campeche's municipalities index of marginality

Municipality and place in the state context	Index	Level	Place in the national context.
1. Hopelchén	0.603	High	682
2. Palizada	0.270	High	971
3. Champotón	-0.071	Medium	1256
4. Calkini	-0.230	Medium	1407
5. Escárcega	-0.255	Medium	1423
6. Hecelchakán	-0.284	Medium	1448
7. Tenabo	-0.295	Medium	1462
8. Isla del Carmen	-0.959	Low	1954
9. Campeche	-1.413	Low	2211

Source: Dirección General de Estudios de Población 1993.

The latter, are mainly urban and contain 57.9 percent of the population. The capital city Campeche has 32.5 percent of it and Isla del Carmen 25.4 percent. The latter has received the economic benefits from the state-owned National Oil

Company-PEMEX (*Petróleos Mexicanos*) generating an atypical economic situation there. The differences between the municipalities offer interesting contrasts that have proved relevant to the implementation of the programme.

Politically too, Campeche is peculiar in the national context. Up to the 1994 elections, the state had never faced political opposition. Commonly known as a PRI paradise, the state has been an electoral stronghold for PRI politicians and because of this, it has significantly contributed to presidential victories. As in other states of the federation, it has been governed by a reduced government coalition which exercises political power frequently unresponsive to citizens' needs. Politically conservative and rather reluctant to change, its political culture may be characterised by parochial values on the side of the civil society and authoritarian and paternalistic on the side of the state. These values, political and historical as well as economic conditions, must be kept in mind in understanding local implementation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO FOMUN

This section deals with a group of conjunctural questions without which the implementation of the programme could not be understood. They are related to the changes that the Salinas administration introduced. One of these topics refers to the power of the president in Mexican politics and his role in the success of the programme. Another deals with the intra PRI struggle which partially explains why a presidential initiative is threatening the traditional structures of the PRI. The so-

called reform of the state is also reviewed as it provides the philosophy in which FOMUN is based, namely the establishment of new relationships between state and society, which also provided the framework for the community participation component. The institutional reorganisation induced by the programme, is also essential in understanding the implementation of FOMUN as well as the origin of the impressive amount of resources used by the programme.

THE PRESIDENCY

There are some features that are eloquent enough to illustrate the strong power of the presidency and that have generated the term *presidencialismo*, which refers to the overwhelming power of the executive branch of government in Mexican politics. A mix of legal, economic and political reasons are basic to such supremacy.

Constitutionally, the President has a legislative role. In fact, the most significant changes made to the constitution have been the result of presidential initiative. The legislative branch of government has played a secondary role in this respect, not only because its initiatives have been aimed to transform less important areas of public affairs, but also because its role has been that of approving executive initiatives with minimal opposition. The way the congress is constituted partially explains this situation. Of 500 members of the Chamber of Deputies, nearly three hundred belong to the PRI, who in turn have been hand-picked in the manner previously described. This has secured more than the minimal majority for the approval of presidential initiatives, or the rejection of any other party initiative.

More recently, pressures from opposition parties and alliances among them, have decisively reduced the majority of PRI deputies in the chamber, making it more difficult for a presidential initiative to be approved. For instance, during the general elections of 1988, the PRI lost the majority and could not obtain the two thirds necessary for a constitutional reform. Nevertheless, this has not diminished the presidential power to make laws, which means that he can still act with very little constraint.

Likewise, the president in Mexico has also the ability to choose the most important members of the supreme court of justice as well as other judges in the country, who in addition, develop their careers in a highly corrupt environment. In addition, the Mexican President is also the supreme chief of the armed forces and most important, he controls public administration resources. The president is also the 'natural' leader of the PRI, and by expressing his "points of view", he exerts decisive power to select candidates for popular election posts as well as the selection of leaders for the most important unions in the country.

Given that the centralisation of power is in the hands of the President, one may think that such power is reflected at all levels of government and in each sphere of public performance. However, research findings suggest that this predominance of the executive, is to some extent, modified during the implementation of many policies. While the design of public policies still remains a federal initiative, the implementation process reflects a different balance of power.

Despite this, the president's support has been and still is, essential to determine the success of a policy. It is not strange, that PIDER, COPLAMAR and now PRONASOL-the most recent anti-poverty experience in the country-have been under the direct control of the presidency, something that proved to be essential in the case of FOMUN. It is contended here that without presidential support, the reform that FOMUN was trying to impose, would not have been possible.

Having this in mind, we may consider the origin of the reformist essence of a programme like FOMUN; how FOMUN differs from interesting experiences of the past, such as PIDER or COPLAMAR, and the relationship between FOMUN and the economic and political project to which Salinas was strongly committed.

THE "TECHNOCRAT" VS. "POLITICIANS" DEBATE

Recently, traditional and modern attitudes about the way politics and the economy must be conducted, have generated significant changes in the country and also have stressed the underlying changes in political recruitment in Mexico. The rise of a new economic and political project has been influenced by educated young politicians or *technocrats* whose credentials depend more on an advanced university degree, than on a long grass-roots political tradition of the older members or *politicians*. These *politicians*, have developed their political careers for many years inside the PRI structure and/or its affiliated sectoral organisations. Nowadays, they represent the hard-liners and are strongly identified with 'dirty

electoral activities' (Cornelius and Craig 1991, p. 62).¹⁰ and with more traditional forms of political control. Compared with the technocrats, they lack not only the administrative ability to influence the direction of public policies, but also the willingness to do so without resort to clientelist procedures. The rise of the modernisers' to the political elite, exhibits a common process through which, a renovation of cadres has taken place, replacing old politicians who had governed the country for several decades. International and national economic and political conditions, created a positive atmosphere for the success of the modernisers. Former president Salinas de Gortari, is the most representative of the technocrats and his policies also reveal that there is a rupture with models from the past. For example, the most influential cabinet posts during the Salinas term of government, were occupied by specialists in areas of economics and public administration and who had postgraduate qualifications from Stanford, Harvard, MIT, Yale, Princeton, etcetera. It will be necessary to take account of this intra-elite struggle in order to understand some of the features of the National Solidarity Programme.

Despite its importance, such a distinction is not precise in reality. It is clear that not all Salinas' members of cabinet in particular and federal authorities in

¹⁰Some of these dirty techniques for electoral success in Mexico. "Stuffing ballot boxes, intimidating potential opposition supporters by threatening to withdraw government benefits, disqualifying opposition party poll watchers, relocating polling places at the last minute to sites known only to PRI supporter, manipulating voter registration lists (padding them with non-existent or non-resident PRIistas while "shaving" those who might vote against the ruling party from the rolls), issuing multiple voting credentials to PRI supporters, organising multiple voting by *carruseles* ("flying brigades" of PRI supporters transported from one polling place to the next), and so forth. See Cornelius and Craig 1991. 62.

general, share his rupture with models from the past. Federal, state and municipal bureaucracies are far from homogeneous. There exist bureaucratic struggles between them (as it will become clear in the following chapter) and this influenced the way the Children of Solidarity was implemented. Therefore, it is not argued here that federal authorities are in general a positive force for change and that local politicians are old-fashioned and against reform. As said before, there are some bureaucratic groups that are old-fashioned and other that are more prone to political reform. It is in this respect that the main and most influential SEDESOL officials have to be differentiated not only from other old-fashioned bureaucratic groups in the three levels of government, but also from other bureaucrats inside SEDESOL itself.

The way SEDESOL integrated its cadres for the implementation of the programme helps to explain this. Julio Moguel (1994, p. 173) argues there are some similarities between certain ideas held by the social left and incorporated in PRONASOL which are not coincidental. Furthermore, he explains that 'the ingredients that the social left has contributed to PRONASOL are as visible as are the members of the social left who now hold key posts in the Salinas team, beginning with Carlos Rojas, the individual directly responsible for PRONASOL'. It is clear then that some cadres that integrated the PRONASOL are sensibly different from other executive ministries. It is not a matter of SEDESOL officials being more enlightened and progressive than their colleagues in other ministries, but one that emphasises how 'their beliefs were expressed and translated into given

political practices' (Moguel 1994, p. 172), something that caused frequent disagreement with other bureaucratic groups at the three levels of government.

THE REFORM OF THE STATE

The so-called reform of the state was the main political discourse of former president Salinas, which aimed to transform most of the economic and political institutions created after the revolution.

For Salinas, the reform of the state was the result of internal and external conditions. First, due to a dynamic demographic evolution,¹¹ a rapid urbanisation process and because of the limited possibilities of the economic model followed by the country in the past (known as the imports substitution model-ISI), the government had to confront a large and complex deficit in the attention to social demands which were aggravated by the economic crisis of the 80s and which mainly impacted on popular urban areas, the countryside and indigenous communities (Salinas de Gortari 1990c). For Salinas, constitutional power has given the Mexican state the responsibility for taking care of its inhabitants, but in the long run they have given the state the prominent role of supplier. In turn this has diminished society's capacity for self government and self reliance. Economically, the expansion of the state's responsibilities eventually pushed it to

¹¹ According to the last socio-demographic census in the country in 1990, the total population doubled during the last 25 years and shows an annual growth of 2.1 percent. See Salinas de Gortari 1990b, p. 38.

increase the level of its foreign debt to obtain resources and meet its social responsibilities.

The external reasons came mainly from the need to cope with the globalisation and the interdependency of the economy. For Salinas, finding a place in an ever changing world and avoiding isolation, was an economic imperative to prevent the kind of problems that grew up under the imports substitution model.

According to Salinas (1990c, p. 30) the new role of the state based its actions on negotiation, democratic attitudes, a drive for participation and popular organisation of social programmes. Also the privatisation of non-strategic public enterprises to channel the funds to social programmes, transparency in its relation with all citizens, and the inclusion of society in the decision-making process, were other actions which were only possible if institutional changes took place.

In practical terms the reform of the state, opened the possibility for the exploration of a different modality for state intervention, in particular for the implementation of public policies. The comments of Salinas about the shared responsibility of the state and community in the solution of public problems, would eventually evolve in one of the most important characteristics of the National Solidarity Programme by including community participation in the decision making process.

ECONOMIC REFORM: ORIGIN AND USE OF THE FUNDS

For Salinas the reform of the state implied a deep economic reform of three main areas: fiscal reform, privatisation of non-strategic public enterprises and the re-negotiation of foreign debt. They represented not only an economic imperative, but a necessary condition for the trickle down of some of the benefits of his economic project.

In fiscal terms, the reform not only generated an increase of 35 percent of tax collection in the country, but also generated a new revenue-sharing system that took into account the population of each state, its level of development, and its efforts at collecting local taxes. Some states are changing their formulas of coefficients for distributing federal revenue-sharing to target a greater proportion of these resources to poor municipalities. These changes have increased revenue-sharing with the nine least-developed states: between 1988 and 1994, their share rose by 55 percent in real terms, or 2.3 times the national average (Salinas de Gortari 1994).

In terms of the privatisation of public enterprises, the reform implied that strategic companies (defined as those that must remain under state control) were strengthened and most of the others were sold or liquidated, that is, 415 parastate enterprises, or 67 percent of the total.

Finally, the re-negotiation of foreign debt meant cutting the net transfer of resources abroad, reducing the amount of accrued outstanding debt, ensuring net positive resources over a long period, and reducing the real value of the debt and

the share of gross domestic product that it represented. These three areas of the economic reform, provided the resources for the National Solidarity Programme.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community participation was not just one of the four principles of all the National Solidarity Programme, but its backbone. FOMUN in particular aimed to build a net of social organisation around the way public policies have traditionally been implemented in the country. The aim was to diminish the power that bureaucratic actors have created around the use of public funds, and also to bring democratic legitimacy to the government and to overcome the rivalry between institutionalised PRI interests on the one hand and the political project of the president on the other. Although unstated, this was the hidden agenda of the programme and its essential objective by means of which the programme's designers aimed to effect change in the bureaucratic structures and practices at the local level.¹² In order to hide this conflict the community participation element of the programme was eagerly presented as an extension of an historical tradition of community involvement in the country.

Popular mobilisation however was not restricted merely to the sphere of implementation, but also it was assigned a decisive role in the decision making process. In most modern democracies popular influence can be exercised at the

¹²For an illustrative example of how some policies have tried to modify administrative and political behaviour, see Sabatier and Mazmanian 1981.

policy formulation stage on the assumption that policies thus created will be properly and officially implemented. By contrast, the Mexican approach to community participation implied in the programme, not only required the people to decide what ought to be done, but also to implement it by themselves.

Historically, the inclusion of the community in areas of public performance from which it has been traditionally excluded, is based on a tradition of self-help in certain regions of the country. The Mexican 'tradition of community work' involves a non monetary exchange of work and goods practised mainly by Indigenous communities, like the *tequio*, the *mayordomías*, the *faena*, and others.

The way that the community participates in all the programmes of Solidarity, is by the creation of Solidarity Committees which are elected at public assemblies and liase with the authorities and the social sectors to determine what work or project to carry out, how to put it into practice, how long it will take, at what cost, with what quality, an how the financial support provided will be recovered and reinvested.

Economically, community participation also had a significant impact in the implementation of public works mainly by decreasing their cost as well as the time during which they were implemented (Lustig 1994, pp. 83 and 88). Finally, community participation was also aimed at making good bureaucratic failing and technical weaknesses at the municipal level of government.

Politically, community involvement in the programme had a more important role. As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, although community involvement in the programme should be understood in a rather restricted manner, that is, at the level of neighbourhood, it was useful too in displacing, though not without resistance, some of the traditional political organisations which grew up under the corporatist and clientelist structure of the Mexican political system. Despite this, its political implications must not be overlooked. In many cases, community participation could not confront those corporatist and clientelistic structures creating Solidarity Committees which merely mirrored PRI neighbourhood committees and which privileged known *priistas* in decision-making positions.

As a result, different interpretations have questioned the role of the community participation element of the programme. It is argued here that such a component not only brought new voices to the policy process but it was also useful in pursuing the hidden agenda of the programme, as it has been referred before. But other interpretations have argued that community participation is only part of the government's persistent strategy of cooptation and undermining of potential opposition mobilisation (see Dresser 1991 and Craske 1994). In reality, both things are true. As it will become clear further in this chapter, community participation was useful in curtailing the power of bureaucratic actors (the hidden agenda) and in bringing new voices to the decision-making and implementation processes as well. But it is also true, as it will be clear in chapter five, that the communitarian element

of the programme was also useful in producing political demobilisation of potential opposition.

PRONASOL AND INSTITUTIONAL REORGANISATION

The implementation of the programme required an important institutional reform, the creation of a propitious institutional environment to promote its goals and generate adequate inter-bureaucratic collaboration.

On December sixth 1988, the Official Newspaper of the Federation (*Diario Oficial de la Federación*) published the agreement creating the Commission of the National Solidarity Programme. The commission was presided over by the heads of the federal executive branch and by most federal departments.

The under-secretary of Regional Development within the Department of Social Development, appointed by the President, is in charge of co-ordinating the functions of the PRONASOL. On May 25, 1992, the Department of Social Development-SEDESOL, was created by a decree published in the Official Newspaper of the Federation which reformed, added onto and superseded a group of stipulations within the Organic Law of the Federal Public Administration. The Co-ordination of the National Solidarity Programme was integrated within this department, which formed part of the economic and social development, as well as the agricultural and livestock cabinets, in addition to participating in the Inter-Departmental Commission on Expenditure-Financing.

The institutional organisation introduced by the programme was aimed mainly at securing the adoption of the model which the president was eagerly trying to impose. Presidential support for the programme was not only expressed by a profuse amount of political discourse and by continuous promotional tours around the country to deliver public works personally. Federal SEDESOL, as well as its state equivalents, the federal delegations in each state and finally, the "federal links" at the municipal level, worked as his emissaries and gave the president a permanent presence all over the country to secure the implementation of the process. This institutional reform gave rise to an overwhelming presence of PRONASOL officials all over the country. This triggered many conflicts between governors and mayors who perceived it as yet another federal incursion into their jurisdiction which prevented them from diverting public funds. PRONASOL sought to overcome the corruption which had bedevilled the system for a long time. Despite this, inter-bureaucratic collaboration was not only difficult to achieve but also proved to be ineffective in avoiding bureaucratic lag among many of the agencies involved in the implementation process. As Nelson (1989, p. 102) notes 'politicians may oppose channelling funds through local communities and non-governmental organisation (NGOs), short-circuiting their allocation of patronage and developing alternative power centres. Government bureaucrats may also resent such channelling, since it implies doubts about their own capabilities and establishes rivals in their area of responsibility.'

SOLIDARITY MUNICIPAL FUNDS-FOMUN

In 1989 President Salinas' 'masterpiece', '*programa de las pequeñas grandes obras*', started to take shape, but it was not until March 1990 that FOMUN was formally launched. It was tested first in Chalco one of the largest slums near Mexico city, where it showed both, its usefulness in addressing the huge gap in the provision of minimal social services and in producing political credit and recovering lost votes in areas where the opposition parties had been strong.¹³

The Salinas administration confronted an enormous deficit in the provision of public works at the municipal level. Geographical isolation, centralised planning, scarce resources and quite frequently, deviation of public funds, partially explain this situation. For Salinas it was no longer possible for federal agencies to offer solutions to local problems as had been the case traditionally. For him, FOMUN's formula was simple: implement small community works and do more with less by involving the community in the process (Salinas de Gortari 1991).

¹³ Interview with Antropólogo Salinas, A., Representative of the State Branch of Federal FONAES in Campeche, October 10, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche). After Salinas designation as President, it was decided that Chalco (area lost by the PRI during the general elections of 1988, due to several community organisations led by members of opposition parties and religious groups), would be the best place to test the new programme. At the beginning, community rejected solidarity officials because, arguably they were members of the PRI. To cope with this, the promoters of the programme started to offer drinking water in tanks with the logo of solidarity to gain the confidence and acceptance of the community, achieving in less than a year, a considerable introduction of social services. During the 1991 elections for deputies and mayors, the PRI recovered Chalco.

Solidarity Municipal Funds-FOMUN, one of the most important¹⁴ components of PRONASOL within the area of regional development, was conceived as a "concerted" programme because it incorporates the community in the definition and implementation of its actions. Its objective was to transfer additional resources to the poorest municipalities in the country and strengthen their financial and administrative ability to care for their inhabitants. It is not by itself a comprehensive poverty alleviation programme, but it complements and strengthens normal sector investments without displacing or substituting conventional efforts.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

FOMUN had two main objectives. The first is to promote public works and productive activities to benefit the communities with the lowest income in the country and, the second, is to promote social organisation and collaboration between local authorities and the community.

FOMUN included the funding of a wide range of public works in three main areas:

1. Social Welfare Projects which aim to promote communities' social development. They include construction or restoration of drinking water systems and sewage disposals; basic lighting in urban areas and poor neighbourhoods; parks and gardens; construction or restoration of

¹⁴The other most important is Solidarity Funds for Production. In the state of Campeche, however, FOMUN absorbs the largest amount of public investment dedicated to solidarity programmes inside the Social Development Agreement (CDS), this is, 32.50 percent.

classrooms for primary schools and annexes; sports facilities and health centres.

2. Productive Projects which are oriented to support the production of basic services and products such as irrigation projects; small agribusiness projects; fishing and aquiculture farms; warehouses and small markets.
3. Infrastructure Projects, which aim to provide public services to less developed communities. These include septic tanks, public cleaning projects, hanging bridges, rural electrification, rural telephony, toxic residues management projects, rural roads, slaughterhouses, residual water treatment projects, water wells, pavements and municipal transportation.

FOMUN funds could also be used for other public works as long as the objectives of the programme were met. In general, each project had to fulfil certain requisites: the total cost of the project ought not to exceed the 200,000 new pesos (roughly 20,000 pounds); where 'agrarian problems'¹⁵ were likely to arise, these had to be settled before the implementation of the public work. The funds could only be used for new public works and the project had to be finished in less than a year, and not be divided in stages; in the case of health centres and school rooms, the equipment and personnel had to be available in advance.

These resources are allocated to either the public institution in charge of the projects, such as roads, drinking water system, sewage and electrification, or

¹⁵ Agrarian problems "is administrative shorthand for the virtually thousands of disputes over boundaries, water rights, titles, and the like, which can seriously complicate routine public work's activities" (Bailey 1994, p.116).

directly to local governments where communities use the funds for particular projects they have decided to carry out. Communities must add their contribution, representing from 20 to 50 percent of the total cost of the project. That percentage will change according to the nature of the public work. For example, for public works on education, health, and drinking water, which are considered as a priority, the financial scheme is 80 percent from government resources and 20 percent from community participation. The scheme changes to 50-50 percent, respectively, when those public works are streets, *ejido houses*¹⁶ or certain sport facilities, such as basketball courts.

By the standards of industrialised countries, the financial ceiling of each project might appear quite small. But it is necessary to keep in mind the enormous poverty of many Mexican communities. Although these are very small projects they represent a real step forward for these people. As Streeten (1994, pp. 17-18) notes, the concept of poverty is relative because it varies between climates, cultures and social and economic environments. For instance, in many rural municipalities, FOMUN alone more than doubled the amount of investment resources available to the local jurisdiction (World Bank 1994, p. 8).

¹⁶*Ejido houses* are little offices for *ejido* authorities. The *ejido* used to be one of the land owning schemes granted in the Mexican Constitution after the 1917 Revolution. The land belonged to the *ejidatarios*, who possessed the land on condition that it was not sold or rented for private use and exploitation. During Carlos Salinas' administration, the Constitution was changed to privatise the *ejido* scheme.

FINANCIAL STRUCTURE OF FOMUN

The resources for the programme came mainly from fiscal reform, the privatisation of public enterprises and the re-negotiation of the national external debt. FOMUN in particular obtained its funds from five basic sources: federal, state, municipal, and community contributions as well as additional resources granted by the World Bank (1994, p. 16) as part of its Decentralisation and Regional Development Project (US \$ 350 million loan financing). Although the ratio varied according to each state, in general, federal government made the largest allocations. In the state of Campeche alone FOMUN has invested almost one hundred billion new pesos (roughly 10 million pounds) from 1991 to date. Federal contributions represents 60.72 percent, state contributions 21.32 percent and the community 17.96 percent (Gobierno del Estado de Campeche 1994).

The community's contribution was surprisingly high compared to that in other communities. From a national sample of 10,526 Solidarity Committees, 48 percent of them contributed with labour; 36 percent money; 6 percent materials of the region; 6 percent some other kind of contribution, and 4 percent made no contribution (SEDESOL 1994, p. 13). All contributions-excepting those of the community-are gathered each year in an instrument called Social Development Agreement (CDS), an annual treaty-like document, that establishes contributions to solidarity programmes.

Because of the wide range of projects which the programme supports, FOMUN has significantly improved public revenues at the municipal level. In some

situations, the financial support coming from FOMUN has surpassed the total amount of traditional municipal and state incomes¹⁷. One of the reasons for this, is that in addition to the regular allocation which local governments receive from the state, municipalities may obtain supplementary funds according to their ability to promote and create Solidarity Committees.

GENERAL STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES OF THE PROGRAMME

The allocation of funds to municipal governments follows a complex procedure and requires provision for community involvement within the structure of the municipal administration. Community involvement was achieved first, through the Solidarity Municipal Council-SMC, which was a collegiate group in charge of distributing among members of the community the resources allocated for solidarity programmes. In addition, the SMC had to propose possible uses and procedures for such funds to analyse community proposals, making sure that the guidelines of the programme are met and to gain agreement and collaboration for the implementation of the projects. The Council comprises the mayor, a representative of the state government, the municipal treasurer, the appropriate municipal auxiliary authorities and a member of the community who acts as a spokesperson of Control and Vigilance. The mayor chairs the SMC and is responsible for the organisation of the Solidarity Committees in each community.

¹⁷ Interview with Ing. Valle Cambranis, R., Director of Programming of State SEDESOL, November 11, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

The SMC is a new structure different from the *Cabildo* which is elected together with the mayor every three years and acts as a municipal legislature.

A second area of community involvement was the so-called *Social Comptrollership* which empowers members of the community to supervise and control the execution of public works, giving them the capability of denouncing the municipal authorities or any other member of the Solidarity Committee for the misappropriation of funds. Two legal figures carry out these activities. One is the so-called spokesperson of control and vigilance who is a member of the community in each Solidarity Committee and the second is a community representative who acts as spokesperson of control and vigilance inside the Solidarity Municipal Council-SMC.

The third significant area of community involvement in the programme was the Solidarity Committees. They were the basic structure of the Solidarity programmes, and were made up of a president, one secretary, a treasurer, one spokesperson of vigilance and control and two more spokespersons. They were democratically elected in a general and public assembly among members of a community, only after a project has been identified for implementation, and therefore they depend on specific community demand. 75 percent of the committees were created by neighbours looking forward to attending to a specific community need. The remaining 25 percent were created from existing organisations of a particular religious, political or other character (SEDESOL and PRONASOL 1994, p. 6).

Members of a Solidarity Committee must not hold a popular representation post, neither be public officials. They must live in the community where the committee is established and they must be recognised as honest and responsible members of the community. Whenever possible they must show leadership in their community. Solidarity Committees have certain prerogatives: they decide directly in general assemblies, the work or activities to be carried out; they receive and control government contributions as well as those from community members, to implement the project themselves, although they may decide to use the services of a private contractor to carry out the public work. They also approve the cost and budget of the work; watch over the use of resources, the progress made, and the quality of the work, and finally, they supervise the maintenance and operation of the completed work.

Although the committee proposes projects to the SMC, under certain circumstances the authorities will decide which projects to implement. One out of ten public works were decided by the authorities, something that decreased the level of participation of the community (SEDESOL 1994, p. 20). When they are received community initiatives are analysed by the auxiliary authorities within the SMC, where technical documentation defining the basic characteristics for investment are drawn up. Subsequently, proposals are channelled to the Planning Committee for State Development-COPLADE, as well as to the head of the state office of the Federal Department of Social Development-SEDESOL for evaluation as to their feasibility for support.

In fact, no funds for the programme are received by municipal governments if there is not a formal Solidarity Committee behind each proposal for public work. Therefore, the creation of Solidarity Committees turned out to be one of the priorities of municipal governments, mainly because the allocation of resources beyond those normally received by the federal and state sharing system, are dependent on them. In fact, community participation under FOMUN scheme, was transformed into a basic budgeting unit for the allocation of funds, with rigorous restrictions and guidelines for their use. Funds cannot be used for any purpose other than a particular project supported by the Solidarity Committee. This guaranteed that each project had been previously defined according to community needs and that funds were meticulously monitored by members of the community to avoid corrupt practices. This is an important element because it stresses the political nature of the programme by reinforcing community mobilisation around the implementation process. However, turning the Solidarity Committees into a *sine qua non* for the allocation of funds, has also brought some problems. Sometimes, Solidarity Committees only existed on paper. During field work situations were encountered where the Committee was invented by the municipal authorities in order to receive funds. In sum as Lustig (1994, pp. 83-84) points out, community participation produces a more effective targeting than when decisions are taken outside the community. It also increases government legitimacy by establishing a direct link between community requests and government responses.

Additionally, it encourages the development of organisational and managerial skills and reduces corruption.

NEW SKILLS FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The changes that the programme aimed to effect had to be accompanied by an institutional effort to support its implementation. In 1992 the government created the National Institute of Solidarity-NIS which aimed to offer the Solidarity Committees a forum to discuss recent experiences of implementing the programme in terms of their success within the solidarity philosophy. Eventually this became the most important training centre for Solidarity Committees, mayors, federal, state and municipal public officials, union leaders, peasants and those involved or interested in the implementation of the programme. Its main objective was to consolidate social organisation and community participation, mainly through workshops, conferences and seminars where participants learned about the principles of solidarity. The NIS received nearly 400 persons on a weekly basis for training so that they would go back to their communities and repeat the model they had learned. Despite the economic, political and institutional reform embedded in the programme, FOMUN still had to confront and surmount the old network of economic and political interests, as well as the traditional structures of patronage and clientelism that had been created around public policies and that were deeply rooted in the political culture of the country. This implied an enormous educational effort if the programme was to achieve its objectives. On more than one occasion, members of Solidarity Committees were encouraged by NIS members, to exert

pressure on those mayors and state authorities whose co-operation with the programme was doubtful.

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF FOMUN

Evaluating the programme is a slippery business. It is difficult to resist the temptation to evaluate it according to its achievements because it was aimed at eradicating the causes of poverty. This would require more than a single presidential administration, and monitoring systems not yet developed. The situation is further complicated by the need to distinguish the impact of the programme on poverty levels, from other variables that might affect poverty levels, for example, the general economic recovery that was going on alongside the Solidarity programmes.

Therefore, the evaluation of the programme has to adopt a different perspective. Brown and Wildavsky (1984) offer an approach for the evaluation of policies that fits the purposes of this research. They suggest that although quantitative measures of goal attainment and efficiency, are the most obvious criteria for successful implementation, there are other issues that have to be considered. For them a formal policy should be viewed in terms of 'whether it possesses the ability to structure the implementation process by means of clear objectives and priorities, a valid theory of causality connecting instruments of policy to desired objectives, adequate financial resources at the start, and sufficient

power-co-operation among implementing organisations and the ability to get the clientele involved to do so as desired.' (1983, p. 212).

This is the definition adopted here for evaluating the implementation of FOMUN. First, some data will be offered about goal attainment and efficiency relevant to the evaluation.

GOAL ATTAINMENT AND EFFICIENCY

In 1994 federal SEDESOL (SEDESOL 1994) carried out an evaluation study to measure the impact of the programme in the state of Campeche. The study is based on a sample of 140 Solidarity Committees during the period 1991 to 1993 selected randomly among the nine municipalities of the state.

The study reports that funds were used to build pavements and streets (29%); to restore and build markets, public squares, sports facilities, bridges, and other similar projects (15%); to establish drinking water systems (13%); public lighting (9%), and other public works (31%).

At the time of the evaluation, 87 percent of the projects were finished, 9 percent suspended, and 3 percent were still in progress. The reasons for suspending or not finishing the work, were lack of resources, 35 percent; conflict with the mayor, 9 percent; and 35 percent for some other reason. In terms of efficiency the figures are on the whole positive, 77 percent of the projects were of an excellent or good quality; 20 percent satisfactory, and only 3 percent of the Solidarity Committees from the sample said the quality of the work was bad. 73

percent of the work was finished on time; 14 percent finished ahead of time and 8 percent were late. In 76 percent of the cases, the cost was as expected; in 9 percent it was higher, and in 2 percent it was lower. Finally, the Solidarity Committees' perceptions of the process were as follows: 77 percent said the projects worked well; 13 percent said they worked satisfactorily and 5 percent reported poor projects (Missing percentages are not reported by the SEDESOL study).

In terms of goal attainment, in the state of Campeche, for the period 1991-1994, official figures report a total of 1,637 projects carried out with FOMUN, and the creation of 1,651 Solidarity Committees. This represented a total investment of 99,714.19 billions of new pesos.

Although the allocation of resources to municipalities, is still inadequate, in Campeche, government contributions grew 132 percent in real terms. A better distribution of resources among municipalities was also achieved. More money was channelled to rural than to urban areas (Gobierno del Estado de Campeche 1994b, p. 15). Although encouraging, these figures do not allow any serious conclusion to be drawn about the impact of FOMUN in terms of poverty alleviation, mainly because the impact of the general economic recovery that took place during the period might also have had a positive impact on poverty levels.

QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

Perhaps the most important feature of the programme is that it provided an opportunity to change the way public policies are implemented. It also proved to

be an important vehicle for greater citizen participation in government decision. The evaluation study prepared by SEDESOL, shows that the community participated in 69 percent of the cases in deciding the kind of work they wanted, and only 7 percent of the projects were proposed by solidarity officials. The community also participated in building their projects; 36 percent of the committees built the project directly; 32 percent used private contractors; 20 were built by municipal authorities and 12 percent by other means.

The ability of the programme to structure the implementation process by means of clear objectives and priorities, was facilitated by its "open-endedness" which gave it a great deal of flexibility, facilitating not only the definition of particular objectives, but also the definition of the means to accomplish them. Changing objectives and priorities was a community prerogative and the implementation of the programme was designed with this in mind. By this means FOMUN successfully increased the amount of financing available for infrastructure in poor rural communities.

Co-operation among implementing agencies varied according to the location. In the case of Campeche, as well as in other states, there was a network of economic and political interest around the process of implementation which affected the co-operation with the programme. Usually the degree of co-operation depended on the perceptions that bureaucratic actors had of the programme and how the implementation process would affect their interests. Finally, the level of community participation was high in 72 percent of the cases and in 28 percent it

was low. Community participation contributed labour in 81 percent of the cases; 15 percent money and 2 percent materials.

The programme had an important effect on the communities' attitude towards participation in the programme. It actually surmounted the lack of credibility that is usually associated with this kind of programme. For example, 85 percent of the Committees were created especially to build a project and only 12 percent were pre-existing organisations. This is significant because it shows that if the participatory element is to continue, it will depend on the availability of resources. Some data confirm this argument. Only 47 percent of the Committees said they would continue participating if solidarity supports their efforts; 22 percent will continue, even without the support of solidarity; 9 percent will create a new organisation; 9 percent will disappear, and 9 percent have no clear expectations about their future.

Despite this rather pessimistic scenario, the programme was an interesting learning process for the community. For example, 66 percent of the Committees took their main decisions in a general assembly; 17 percent of the decisions were taken by a selected board and only 11 percent of the Committees reported that their decisions were made because of suggestion of a solidarity official. In sum, the inclusion of the community as a major component of the programme; the creation of institutional and legal changes that allow community to participate in certain areas of policy design and implementation; the promotion of decentralisation, by including the community in the decision-making process of the programme, and the

proof that the inclusion of community participation produces large numbers of public works in a cost effective manner, in a short period of time, represent significant achievements that should not be minimised. Although there must be caution about effectiveness of the programme in reducing poverty, that is only one of its objectives. Popular mobilisation, the improvement of public services and the new links established between president and people represent political achievements that cannot be disregarded when evaluating the PRONASOL in general and FOMUN in particular.

THE THEORY AND PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

During the 60s in the United States, the "*Great Society*" and "*War on Poverty*" initiatives inaugurated the debate about governments' ability to cope with social problems in areas such as health, education and housing. Confronted with continuous delays, lack of effectiveness, social resistance, and bureaucratic lag, it became clear that the most frequent problems of public policies occurred in implementation rather than in design or with the methodology used for programme evaluation. As a result, many authors interested in government performance, started to develop ideas about policy implementation. The works of M. Derthick (1972), A. Wildavsky and J. Pressman (1973), E. Bardach (1977), M. Lipsky (1976), R. Elmore (1978 and 1979-1980), and others, proposed interesting interpretations that now prevail as indispensable references to the study of public policy implementation.

The debate took two major directions: the first studies covered the analysis of implementation from a hierarchical point of view, or the so-called "top-down" approach. They stressed the importance of control and rigid administrative procedures to govern the conduct of operators at the lower levels of implementation, arguably because this was the only way to secure the achievement of policy objectives. The second direction, the "bottom-up" approach, came to the conclusion that policy implementation should not stress hierarchical and centralised procedures to secure policy success, but on the contrary, it should pay more attention to the setting where those policies are implemented and recommend an open attitude to discretionary decisions and actions during the implementation process so as to increase policy success. This approach assumes that the 'closer one is to the source of the problem, the greater is one's ability to influence it; and the problem-solving ability of complex systems depends not on hierarchical control but on maximising discretion at the point where the problem is most immediate' (Elmore 1979-1980).

This case study tests the ideas of selected authors representing both "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches. The value of "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches to the implementation of the programmes selected for this research, will be debated. Derthick (1972), Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) can be roughly classified as representing the first tradition and Elmore (1978 and 1979-1980) as representative the second. Derthick was a pioneer in this field and her arguments proved to be useful in explaining the tension between centralisation and

decentralisation, and the limited capacity of the federal government to impose rigid control over local actors which are embedded in the FOMUN programme. Likewise, Pressman's and Wildavsky's contributions are useful in identifying the actors involved in the implementation process and the importance they have as clearance points in the decision making process. Elmore's (1979-1980), contribution will also be analysed and evaluated as well as its usefulness in explaining the implementation process for the Mexican case.

FOMUN AND THE TENSION BETWEEN CENTRALISATION VS. DECENTRALISATION

One of the first attempts to find out why federal programmes fail was made by Martha Derthick (1972). For her, federal governments are seriously limited in imposing inflexible control over state and local governments. Because of the limited power that the federation possesses to influence implementation actions at the state and local level, as well as its bias in favour of idealistic goals, federal programmes are doomed to failure. To accomplish its policies, the federal government must deal with state and local governments so as to generate political consensus as well as to negotiate policy implementation with local actors. In order to succeed, the federal government has to consider the resources necessary to generate three important conditions: firstly, it must have enough knowledge of local politics to know the resources needed to initiate action; secondly, it must possess adequate resources and third, the resources must be available at the time when they are needed to produce the desired effect on policy implementation. Although Derthick's assumptions are based on American Federalism, are

nevertheless useful in describing the Mexican case, not because of the existence of a genuine federal system in Mexico, but because of the way political power is structured in the country. Political actors at the state and local level in Mexico have a margin of political manoeuvre that allows them to adapt and even oppose federal initiatives. The implementation methods of FOMUN, seek to achieve reform by applying some centralisation and some decentralisation. That is, the programme, mainly oriented to impose a decentralised model for public policy implementation, paradoxically included a degree of centralisation to counter the resistance of old interests who would not adopt the model willingly.

Before the discussion of FOMUN and the limits of centralisation it is necessary to clarify what is the meaning of centralisation. Bailey (1993, p.p. 102 and 103) argues that according to Mexican terminology, decentralisation refers to "the devolution of decision-making authority to constitutionally authorized bodies separate from the central government line ministries that operate under presidential authority". On the contrary, "deconcentration refers to delegating some degree of decision-making authority from the federal ministries to their own field offices operating in the states and municipalities, or to state and local bureaucracies themselves...the field offices operate under the authority and supervision of the central ministries; and powers that have been deconcentrated by executive order can be reconcentrated by a similar measure". Because of this, Bailey concludes that "Solidarity acts to deconcentrate, not to decentralize, administration. Yet, while

the short-term effect is to bolster presidentialism, the program may help create conditions to support decentralization over the longer term”.

Theoretically, such differentiation is useful but also a matter of degree. It is argued here that certain degree of deconcentration implies a degree of decentralisation. It seems that Bailey refuses to talk of decentralisation in the case of Solidarity because the whole scheme of the programme was designed to bypass “constitutionally authorized bodies separate from the central government line ministries” that is state and local governments and congresses. Furthermore, Bailey (p. 104) argues that “PRONASOL deconcentrates program implementation to state governments and municipalities and to federal field offices through grant-in-aid mechanisms, but effective decision authority remains in México City”. However, while it is true that the whole command of the programme remains a federal prerogative, it is also true that the implementation rests in constitutionally authorised bodies, that is, the Solidarity Committees which are institutions which have legal grounds on Articles 25 and 26 of the Mexican Constitution. Indeed, the financial structure of the programme facilitates federal control of the programme, but in a country saturated in caudillismo and clientelism relations, this acted as a safeguard against misappropriation of funds.

In sum, while the theoretical differentiation may be useful, it does not help to explain the inclusion of non-bureaucratic actors in the decision-making process and how these new actors, constitutionally erected in the form of Solidarity Committees, had the chance to make decisions that had traditionally been a

bureaucratic prerogative. Although the way Solidarity operates looks more as an attempt to leapfrog obstructionists local politicians, the rationale of the programme may help create conditions to support effective decentralization over the long term, as Bailey has suggested (1994, p. 101).¹⁸

FOMUN and the limits of centralisation

It is generally accepted that the Mexican federal government, and most of all, the constitutional and meta-constitutional powers of the president are so strong that government actions, at the state and municipal level, have limited opportunity for autonomous performance. However, local actors have confronted to some extent the power of the centre in two ways.

First, different political objectives between federal and state executives and divisions not only inside the party but also in the governing coalition caused some resistance during the implementation process. In Chiapas, for instance, the introduction of the programme had to cope with strong resistance from the former governor (later Home Minister and dismissed after the Chiapas upheaval in January 1994) Patrocinio González, and local politicians. Local resistance may take the form of a bureaucratic lag or even subtle forms of violence and repression, as in the case of the imprisonment of Solidarity promoters during the introduction of the programme, presumably because they were creating political problems with some

¹⁸ For a discussion on decentralisation and Solidarity, see Rodríguez 1993.

of the Indigenous groups in the state.¹⁹ Opposition to the programme was so strong, that during an evaluation workshop in the National Institute of Solidarity in August 1994, one of the Chiapas mayors attending the meeting, asked federal officials why the Children of Solidarity programme had not been introduced in her municipality. She was told that the governor Patrocinio González had not agreed to work with the programme and that instead, he had decided to channel the funds to provide daily breakfast for the children.

The second way by means of which local actors have confronted the centre is by the Constitutional changes that took place in 1983 (to strengthen municipal governments), as well as the amendments to articles 25 and 26, (that introduced the so-called *National System for Democratic Planning*, which included community, municipalities and states in the formulation of national plans), have created a legal framework that may facilitate processes of decentralisation of the Mexican political system but also could empower state and municipal actors to challenge federal initiatives.

However, local resistance on the one hand, and institutional modernisation on the other, have created tension between centralisation and decentralisation because, in order to encourage a programme aimed to increase decentralisation, such as FOMUN, it is important to inject important elements of centralisation in

¹⁹Interview with Lic. De la Torre, J. M., Director of Municipal Programmes at the Federal Department of Social Development-SEDESOL, August 2, 1994 (SEDESOL Central Offices Mexico, D.F.).

those places where local resistance is strong. Such resistance is not directed at the introduction of public works and services but rather at the methods of the programme which aims to remove the power of vested interests which have grown up around the implementation of public works.²⁰

The experience in Campeche is illustrative of the different forms that local resistance may take and how this is diminished when federal and state political projects converge. When the PRONASOL started its operations, the federal government had to deal with two different state governors. The first one, Abelardo Carrillo Zavala, who was already in his fourth of a six year period (1987-1992), was considered as a "*politico*" and came from the PRI traditional breed of politicians. His political career developed under the protection of Fidel Velázquez, leader of the most powerful union confederation in the country (Confederation of Mexican Workers-CTM) and one of the original affiliated organisations of the PRI. He developed his political career in the arena of electoral politics and in the corporatist organisations affiliated to the PRI. He had previously held positions as a federal MP, leader of the state CTM, local MP and president of the PRI at the state level. When FOMUN started the governor implemented the programme by creating some Solidarity Committees using neighbourhood cells of the PRI. Although some of their members had been leaders in their communities, they lacked the necessary credibility for the implementation of the programme. Even

²⁰ Although limited to the telecommunications sector, for an interesting study of how public interests and private ones meet in Mexican politics, see Heller 1993.

worse, other Solidarity Committees existed only on paper and most of the formal procedures related to the programme were false. The assemblies in which communities discussed their needs and the organisation behind the strategy of Solidarity, were just a fiction. The reluctance to implement the programme as originally intended stemmed from the governor's unwillingness to identify with the president and with the objectives of the programme. His support for the programme was merely formal, neo-liberal policies and political modernisation were not compatible with his political viewpoints and they were perceived as a threat to the political arrangements created and cultivated for a long time, namely the corporatist and clientelist system of political representation.

The second administration in Campeche, that of governor Jorge Salomón Azar García (1992-1997), took office almost at the middle of the period of the federal administration (1988-1994). A university educated politician,²¹ García counted on the support from the president to become governor and developed his political career working in the federal and state agencies of the public administration. He shared not only political convictions with the president about FOMUN, but also personal commitment as a show of gratitude for presidential support. He shared the values of political modernisation and neo-liberal economic policies. This political convergence had a different impact in the way the programme was managed. While in 1991, during the last year of Carrillo Zavala

²¹For an analysis of recent political recruitment in the country, see Camp 1990.

administration, 330 projects were carried out with FOMUN, in 1992, during the first year of the new state administration, this rose to 671 (Salinas de Gortari 1994, p. 648).

The comparison shows how political perceptions influence the implementation process. Although the design of the programme aimed to decentralise decisions and to offer additional resources to local governments, in practice, such decentralisation depended on shared political values. The first state administration shaped the programme in the form of a patron-client oriented profile, producing a diversion of objectives and funds, and reducing the federal commitment for a major allocation of funds. As Knight (1994, p. 41) notes, governors' collaboration with national policies depends on their perception of possible benefits or threats. For him this was particularly the case for labour organisation, agrarian reform, and *Indigenismo* during the 20s and 30s, and in spite of changes to programmes and initiatives, the rationale remains the same.

In particular circumstances local actors show a significant margin of political and administrative manoeuvre that may affect policy effectiveness. While the appropriate allocation of resources is essential for an effective policy, this is not enough if local actors do not share the objectives and methods of the programme. Policy is tied to actors' political perceptions. In the case of FOMUN in Campeche, the federal government showed a limited capacity to influence the first state administration, not because of a genuine federalism like the one Derthick has in

mind, but because of a set of informal rules that characterise the Mexican political system.

The limitations of the decentralisation of FOMUN

It is precisely because local actors have a significant margin of political manoeuvre, that further decentralisation of programmes like FOMUN should be seriously considered. Derthick's assumptions about the limited capacity of a federal programme to operate rigid control and influence state actions, seem to be correct in explaining the FOMUN experience. But whether a programme like FOMUN should be decentralised in conditions that do not guarantee the achievement of federal policies is debatable.

For decentralisation, specific conditions are required. First, the network of economic and political interests that surround the implementation process must be curbed to guarantee the achievement of policy objectives. In a political context prone to politically motivated meddling, and in which the rule of law has given way to discretionary decisions and patronage, decentralisation may produce worse results than a policy centrally implemented. FOMUN played an important role in this respect. The programme not only had the objective of building public works but also, of generating a network of social organisation, the so-called popular mobilisation, around Solidarity Committees, that would replace traditional interests associated with public works. The aim was to scale down the 'project by contract'

scheme that used to mean large revenues for contractors and for those public officials who assigned the contracts.²² However, despite public commitment, this is a practice which still remains. The rules of the programme included the possibility of communities transferring power for the implementation of the project to municipal authorities (*carta de desestimiento*).

According to the General Manual of Operation, committees are allowed to cede their responsibility to undertake the work to municipal authorities when the committee is unwilling or unable to implement the public work. Although the community sometimes did not want to participate in the programme, in Campeche it was common to find that authorities discouraged Solidarity Committees from implementing the public work. Some municipal authorities in Isla del Carmen threatened Solidarity Committees that being involved in the execution of public work would cause trouble and that an improper use of funds would cause them legal problems. This was particularly so in the case of Candelaria, one of the municipal seats of Isla del Carmen.

One of the main problems of this village was the deplorable condition of some of its streets. In one of its neighbourhoods, a Solidarity Committee was created and funds were granted to solve the problem. However, the municipal authorities persuaded the committee to cede the project, presumably because if the

²²Interview with Lic. De la Torre, J. M., Director of Municipal Programmes at the Federal Department of Social Development-SEDESOL, August 2, 1994 (SEDESOL Central Offices Mexico, D.F.).

quality of the work was not good, that would cause them legal problems. The project was finally ceded to the municipal authorities and later, it was allocated to a private contractor. At the end of the day, the work did not fulfil the technical requirements established in the Technical File, neither in the quality of the materials, nor in the extent of the work.²³ The Solidarity committee demanded that the street should be re-built according to the specifications. The municipal authorities had to pressure contractors and the Solidarity Committee received a positive answer only because one of the members of the committee was a member of the state legislature. Unfortunately, this situation was not an isolated one. Particularly evident in the municipality of Isla del Cármen, this strategy allowed municipal authorities to transfer a large number of public works to private contractors. Although the community watched over the use of funds, as in Candelaria, this did not prevent the proliferation of such practices, particularly in Isla del Cármen and the city of Campeche. There are two reasons for this situation. The first is that these municipalities concentrate the economic activity of the state and therefore, they receive the major part of the state and federal funds. This has created a complex network of economic and political interests around public spending in which public officials and private actors collude producing a misappropriation of funds. The second reason is that in urban areas it is more difficult to reach agreement among the community about the nature of the public

²³During the field work it was possible to corroborate the low quality of the work. It was possible to make a little hole in the layer of pavement even with a key. October 28, 1994.

work to be carried out. As noted by a municipal official of the City of Campeche, 'we do not have the time to discuss every single project with the community. If we do that, we would never have time to finish in accordance with the regulations of the programme. Besides, if we let the community discuss and decide the kind of public work they want, this results in conflicts and divisions inside the community. Furthermore, because the programme gives the community a significant place in the implementation of the programme, sometimes the public works merely reflect the wishes of a strong leader in the community (usually recruited under PRI's tutelage), but not necessarily those of the community in general. That is why it is quicker and less complicated for us (municipal authorities) to decide where and what kind of public service to build in the community'.²⁴

Cases like these, are useful in showing the limitations of other approaches, such as the one proposed by Richard Elmore (1979-1980). His suggestion that the key to successful implementation is to maximise discretion at the point of service delivery, is not appropriate here. The programme was precisely designed to curb a trend in which public policies are characterised by patronage and clientelist practices. To expose the programme to that political environment, would have resulted not in the institutional change FOMUN was trying to achieve, but rather, in the reinforcement of patronage. Therefore, if the federation still controls fundamental decisions, it is because a direct transfer to state and local actors,

²⁴Interview with Lic. Sosa Mario, E., Municipal Treasurer of the Municipality of Campeche, August 30, 1996 (Campeche, Campeche).

without certain federal control, would have exposed the programme to the influence of a network of political and economic interests at the local level.

A second condition that has to be considered for a more decentralised implementation of the programme is the level of administrative skills in local government. There were cases such as the municipality of Hopelchén where several conditions converged and that created a propitious context for the programme to introduce decentralisation. Although this municipality enjoyed adequate resources, local political support and representation, as well as the promotion of mutual adjustments, political conditions were also a determinant of success. In the state of Campeche, Hopelchén shows the highest level of marginality. It is a predominantly rural municipality, with a population density of 5 inhabitants per square kilometre, the lowest in the state; it is ranked third in the state context in territorial area (7,927.95 km²), with a high dispersion of villages, generally isolated because of the lack of roads and communication infrastructure. Situated near the border with Guatemala, with a large Indigenous population, its economic growth is rather slow. That is probably why the network of economic interest is not significant enough to alter the process of implementation as in the city of Campeche or Isla del Carmen. Politically speaking, Hopelchén is exceptional for two reasons. First, the mayor of this municipality had strong and long standing personal links with the governor, and second, Carlos Rojas, the current Head of the Federal Department of Social Development-SEDESOL, worked in this municipality during the 70s in the National Indigenous Institute-

INI, when he developed personal links with the region. The former mayor, was also respected as an honourable and responsible person in the community. He fully adopted the objectives of the programme and applied all its strategies. As a result, Hopelchén had the second highest per capita investment in the state and created the third largest number of Solidarity Committees; it is frequently mentioned as a model of implementation, not only at the state, but also at the federal level where it received a presidential award in recognition for its level of organisation and commitment to PRONASOL.

In administrative terms, Hopelchén was also unusual. The person in charge of all the Solidarity programmes in the municipality, was a young university educated person, with previous experience in the private sector. He managed the programme rigorously, establishing monthly goals and objectives; he assigned clear tasks to his personnel, trained them in the philosophy of the programme, and imbued in them a team work spirit and a sense of professionalism. He also managed the programmes so as to maximise budget restrictions. When his personnel had developed the necessary abilities for the programmes, he promoted them, creating at the same time, positive expectations about future promotions even if they were not accompanied by an increase in their salaries. A secretary, for example, eventually was promoted to manage the Children of Solidarity programme. In addition, he also had the full support of the mayor and because of his administrative and political abilities soon developed strong relationships with state and federal SEDESOL officials. He carried out permanent supervision of the

programmes and encouraged communities to participate fully in their implementation. Only in certain cases, such as the construction of water wells, which require machinery and a certain level of technical skill, were the works assigned by the community to people outside.²⁵ This in particular had a significant impact in reducing economic and political interest around public works.

On the whole, the example shows that community participation works when institutional support is provided and also when there is local and qualified leadership. It can be argued however, that the experience shows on the contrary, the importance of the control of the process residing in few trained hands and when possible without the interference of the community. Nevertheless, the programme genuinely stimulated community participation because both institutional and human support were provided.

FOMUN's assets

The programme's ability to adjust its procedures to local conditions is perhaps one of its most important assets. The programme's flexibility was possible because of its open-ended structure and its procedural nature. This demanded continuous change to the rules of the programme which facilitated the adaptation of its procedures to local conditions. For instance, the mechanisms for the creation of

²⁵Mennonites-members of an Anabaptist sect founded in the 16th century and still existing in West Europe and North America and that had emigrated to different places in Mexico-have developed this ability. The quality, price and speed to built wells is quite good. The price for a well is 40 percent cheaper, in comparison with private firms. The quality is better and they even built a machinery room, something private firms charge apart.

Solidarity Committees changed according to local needs and demand. Although FOMUN norms establish that municipal authorities must promote the creation of Solidarity Committees before the allocation of funds, some municipalities did the opposite. For local authorities to create Solidarity Committees and promote popular mobilisation without securing funds first, would only have caused false expectations and political problems with the community.

Some municipalities deliberately reversed the process to force the allocation of funds from the federation. In the municipality of Guasave, Sinaloa, local authorities set priorities in the community, organised people in Solidarity Committees, asked them for their contribution, and then asked for funds for the projects²⁶. This was an effective mechanism for exerting pressure on state and federal officials for the allocation of funds. This way the process was shortened and there was plenty of time to implement the project. Flexibility also allowed the kind of projects that could be funded to be modified.

To accommodate a growing number of public works demanded by the community, federal officials created the possibility for municipal authorities to spend 15 percent of the total funds assigned to the municipality according to the particular needs and wishes of the community not necessarily included in the norms of the programme. In practice, this meant that from 200 million pesos, for instance, 85 percent was spent according to the norms of FOMUN, while the rest was spent

²⁶Interview with Dr. Peña Gastélum, M. E., Secretary of Social Development of the Municipal Council of Guasave, Sinaloa, August 10, 1994 (Mexico, D.F.).

at the community's discretion.²⁷ Such flexibility was possible because the programme assumed that popular mobilisation ought to be allowed to go beyond the approved list of eligible projects. Popular mobilisation was not overwhelming and cases like the one cited here are rather few. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasising that the programme successfully modified itself to deal with more demanding communities.

Flexibility however had its limitations. In the political and administrative context in which FOMUN was implemented, laxity sometimes suggested the need for greater control. During the implementation of FOMUN there was tension between the need for control and the need for maximising discretion that ultimately did not obstruct the achievement of the programme's objectives. The non-written rules in Mexico allowed the exercise of discretion but within the limits established by central power. When these rules were not enough, the central power exerted its authority to speed the programme using federal emissaries. The state branch of federal SEDESOL was effective precisely in counteracting the power of local actors enough to secure the adoption of the Solidarity model.

For instance, in Isla del Carmen both the federal delegate and the 'link' at the municipal level had confrontations with the mayor, because both officials supported the Solidarity Committees in carrying out public works themselves,

²⁷ Interview with Lic. De la Torre, J. M., Director of Municipal Programmes at the Federal Department of Social Development-SEDESOL, August 2, 1994 (SEDESOL Central Offices Mexico, D.F.).

whereas the municipal authorities preferred to use private contractors. The confrontation gained momentum when the mayor expelled the federal SEDESOL link person from the Island. These experiences suggest that although the federation still has effective means of control at the local level, powerful local actors can successfully confront the federal authority. These experiences particularly the one of Isla del Carmen also confirm Derthick's assumptions in relation to the limited abilities of federal governments to implement policies if local collaboration is not forthcoming. On the whole, however, her assumptions are not correct since FOMUN was able to be implemented on a national scale due to the influence that presidential power can exert in overriding local interest that might attempt obstruction. Nationally, cases like the one of Isla del Carmen were the exception rather than the rule. The difference between the Mexican situation and the American one (on which she based her ideas) seem to weaken her arguments because the difficulties that she envisaged do not actually arise in a damaging form in the Mexican case. Contrary to what she argues, in a highly politicised context like the Mexican one, effective measures and rules to limit the weight of local economic and political interests can ensure success.

The FOMUN experience showed that three important conditions determined effective implementation: the first, was the popular mobilisation around the programme. The inclusion of community participation through the creation of Solidarity Committees noticeably diminished the discretion possessed by municipal and state authorities. However, research's findings suggest that the stronger the

network of economic and political interest at the local level, the more difficult it becomes to obtain good results, for example, in Candelaria. The success achieved by the programme in terms of community mobilisation can hardly be exaggerated. Popular involvement in Mexico apart from protest and crisis is rather unusual and even more unusual on a national scale. Compared with other experiences of popular mobilisation, particularly in European countries, the experiment is an unusual achievement. Indeed, these countries have a representative system that works reasonable well and that makes community involvement unnecessary. But in the case of Solidarity, the large number of people involved was particularly successful because of the institutional opportunities available for participation, and also because of the lack of public services which acted as a catalyst for such participation.

Second, community participation was possible because significant funds were directed to the programme, more than US 12 billion dollars during the first five years of operation (Cornelius 1995a, p. 144). And third, the allocation of funds and community participation were only possible because of the strong presidential support which the programme received, and by means of which significant changes in the implementation of public policies in the country were introduced. Presidential support, combined with community participation proved a perfect democratic means of altering the balance of power across the country. That is why the programme fluctuated between a centralised control and important degrees of flexibility and discretion. An important element for this support was the

institutional changes introduced with the programme. Particularly, the powerful role assigned to some federal agencies at the state level and federal representatives in municipalities in isolated communities. Their role and presence guaranteed and reinforced presidential influence.

FOMUN: THE COMPLEXITY OF JOINT ACTION

Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky (1984) introduced the idea, in the field of policy implementation, that the larger the number of actors and perspectives the more difficult it is to accomplish policy goals. Therefore, they suggested that the number of participants should be minimised to improve the policy's chances of success. By identifying the actors involved in the implementation process, they pinpoint decision and clearance instances on which the process relies for its success. Table 3 lists the main actors involved in FOMUN's implementation followed by a brief description of their role in the decision-making process and their influence on the programme's performance.

Table 3. Participants and Perspectives of FOMUN in Campeche.

<i>Participant and (Jurisdiction level)</i>	<i>Connection with Programme</i>	<i>Perspective and Major Objectives</i>	<i>Sense of Urgency</i>
Community (community level)	Propose a public work.	The programme represents a source of resources to satisfy a community need.	Very high.
Solidarity Committee (neighbourhood level)	Indispensable social organisation to implement any public work in community.	The programme represents an opportunity to solve a public need. To implement a public works according to the procedures of the programme.	Very high.
Solidarity Municipal Council (municipal level)	Collegiate mechanism inserted in the municipal administrative structure to consider and approve all community proposals.	A programme to satisfy community demands of public works. Approve according to certain criteria, public works.	Varied according to the commitment and the way criteria are met by the president of such Council.
Solidarity Municipal Officials (municipal level)	People in charge of the formulation of the <i>Technical Files</i> (Expedientes Técnicos).	Varied according to their positions in the bureaucratic structure and to their identification with the programme.	Varied according to their positions in the bureaucratic structure and to their identification with the programme.
Municipal Council or <i>Cabildo</i> (municipal level)	Exercises its authority for the approval of public works and verifies that process meet legal procedures.	Shares with most of the actors, the importance of the programme. Tries to speed up and facilitate the implementation of the programme, in accordance within the legal responsibilities it possesses.	High.
State Department of Social Development or State SEDESOL (state level)	Verifies that legal, organisational and general procedures are met.	A programme to create public works. Generate as many as possible public works for community.	Very High.
COPLADE. (state level)	Approves at the state level, all public works to be implemented under the scheme of Solidarity.	The programme is just one mechanism, among other, to foster development in the state. Verify that state needs in terms of the programme, are included in national plans for further support.	Varied according to the president of this collegiate actor.
State Branch of Federal SEDESOL (federal level)	Validates on behalf of Federal SEDESOL, proposals for public works.	The programme would reverse a trend in the satisfaction of public services. Integrate all state proposals in a coherent way.	Very High.
Federal Department of Social Development (federal level)	Verifies state proposals and authorise funds for the projects.	Generate all over the country as many as possible public works for community.	Very High.

The process starts with the identification of a project needed by the community. A Solidarity Committee is then created for the implementation of the

project in the community. Next, the committee submits its proposals for consideration of the Solidarity Municipal Council-SMC, a collegiate body which considers and approves all community proposals if all the requisites are met. Once the community projects have been submitted to the Council, the municipal solidarity officials transform community proposals into technical files which contain all the information necessary for the project to be implemented and which shall be submitted to state officials. Then the community proposals are submitted to the Cabildo for endorsement. Then the municipal proposal is submitted to the COPLADE a collegiate actor, which is made up of representatives of the state and municipal authorities, and that is chaired by the governor. The state proposal is then submitted to the state branch of federal SEDESOL that verifies whether projects meet technical criteria before sending them to Mexico city for final approval. Finally, federal SEDESOL validates the proposals and authorises the funds for the projects.

The implementation of the programme however was a complex business and several setbacks appeared during its implementation. One of them was the population's lack of faith in the programme. The emergence of a programme that offered full participation in decision making and implementation was viewed with reluctance. In many communities the government's presence has frequently been associated with local bosses, the police or the armed forces. Despite this, the mobilisation created by the programme produced encouraging results. In Campeche, 87 percent of the projects were based on the community's demands and

only 7 percent were proposed by solidarity officials. This was possible because of the complex and costly propagandistic apparatus of the programme and the role of Solidarity promoters who acted as emissaries of the programme, and were frequently regarded as trouble shooters by local political coalitions. This proved to be an essential component in the implementation of the programme.

A second problem was that because the Solidarity Committees were essential for the allocation of resources, on some occasions they were created using the existing forms of political organisation, e.g., PRI cells in neighbourhoods. Although the programme was clear in this respect, it had to accept this situation so as to avoid open and direct confrontation with reluctant local political actors, as was the case with the first state administration in Campeche or in Chiapas where problems were more acute.

Once the community's proposals had been submitted to the SMC for approval, implementation had to confront another obstacle. Although a member of the community was nominated to this body, the mayor who chairs the SMC, had significant power in analysing and selecting the projects to be carried out. Although FOMUN's rules have effective means to counteract his influence, via the state branch of federal SEDESOL or the federal representative at the municipal level, the mayor can actually hinder some projects, either because he is not sympathetic to the programme or because the approval of certain projects would go to communities where he had suffered an electoral setback. In Isla del Carmen, for instance, the mayor did not direct funds to one of the Municipal Boards (*Juntas*

Municipales)²⁸ because electors in that particular locality did not favour him in the municipal elections, but most of all, because the president of that Municipal Seat, represented an opposition party (PRD).

The elaboration of the so-called technical files commonly delayed the implementation process because it required certain administrative and technical skills. This activity depended on a bureaucratic structure, the skills and sense of urgency of which did not match those of the programme's vigour. Two situations helped in solving this problem. The first was the distinctive pattern of recruitment of Solidarity cadres and state and municipal operative personnel. Many of the Solidarity cadres had developed much of their experience working with communities and had even worked in previous governmental initiatives that explored the community involvement component for their implementation, namely PIDER and COPLAMAR. Some of them had even been involved in guerrilla movements in the country side during the 60s and 70s. This raised criticism from the Mexican left who interpreted this as yet another example of how the Mexican political system co-opts political cadres from the opposition (see Moguel 1994).

When municipal proposals were submitted for analysis and approval at state level, some problems appeared because of the veto power of the governor. Again, as happened with the mayors, the governor's political priorities and agenda were not always coincident with those reflected in municipal proposals. In some cases

²⁸Several Municipal Seats integrate the Municipality.

governors channelled funds to those projects which they deemed urgent and consequently funds were diverted from other needs or regions.

The way in which the programme countered this and secured the achievement of its objectives was by assigning a significant role to the state branches of federal SEDESOL and their representatives. They not only ensured that the rules of the programme were met, but also they had an important role in controlling the allocation of resources to the states. Very frequently governors had to negotiate with federal representatives, a process that caused political problems between the federation and the states (see Haber 1994).

This sort of conflict however was not confined to hard-line governors and the programme representatives. They also occurred where state and federal actors shared the objectives of the programme. This was so because it was difficult to avoid using the programme with different purposes. It became evident during the field work that it was relatively easy to transform almost any community problem into a Solidarity proposal and by means of this, to channel resources which in the Mexican political context have effective healing properties in solving political problems. As mentioned by a state official, 'in politics, money is the cheapest resource.'²⁹

²⁹Interview with Lic. Alcalá Ferrás, R., Under-secretary of Social Development in State SEDESOL, September 21, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

From this review, it is clear that the implementation process was not only complex, but also had to confront issues, the importance of which was to some extent diminished by the rules of the programme. In practice state and local actors, influenced the final result of the programme. In addition, the process was made more complex because an additional actor was introduced not only in the decision-making process but also in the implementation of the programme. Despite this, the programme was quite successful in terms of implementation. Considering the complexity involved in its implementation it is surprising that it was implemented at all. Neither its complexity, nor the increased number of actors reduced the success of the programme because of the nature of the actors, the ways the process was structured and the institutional reform that accompanied the implementation process. When a community becomes an actor within the administrative structure with decision making power, the results are more in accordance with the wishes of the recipients of a policy. Organisation played a significant role in this process, not only by giving an appropriate channel to such popular mobilisation, but also by re-arranging bureaucratic structures and rules, creating an institutional framework that made possible the interaction of actors, new and traditional, in a programme that was more effective than in previous experience, namely PIDER and COPLAMAR.

Compared with PIDER or COPLAMAR, for example, the inclusion of a new actor (community) in FOMUN was not new. However, its participation was limited to the contribution of manpower for the construction of public works. The

novelty is that FOMUN gave the community the status not only of an actor, but also one whose perspective and weight in the decision making process was essential for its implementation. Thus, it is not only their inclusion, but also the role played by these actors, old and new, which produced an institutional change that transformed the programme.

It is not contended here that each new actor will make the implementation process easier, but that the addition of certain actors, may be an advantage. This is so because the peculiar advantage of including the community as a new actor, is that the community has a direct interest and incentive in the efficient carrying out of the programme. This is a very simple but useful principle that, in so far as new actors have a direct incentive towards programme performance, their inclusion does not produce the kind of complications that Pressman and Wildavsky would expect. In other words, if additional actors are introduced in the programme, who do not have that kind of direct incentive, the expectations of Pressman and Wildavsky would be correct.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of FOMUN showed tension between decentralisation and centralisation. On the one hand, the programme made an effort to decentralise substantial decisions which had traditionally been a bureaucratic prerogative at the federal, state and municipal level. This attempt introduced an institutional change that included the community in the decision-making process. The most important

constitutional reforms were those of articles 25 and 26, which created the so-called National System for Democratic Planning the introduction of the Participative Planning method and the improvement of the Article 115, which redefined the responsibilities of municipal governments.

FOMUN structured its objectives and procedures around this institutional re-organisation and introduced the Solidarity Municipal Council and the Solidarity Committees as basic units for its implementation. From this moment, the community became a new actor with an important role in the decision-making process that diminished to some extent, the power of local actors who have traditionally been oriented by patrimonial political values. This, created anxiety and opposition to the programme. Delays in the allocation of funds, and discretionary decisions to select communities or projects to be funded, still exist in the process of implementation. This is so for two reasons. One is that certain actors counteract effectively federal initiatives, particularly those aimed at effective reform such as the Solidarity programme. The second is that the federal government has a limited capacity to impose rigid control on state and local actors. Because of this, tight control and increased centralisation was required to secure the introduction of the new model, which paradoxically was aimed at increased decentralisation. In this respect presidential support was essential. Federal delegates and representatives at the state and municipal level, played an essential role in this process. By means of them presidential control of the programme was achieved.

Derthick's arguments in relation to the limited possibilities of federal governments of controlling the implementation process were seen to apply to the Mexican situation only in certain respects. The findings of this research show that in programmes like FOMUN the centre can achieve major objectives with, as in this case, proper allies. These allies were the local communities and their new leadership. They helped to limit the power of the conventional, well organised elements in Mexican party politics. The centre has been able to get a good deal of what it wants locally, because the opposition that could have been expected in a federal situation like the American one, where federal interests can be found on the one hand and local interests on the other does not exist.

The evidence of the research shows that the alliance between presidential power and the local community, was sufficient to produce a substantial shake up in the balance of power at local level. Derthick is right when she explains and describes the sort of limitations a central government faces in implementing public policies. But those limitations can be reduced and are reduced substantially in the Mexican situation when the federal actor, particularly the presidential actor, is able to find allies among the divided local actors. If local allies cannot be found, then the analysis of Derthick fits and all that can be done is to give weight to the local interest and allow it to adapt the policy to what they want. Considering all the adversities and the network of vested interest which grew up around public funds in Mexico, central power is achieving more than expected for a programme that

aimed to introduce changes in the way public funds are managed and which has been one of the foundations of the Mexican political system.

The programme also showed the differences that may arise when implementing the programme in different economic contexts. The differences that appeared in the city of Campeche and Isla del Cármen vis-à-vis Hopelchén suggest that although presidential power has generally been able to find allies in certain situations, in others this has been particularly difficult. It can be argued that the programme performed less well in the urban more developed areas where the network of economic and political interest was stronger and in which the popular mobilisation component was more difficult to activate. This may be crucial in suggesting that the difficulties encountered in the capital city and Isla del Cármen might be representative of what might happen in the rest of the country.

In those cases FOMUN showed that local political actors have a significant margin of political and administrative manoeuvring, that may be used to introduce changes to the federal policy. These actors have originated a dynamic and complex network of political and economic relationships that confront and effectively counteract such centralised structure, not because of a constitutionally federal system, like the American one Derthick has in mind, but because of the way political power and recruitment are structured in Mexico.

The most important assumption of the bottom-up approach for policy implementation has been evaluated. It is clear that in a context such as the one in

which FOMUN was being implemented, the maximisation of discretion would have resulted in a less effective implementation. In opposition to Richard Elmore's suggestions, it has been shown here that the maximisation of discretion at the point of service delivery is not advisable in the Mexican context, because of the patrimonial and patronage attitudes which persist in many regions of the country.

This however did not prevent the programme from carrying out adjustments to each particular situation. One of the main assets of the programme was its flexibility or procedural nature, where the achievement of quantitative objectives, was not as important as the popular mobilisation around the process of implementation. The range of projects was ample, from a hanging bridge, to pavements, public lighting, grave yards and even the refurbishment of a church. The means to achieve them could vary as long as the community were involved in the process. During the whole life of the programme, several changes were introduced in the General Manual of Operation to give a legal framework to different modalities of functioning around the country as well as to allow a redefinition of objectives at the local level as it was the case of Sinaloa. The procedural nature of the programme helps to explain such flexibility. Although goal achievement is important, the success of FOMUN should be measured in terms of the process it implied, the way in which it altered the balance of power around the country and the social learning process that it produced. Whether the programme produced enduring effects in these areas is debatable, but it succeeded in implementing both its formal and hidden agenda.

Contrary to what Pressman and Wildavsky argue, it has been demonstrated here that the inclusion of a new actor did not diminish FOMUN's success. This is so because the logic of the argument is different. FOMUN is not an old programme that included a new actor, but a new actor who defined a set of rules and institutions around it creating a completely different programme.³⁰ The success of the programme is explained first, by its flexibility or its procedural nature, which facilitated mutual adjustments with the local setting. Second, by the political and personal commitment to the programme which was a decisive variable, as in the municipality of Hopelchén. Third, by the presidential support which was necessary to impose the model in the country, against patrimonial oriented actors and other interests. In this attempt the community mobilisation of FOMUN and the other Solidarity programmes worked to surmount the resistance that the programme would confront. Finally, by the resources available, mainly those produced by the economic recovery during the period.

³⁰From a statistical perspective, Bowen corroborates this finding. See Bowen 1982.

Chapter 4

The Children of Solidarity Programme: Lessons for Public Policy Implementation in the Education Sector in Mexico

INTRODUCTION

Academics and politicians share the belief that one of the most important areas of government performance is education. In Mexico education provides a terrain on which government success can produce significant political dividends. Since the revolution of 1910 the Mexican government has made it one of the pillars on which its legitimacy rests. Nevertheless, slow but significant changes inside and outside the education system, have affected this area of public policy. Over several administrations the efficient provision of education has been hampered by the rate of growth of the population. Also dispersion has created disparities between urban and rural schools. Furthermore, economic crises have resulted in the redirection of public expenditure away from education to other urgent government needs. As a result, education has suffered a chronic lack of resources which has affected teachers salaries, but also materials and buildings. This has affected standards and achievement.

The deterioration in training provision has also contributed to a poor image of the profession and a poor self image of the teachers themselves. In times past the rural teachers (*maestros rurales*) were sometimes considered as "martyrs" because of their devotion and commitment. Nowadays however it is difficult to

recruit good people to the profession and teachers are often treated with contempt. Also the teachers' performance is often influenced by the administrative atmosphere in which it takes place. This is authoritarian, centralised and patronage-oriented. It is fostered by the teachers' union, the National Union of Educational Workers-SNTE (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación*) and the educational authorities and militates against any attempt to develop a career based on merits or qualifications. Increasingly the population has become aware of external and internal influences on education and politicians have been forced to assign an exceptional place to education. The design and implementation of the Children of Solidarity programme is the result of this pressure.

Children of Solidarity (*Niños de Solidaridad*) was launched in 1991 and it aimed to fight the causes of early leaving among poor children in the country. Early leaving in the primary school was associated with the more general problem of poverty. For the designers of Children of Solidarity malnutrition, ill health and most important, the cost of sending children to school, are symptoms of a general problem of poverty which results in children having to repeat grades and in early leaving, mainly during the primary school years. The programme offered poor children a monthly scholarship, and package of supplies to secure minimal levels of nutrition as well as free medical care. This gained the government political credit through a more educated work force in a way cost effective to the family.

Although a preliminary study of the programme exists (Programa Nacional de Solidaridad-UNICEF 1994)¹, an analysis of the implementation of the programme seeks to detect the "red lights" which militate against the final objective of the programme as well as those features which were useful in securing its achievements. A study like this also reveals some of the obstacles that Children of Solidarity had to confront, and their importance to the success of the programme. The chapter balances the success of the programme against the large number of variables involved in implementation.

The objectives of this chapter are to document the process of implementation of the Children of Solidarity programme in the state of Campeche, Mexico. Some of the main theoretical ideas on policy implementation will be presented along with the effect on the implementation of the programme of the micro-political context in which education takes place in Mexico.

The programme was inserted in the larger framework of institutional change that aimed to transform the relationships between public institutions and the community. This new institutional framework not only affected these relationships, but also allowed a review of the theoretical assumptions in the area of public policy implementation, and those concerning the way the Mexican politics perform and change.

¹ This study will be referred subsequently as NSP-UNICEF.

This chapter starts by identifying the political and educational background in which the implementation process took place. This section is followed by a description of the main elements of the programme, its structure, objectives, and bureaucratic setting. The implementation process of the Children of Solidarity programme is discussed in a third section and finally, some conclusions are drawn concerning the degree of success of the programme.

BACKGROUND

EDUCATIONAL IMBALANCES IN MEXICO

Education in Mexico is one of the most significant areas of government action. This is so for three reasons. First, it is an essential means of increasing the quality of the labour force of a country. Second, it is generally accepted that education is a means of achieving social prestige, economic success, and greater self-confidence (see Camp 1993, pp. 56-57). Finally, education has an important place in the political agenda because it is a valuable source of political credit for the government. Nevertheless, despite the priority assigned to education its guidelines, contents and means have varied according either to the economic imperatives of each period, or to the priority assigned to education by each administration. This has created a lack of continuity in perspective and content generating disparities not only in terms of quality, but also in terms of the groups availing themselves of the provision.

Because of this lack of continuity, disparities between rural versus urban schools, poor schooling infrastructure, teacher quality and working conditions are the most evident. First, disparities between rural versus urban have been exacerbated by the political commitment of each administration. For example, while Cárdenas strongly supported rural schools because they were part of his political agenda, Ávila Camacho relegated them not only because they represented an unsettling influence, but also because his priorities were different. As a result, economic resources were redirected and the support given to rural schools during the Cárdenas administration was translated to Ávila Camacho's preferred schools leaving the former almost unaided.

Second, emigration from rural to urban areas also contributed to the existing disparities in education. Attracted by the promise of better opportunities, the rural population emigrated to the main cities of the country increasing the demand for education in urban areas. Many more resources were needed to satisfy this demand, and in the long run, this situation created disparities which provided urban schools with more resources than rural schools. Even so, broken windows, old and insanitary toilets, classrooms without doors, broken chairs, old blackboards, roof leaks and faulty electrical installations, are common in urban and rural primary schools.

The disparities between rural and urban schools are also reflected in the quality of teachers. Better conditions of work, other forms of income, such as 'non-monetary remunerations of the social wage' (Martin 1994, p. 100), and

facilities which a city may provide, encourage teachers to look for urban rather than rural posts. A rural post is still considered by many teachers as their last option and even in these circumstances, they prefer to travel every day from the city to the village. These imbalances erected some obstacles for the implementation of Children of Solidarity.

POVERTY AND SCHOOLING IN MEXICO

One of the main assumptions of the programme was that poor academic performance as well as high rates of early leaving in primary education, are strongly related to the more general problem of poverty. Consequently, its actions were oriented both to overcome the economic limitations which prevent children from finishing primary school, and to minimise the effect of the other variables on early leaving and poor academic performance. Children of Solidarity was structured around four main components: a monthly economic stimulus, a complement of basic family supplies, medical care and nutritional supervision and the promotion of recreational workshops and activities to benefit the community.

Although free education is granted by the Mexican Constitution, the indirect costs have frequently been underestimated. Notebooks, pencils, books, uniforms, clothing, transportation, and from time to time, extra expenses for civic activities, represent a burden which the average family income cannot bear. It may

take fifty to a hundred new pesos per annum (roughly five/ten pounds)² for each child to attend school (NSP-UNICEF 1994, p. 31). Considering that the total annual income of these families is about three thousand new pesos per year (roughly three hundred pounds) and that the family is generally large, the sum must not be underestimated. Also low income families need their children to supplement their income.

The level of education completed is dependent on family income. Early leaving is frequent not only during primary school, but through all the cycles of formal education. Nevertheless, it is at the level of primary school and particularly during its first three years that the problem is more persistent since it is also at this stage that the greatest incidence of poverty is found. Dropping-out from school markedly diminishes the possibilities for employment and the less educated a person is, the poorer s/he remains.

Although economic considerations are important (Martin 1994, pp. 6-8), he is sceptical about the common assumption that early leaving results from the need for children to take a job to supplement family income. He argues that this presupposes the existence of a dynamic labour market and a dynamic economy, something that seems improbable in the Mexican case. His views are reinforced by the NSP-UNICEF study (1994, p. 33) which found that 94 percent of the sample under study said that their children did not work.

² These amounts are given in new pesos and before the devaluation of nearly 45 percent in December 1994.

Martin (1994) believes that the lack of support and supervision of children by their parents whose attention is directed to survival is most important. While this approach might be quite useful in interpreting, for instance, the important role assigned by Children of Solidarity designers to community participation in the programme, it remains true that even if a child receives full attention from his or her parents but poor nutrition or health problems are persistent, the child will not perform well in school.

The decision about dropping-out might also be influenced by the family's perception of the quality and usefulness of education. For many parents school does not offer "value for money" because what children learn at school seems inappropriate for obtaining a job.

Early leaving is not explained solely by economic reasons. Circumstances such as the social conditions in which children and their families live, migration, the parent's educational background, the children nutritional situation and health, are also at the root of the problem. Parents' migration influences the decision to finish primary school. The reasons for migration are varied, but most of the time parents believe that cities will offer opportunities they do not have in rural areas (see Cornelius 1975). Parents move with their children to the cities, particularly Mexico city, and also to the United States in search of a better income. As a result, children are rooted neither to their communities nor in their school.

In relation to parent's educational background, Trejo and Jones (1992, p. 101) show that children from illiterate parents only attended the first three years of primary school; those children whose parents finished primary school, have 7.49 years of education, this means that they have finished primary and secondary school at least; and those children whose parents finished secondary school complete on average 10.41 years of study, which roughly means that they have completed primary, secondary and college. These data show that there is a better chance for children to study more if they belong to a family where parents are educated.

Malnutrition is another factor that prevents children from finishing their primary school. Trejo and Jones (1993, p. 90) show that 20 percent of all children annually suffer malnutrition; 51 percent of children in rural areas are poorly nourished and 2.6 million children under five years old do not have a balanced diet. In rural areas malnutrition is twice as bad as in urban areas showing thus a geographical concentration in the Centre, South and Southeast of the country. In rural areas, 90 percent of children under six years old presented a malnutrition problem and of the remaining 10 percent, nine out of ten children did not consume milk, meat, eggs or fish for a period of four or seven days. Although other circumstances may be significant in preventing children from finishing primary school, these were the most significant for the Children of Solidarity programme.

EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE AND SECTORAL POLITICS

The educational system in Mexico is structured in five main cycles, all of them offered by public and private institutions. The first cycle, pre-primary education, is designed to teach children how to read and write before starting primary school. The second cycle, primary school, lasts for 6 years and the curriculum includes reading, writing, history, geography, mathematics, Spanish grammar, and social and natural science. The third cycle, secondary school, consists of another three years. It increases the knowledge of the previous cycle and includes other fields of study such as technical workshops to prepare some students for technological careers. The fourth cycle, another three years directs students towards a degree course at the university. University or polytechnic institutions require another four or five years, depending on the course selected by students.

Educational policy is the responsibility of the Department of Public Education-SEP (*Secretaría de Educación Pública*). Created in 1921, it has grown to be one of the most important departments in the Mexican public administration, not only because of its legal responsibilities, but also because of the political significance which education provision has acquired in the country. Only the church has questioned the government's dominance in educational matters. In the past, the church-state tension has been a matter of some importance. Although at certain times, particularly in the 30s, the tension has increased, the church has preserved its educational role mainly by reinforcing its presence in private

education at all levels. It is surprising that the church did not criticise openly the Children of Solidarity programme, or demand its extension to private schools.

Educational policy in both design and implementation has been a federal prerogative. The states of the federation have only recently acted as simple operators of the policy which, often, was not coincident with the needs, expectations and cultural characteristics of each state. Efforts have been made to decentralise the functions of SEP, however it was not until the Salinas administration that more visible changes were made, in particular with the National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education-ANMEB (*Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Básica*) in 1992. In general, the ANMEB encourages more community involvement, greater teacher commitment in community matters and shared responsibilities with state authorities, in order to overcome bureaucratic top-heaviness and improve the quality of education (see Martin 1994, pp. 20-23).

Both internal and external factors have influenced educational provision. Internally the role of the teachers has been most important. In the 1930s, when education became one of the axes of government action with the so-called socialist education, teachers had an influential role in urban and rural areas.

Despite the fact that this role has gradually diminished, teachers remain influential not only in educational but in many community matters, particularly in rural and isolated areas where they are still regarded as a link between the

community and the outside world. Mexican families also believe that schools and teachers have an authority similar to their own. School is a second home for children where discipline, rules and other values are learned and teachers are regarded as being in loco parentis. Even today, many parents allow teachers to use corporal punishment as a painful but effective means of learning: "*la letra con sangre entra*" (letters are learnt with blood).

Teachers have also developed authority with government support, both by preventing parents from intervening in school matters (something that was amended by the ANMEB) and by creating programmes such as SEP's scholarships scheme for children whose academic performance is outstanding. In this way, politics and the educational system have been closely linked since the 30s when the institutional period in Mexico reinforced the bonds between teachers and the government.

In sum, with the popular belief that "school is like a second home", and with the representative role that teachers have assumed in the community, and their legal and political status, the authority of teachers is still considerable. However, in order to secure a proper allocation of funds, Children of Solidarity had to curb teachers' authority by allowing the community to take decisions that had traditionally been the teachers' prerogative. Although community participation helped the implementation of the programme, the limiting of the teachers' role discouraged their collaboration.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLING

Community participation acquired significance in the educational policy of the Salinas government. In 1988 when Salinas took office, one of his aims was to achieve community participation in education. For him, education as well as many other areas of public action should be considered as a joint responsibility between society and government. Previous to the ANMEB of 1992, when the system opened itself to more participation and criticism, educational policy had been controlled by bureaucratic actors.

Before the changes made to the General Law of Education, parents' intervention in educational matters other than through the official channels, such as the Parents Association (*Sociedad de Padres de Familia*) was considered as an administrative offence. The educational system worked as a closed system where, teachers and authorities, not only made decisions in a highly discretionary way but also reproduced patronage-oriented relationships inside this sector.

The lack of community involvement is relevant to previous educational developments and explains early leaving in primary education. According to Martin (1994, p. 5-6) by excluding parents from educational activities, a substantial means of preventing children from leaving primary school or improving their academic performance was being unused. This author argues that relationships, are the most important influence on academic performance in school.

This chapter follows Martin's (1994, p. 6) argument which considers that 'the immediate cause of school failure in primary school is the corrosion of the

relation between teachers and parents; thus the final expression of such failure, drop-out, occurs when all relations between parents and teachers over the child have collapsed-when negotiations have broken down.' That is why community participation became an important element for the achievement of the objectives of the programme. For the designers of Children of Solidarity, community participation was a means through which the quality of education could be improved. According to officials of the programme, the main objective of Children of Solidarity was to raise the consciousness of the community of educational matters, and the only way to do this was by opening up opportunities for community participation in the system. 'This is not a programme of coverage; we are not trying to deliver as many scholarships as possible, but on the contrary, this is a programme of impact. We believe that only by involving community in every day problems of schools, not only an improvement in the quality of education will be achieved, but also this will help to retain children at school.'³

It is true that poverty is a determining factor in a family's decision to take their children out of school, but the most important effect of poverty is that it consumes all the family's energies in an attempt to secure a minimum standard of living. Consequently, the whole responsibility of children's learning is left to the teachers.

³Interview with Lic. Becerra, S., Former Director of Regional Operations. Children of Solidarity Programme, August 3, 1994 (SEDESOL Central Offices, Mexico, D.F.).

THE CHILDREN OF SOLIDARITY PROGRAMME

OBJECTIVES AND GUIDELINES OF THE PROGRAMME

The declared objectives of the programme were: to increase the degree of certification at primary school, mainly by attacking the main causes of early leaving, and to improve living conditions for children with the provision of medical care and nutritional support.

The rationale behind the programme was that by redirecting families' attention away from everyday concerns, they could spend more time supporting their children and helping them to succeed in school, and consequently, decreasing the rate of early leaving. Although the economic incentive was effective in keeping children in school, the extra parental attention rarely occurred. Not only were many children left alone but also they were burdened with the need to achieve well enough to maintain the income from the programme.

For selected children the programme offered four family benefits: a monthly grant for a period of 12 months or for as long as the scholarship is in effect, equal to approximately US \$16.00. The NSP-UNICEF (1994, p. 11) study has calculated that this represented an average increase of 45 percent in the family income. The children also receive a package delivered monthly by CONASUPO-DICONSA⁴. This package is made up of cooking oil, pasta soup, sugar, corn flour, sardines,

⁴DICONSA is a distribution agency of the National Subsidised Staple Products Company (CONASUPO) which subsidises with public funds some products considered to be basic for family consumption.

powdered milk, rice, beans and gelatine. The children were provided with monthly medical care and nutritional supervision, and finally, the programme included the promotion of recreational activities for the benefit of the community.

The programme was offered only in public primary schools which offer the six grades⁵ and which were located in highly marginalised zones. They must already have formed a Solidarity Committee, and or have participated earlier in the Solidarity Programme for an Adequate School (*Escuela Digna*).⁶

In each state, the participating schools are jointly selected by the state branch of federal SEDESOL, SEP and state officials according to the level of marginality and poverty, geographical isolation and where early leaving has been identified as a major problem. In some states informal procedures give municipal authorities the prerogative to submit to the state officials a list of schools that they consider to be eligible for the programme. Children of Solidarity worked as a cash-limited programme rather than an entitlement programme. The rationale then allows only a limited number of schools in each state to participate rather than all who meet given criteria or need. Because of budget restrictions, the selection process is important.

⁵This is surprising since many rural schools offer less than 6 grades and are poorer than the others. The programme declared itself in support of the poorest!

⁶Its objective is to support the renovation and maintenance of the educational campuses. The programme include the participation of teachers, parents, students, school authorities and civil associations, aimed at preserving the educational real state.

The programme is jointly financed with federal and state funds. The formula varies according to the economic situation of each state, but generally 75 percent is federal and 25 percent is state funds. Originally, the programme allocated a maximum of 24 and a minimum of 12 scholarships to each selected school, equally distributed among the first three levels, with only one per family. However, the rule was changed during the implementation of the programme and the scholarships were granted up to the sixth grade of primary school and in some schools the number of scholarships was also increased.

OPERATION OF THE PROGRAMME

Jurisdiction

Children of Solidarity is under the direct control of federal SEDESOL. The Children of Solidarity programme co-ordinates, supports and liaises with federal institutions involved in the programme, such as the National Subsidised Staple Products Company-CONASUPO and its distribution agency DICONSA, which provides and distributes the complement of basic family supplies. The programme also co-ordinates with health sector agencies such as the Mexican Social Security Institute-IMSS, the Department of Health-SSA, the Social Security Institute for State Workers-ISSSTE, the National System for the Integral Development of the Family-DIF, and with medical state agencies. Their role is to take care of the nutritional-health area of the programme. SEDESOL and SEP jointly implement the civic ceremonials which are intended to reinforce the programme in schools. Finally, control and vigilance over the use of funds is secured by the General

Comptrollership of the Federation-SECOGEF which provides the training for the Solidarity Committees.

The programme was completely managed by federal SEDESOL and not by SEP, something that caused jurisdictional and territorial problems with local bureaucrats and which affected the implementation of the programme.

Actors in the programme

Children of Solidarity includes a large number of actors in its implementation. Firstly, federal SEDESOL, its state branches at the state level and solidarity promoters. SEDESOL and its state branches have significant influence in the selection of schools, in conjunction with state governments. Jointly they manage the whole programme and make sure that the rules are followed at the municipal level. Solidarity promoters, acted at the community level and had the responsibility of introducing the programme in each school and verifying that it worked according to the rules. Solidarity promoters were mainly selected from university students who must do community work as part of their degrees or social service (*servicio social*). They received payment from SEDESOL and had to introduce and assist the Solidarity Committees with the operation and follow-up of the programme. Solidarity promoters were trained by SEDESOL and SECOGEF in the activities of the programme. They were expected to know the objectives, strategies, policies and procedures of the programme. Their responsibility was to keep the Solidarity Committees informed of every major topic related to the programme.

The programme also required the collaboration of federal, health and distribution agencies to give medical attention to the children selected as well as to prepare and distribute the family package supplies. SEP promoted the civic activities related to the programme, and SECOGEF monitored the efficient and honest use of resources.

The State Department of Social Development or State SEDESOL, the Planning Committee for State Development-COPLADE and a sub-committee especially constituted to deal with the programme at the state level, were the main agencies involved in the implementation of the programme at the state level. Although the COPLADE decided which schools participated in the programme, its decisions were sometimes influenced by the state branches of federal SEDESOL if the selection was not made following the criteria set down by the programme.

At the municipal level the main actors of the programme were mayors, municipal treasurers and the municipal authorities directly related to solidarity actions. They could sometimes propose the participating schools, they administered the scholarships and collaborated in the delivery of the family package supplies. Finally, at the community level head teachers, teachers, Solidarity Committees, parents, and children were the main actors in the programme. Their role was essential because the most important part of the decision-making process took place at this level.

The perspectives of these actors and the complications which those conflicting perspectives brought to the programme are an important part of the discussion of the implementation process.

Allocation of funds

In Campeche the allocation of federal funds for the programme was made in two instalments (Jan/Aug. and Sept./Dec.) through a bank deposit into an account on behalf of the governor who is the general co-ordinator of COPLADE. The account was jointly managed with the representative of federal SEDESOL, who endorsed cheques to the mayors for the equivalent of four months of scholarships to allow them to pay the scholarships on time. Although this never caused open confrontation between the governor and the representative of federal SEDESOL, it was certainly a source of tension because the governor's priorities were not always the same as those of the programme.

The mayors and municipal treasurers opened a joint bank account to manage the funds received, which could not be used for any other purpose than the scholarships. According to the programme's regulations, mayors had to pay the scholarships during the first ten days of each month and ensure that the supplies package was delivered on time.

Selection process

There were four criteria: firstly, the child had to be enrolled in and to regularly attend a public primary school; secondly, s/he had to be selected from the children

of the first three grades; thirdly, children had to belong to a poor family, and finally, s/he should be willing to collaborate and participate at school. In order to keep a scholarship children had to reach and sustain a general academic average of eight out of ten and they had to participate in school and community activities.

Children decided who of their classmates will receive a scholarship. Although this aimed to secure a more accurate selection of children, it also caused a negative disposition among teachers who have traditionally exercised this privilege and who treated the programme with contempt. This has diminished their willingness to co-operate in its implementation. 'The selection made by the children is not always the proper one. In the first selection the children were wrong and now the teacher, the head master and the members of the community make the selection. That is why I think that the teachers should participate more in the selection process'.⁷

The process followed three main stages: first, solidarity promoters arranged a visit to the selected primary school and called for a general meeting of parents to introduce the programme, its objectives, rules, procedures, and the duties they would accomplish under the programme. Required community responsibilities included those of verifying that payments and the package of family supplies were delivered on time; ensuring that the selected children regularly attended school; follow up jointly with doctors the nutritional status of the children, and in general,

⁷ Interview with teacher of Primary School, November 7, 1994 (Villa Madero, Municipality of Champotón, Campeche).

confirm that the scholarship was spent properly. Nevertheless, according to a public official of the programme, there are certain communities that consider that the introduction of the programme would cause divisions among them and they may decide not to participate in the programme. In this case, solidarity officials must minute this and explain the reasons for community rejection. The minutes should be signed by members of this community.⁸

Second, the selection process started with the so-called "special day". By using pedagogical tools, the solidarity promoters tried to gain the children's confidence, by playing a game with them. Once they had captured the children's attention and confidence, the second stage prepared children to make a selection from their classmates. During this stage solidarity promoters tried to familiarise children with the values of solidarity by using fairy tales with a topic strongly related to the main purpose of the programme. Once the children's confidence was gained, they moved to the third stage. During this phase children were told about the scholarship and its purpose and asked to choose some of their classmates who they considered needed help. This phase ended with a preliminary list of candidates for the scholarship.

After the preliminary selection had taken place, the next step was the validation process where parents, teachers and members of the Solidarity Committee, agreed the selection or discussed changes. One of the main problems

⁸ Interview with Lic. Becerra, S., Former Director of Regional Operations. Children of Solidarity Programme, August 3, 1994 (SEDESOL Central Offices, Mexico, D.F.).

when children decide who is to receive the scholarship, is that their decisions are not necessarily accurate enough to guarantee a proper allocation of funds. Their idea of poverty is not necessarily coincident with that of the programme, teachers or families in the community. Very frequently ethical or moral considerations were used by the community to deny a scholarship to a child. There have been cases where a scholarship has been denied on the grounds that the mother of a selected child is a prostitute or a single mother. However according to a public official of the programme, children are accurate in ninety percent of the cases.⁹

After the validation, the Solidarity Committee made a formal proposal, certified by the head teacher. This was submitted to the Mayor who in turn submitted it to the state branch of federal SEDESOL. From here final validation was sought from COPLADE.

Each year, the re-allocation of scholarships followed the same guidelines used in the selection process. However, additional factors were taken into account, including the child's performance. These criteria were quite flexible and the community could decide that despite a poor academic performance, the scholarship should remain with the child. However, in highly isolated areas where poverty is a generalised problem, there may be no second chance.

⁹ Idem.

Family's basic supply package

The basic supply package was provided by the CONASUPO-DICONSA system and it had to be delivered together with the payment. According to the rules of the programme, the state branch of federal SEDESOL gave to the representatives of DICONSA the list of selected schools in each municipality and locality to facilitate the delivery of the family supplies each month (SEDESOL 1993b, p. 13). Their distribution was limited to the existing routes of this agency. However, in order to offer a better coverage in isolated communities DICONSA instructed its regional offices that the distribution route could be altered by up to 50 kilometres from the main route.

Medical attention

Medical care was delivered by the Department of Health-SSA, the IMSS, the ISSSTE, and the DIF, through their medical services in the clinics and hospitals closest to each school. This care consisted of a three monthly check to chart growth and development; an updating of the vaccination record; regular eye tests; dental examination; posture checks and specialised medical attention when needed. The clinic also had to offer practical help with nutrition and hygiene (SEDESOL 1993a, p. 55).

The benefits of the programme came as a package and therefore scholarship holders got health care even though they had no health problems. However, the programme aimed to help those children whose conditions were extremely serious and for whom even the constitutional entitlement to health is not

enough, either because of problems of accessibility or because a curative rather than preventative approach was adopted. The health component of Children of Solidarity aimed to force parents to take their children to the doctor on a regular basis and not only if a child is ill. Children who are not sponsored by the programme are entitled to medical attention in any of the institutions of the health sector. The problem is that they never attend because of economic, geographical and even cultural problems of accessibility. For example, for many indigenous and rural communities a healer (*curandero*) frequently enjoys more credibility than general practitioners.

Reciprocal community activities

The Department of Public Education-SEP supports the work of the Children of Solidarity committees and promotes activities that reinforce the programme at the community level. However the field work revealed that such activities were more fictitious than real. In fact they played only a formal role in the whole process and merely served to compensate for the exclusion of SEP from the main decision-making process of the programme. In fact, by allowing the community to take the core decisions of the programme, the strategy accomplished two objectives. Firstly, since the demand was greater than the resources, by letting the community allocate the scholarships the government transferred its responsibility to the community. Secondly, community decision making curbed the power formerly exercised by the teachers and the authorities and ensured that the resources were managed according to the programme criteria. In sum, the minor role assigned to the SEP

was not accidental but a means of bypassing the bureaucratic structures that have permeated public service in the country and which had made it increasingly difficult to reach target populations.

Securing programme implementation

The last component of Children of Solidarity was the activities of control involved in the programme. According to Children of Solidarity's officials, the organised participation of the community was important in keeping the bureaucracy in check. The skills required to promote the operation of the school committee to support and respect community decisions; to make sure that the assigned resources are provided promptly, with clarity, honesty and efficiency, and to perform the services effectively (SEDESOL 1993a, p. 55), were provided by the SECOGEF which trained the members of the Solidarity Committees and helped them to fulfil their role.

The analysis of the process of implementation will reveal the extent to which the intentions of the programme were achieved.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND THEORY

CENTRALISATION AND DECENTRALISATION

One of the central topics on the agenda of the PRONASOL was the moving of decisions and actions away from federal government. In practice, the programme did not transfer important decisions to the state or local government. A complex distribution of roles and decisions generated a rather contradictory mix of trends

between centralisation and decentralisation. Examples of remaining centralisation can be seen in the funding and selection process for the programme.

The role of the municipalities was limited to administering scholarships and co-ordinating and verifying that the family package supplies were delivered on time, though some municipalities submitted a preliminary list of schools for selection.

After the selection of children, mayors only acted as the official messenger between the community and the state branch of federal SEDESOL which received community proposals. Once the funds were approved, the representative of federal SEDESOL transferred them to the local governments through a bank account. Each federal disbursement aimed to cover four months, so as to allow mayors access to the resources and so as to deliver the monthly payment on time. This allowed governments to gain some credit during the implementation of the programme. Nevertheless, because of the systematic delays in the allocation of funds (mainly because the 25 percent from the state, was not available on time), potential political credit was transformed into a widespread popular belief that the funds were used for different purposes.

Important decisions about funding and selection were taken away from the state and municipal levels of government and became the direct responsibility of the federation. This generated jurisdictional and political conflicts between the federation and the states and reflected a more politicised style of decision-making

of state officials on the one hand, and a firm interpretation of the principles of the programme by the state branches of federal SEDESOL on the other.

Another element that highlighted the centralised character of the programme was the way in which the funds were managed. Although federal funds could be jointly managed by the state governor and the representative of federal SEDESOL, it was the latter who actually exerted more control over the process. He had the prerogative to receive proposals directly from the community and simply submit them for formal validation to COPLADE. Most importantly, he could endorse cheques to municipal governments. This was possible because of the funding formula of the programme, that is, 75 percent of federal funds and 25 percent of state funds. This gave the federation effective control over its resources.

The lack of availability of resources on time, is the third element that reflects the centralised structure of the programme. Delays in the allocation of resources at the municipal level were common because the state contribution to the funds of the programme was not always available. Communities and mayors argued that the delay in the delivery of the scholarships was due to the state's delay in the allocation of funds and at the state level, they argued that such delay was a result of federal delay. 'Sometimes the state and the federation face financial problems and they cannot always secure the allocation of funds when necessary. Therefore, mayors depend entirely on state and federal resources which transform

municipal governments into mere official intermediaries between the federal agency and the community.¹⁰

Conversely, when the resources arrived on time mayors could reinforce their position in the community. Some of them visited their communities and schools, delivering the benefits and transforming the process into a political opportunity. Others, set a delivery point where certain communities could receive the funds every four months, since geographical isolation made it very difficult for them to travel to the main cities of the county. However, delays turned these possibilities into pressures.

But delays may also have introduced important distortions to the goals of the programme. Three months was the average delay in paying for the scholarships. By the end of November 1994, most of the Solidarity Committees in the state of Campeche had not received funds since September. Because of this, one of the main criticisms of the programme is that it has reinforced certain behaviours that reproduce poverty. It was argued that subsidising family income through the scholarship would not necessarily improve the economic situation of children or even the family, mainly because once the money is added to family income, consumption preferences and cultural patterns will determine its use. Some families used the money to buy radios, television sets, to pay debts or even to buy alcohol. In some cases when the delay was at the beginning of the school term, the

¹⁰Interview with Lic. Costilla, I., Former Head of the State Department of Social Development-SEDESOL, September 14, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

acquisition of uniforms, shoes and materials was not possible. Therefore, sometimes the funds neither reached the target group nor solved problems of early leaving. The situation was aggravated when families suffered a delay of three or more months. This reinforced the tendency to use the funds for other purposes other than those intended by the programme.

In sum, the subordinate role of states and municipalities in the decision making process, the way funds were managed and their composition (75 percent federal and 25 percent from the state) as well as the federal control of those resources which usually translated in continuous delays in their allocation, all reinforced the idea of a centralised programme.

But while it may seem that the decentralised ethos of PRONASOL was more formal than real, there is still the other core decision to be considered, that is, the selection of children. This was a community prerogative. While it may appear that the goals of decentralisation are merely discursive because of the role the federation has assigned to states and municipalities in the programme, a significant degree of decentralisation was nevertheless achieved by allowing the community to participate in the decision-making process at the expense of bureaucratic actors. It can be argued that the possibilities for more decentralisation depend on the states' capacity to implement federal programmes in the way intended. Children of Solidarity has also given states and municipalities a role in the decision-making process by inviting them to select the schools which will benefit from the programme. Although such selection is supervised by the delegates of SEDESOL,

this is only the case when the selection of schools has been made using other criteria than the ones established by the programme. In other words, the possibilities of a greater decentralisation depend on the state's ability to follow the guidelines of the programme and reduce the amount of discretion in the selection of schools.

Whether the programme reinforced centralisation or it represented an effort towards decentralisation is debatable. On the one hand, by displacing states and municipalities from the fundamental decisions of the programme and by centralising them in the federation, not only is a centralised structure reinforced, but also this clearly militates against the supposedly federalist structure on which the Mexican political system is based. On the other hand, defenders of the programme, would argue that in the short term this certainly results in the reinforcement of the centralist structure of the Mexican political system, but they would also argue that this strategy was essential because the aims of the programme were the reinforcement of community participation in the provision of certain services. Furthermore, the design of the PRONASOL was based on the assumption that by following the traditional channels for the provision of services, many deviations would occur on the way from the federal to the community level. The federal intention was jaded when it reached the community and as a result, the effectiveness of the policy was diminished. Therefore, although it would be reasonable to object to the exclusion of state governments, because it undermines the principles of a federal structure, it is also true that to stimulate community

involvement in public actions, some of the state and local interests had to be cut out. This was only be possible by a combination of federal action at the top and community action at the bottom.

The centralisation used by Children of Solidarity seems to be the only viable pattern in the short term. The de facto power that the representatives of federal SEDESOL had in the whole process, was not intended to alter the federal system in the country, but instead to ensure that the objectives of the programme were met and to eliminate possible deviations that could arise during the implementation process. The programme was designed to eliminate discretionary decisions that have permeated the implementation of public policies in the past. Therefore, the representatives of SEDESOL frequently acted as a counterbalance to mitigate the possibility of discretionary decisions of the governor or state bureaucracy.

However, the power of SEDESOL's federal representatives varies according to the particular sub-programme of PRONASOL. According to an official of state SEDESOL, there were some programmes whose budgetary composition made them more politically sensitive than others. 'When federal funding is comparatively larger than the participation of the state, the programmes are managed more under federal than state terms. Children of Solidarity is such a

case. The state branch of federal SEDESOL manages and controls the programme here in Campeche because it participates with 75 percent of programme's funds.¹¹

In sum, the programme was administered in a way in which objectives were set centrally although community participation of a subordinate sort was developed at the grassroots level. Although Children of Solidarity had some features of centralisation, local participation and genuine popular support and involvement were obtained.

INTERORGANISATIONAL PROBLEMS

One of the most notorious problems during the implementation of the programme was the lack of collaboration of some of the federal agencies which participated in Children of Solidarity. Considering their number (four from the health sector, one in charge of the family package supplies, the Department of Public Education, one in charge of all the Comptrollership activities and finally SEDESOL) it is tempting to say that this was almost predictable. It was difficult enough to co-ordinate the implementation of the programme in the 31 states of the federation with more than two thousand municipalities. The addition of eight federal agencies (DIF, ISSSTE, IMSS, SSA, CONASUPO, DICONSA, SEDESOL, SEP) complicated the programme, particularly because their collaboration with the programme varied.

¹¹ Interview with Lic. Esquivel Campos, A., Director of Social Organisation in the State Department of Social Development, September 26, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

To a large extent the federal agencies of the health sector were those which showed least collaboration with the programme. Three reasons help to explain this. First, they did not have adequate information about the programme. Second, there were recurrent problems of jurisdiction and territory, and third, these agencies did not perceive any positive incentive in participating in the programme.

Lack of information, was perhaps the most important factor affecting the implementation of the programme. According to the NSP-UNICEF (1994, p. 25) study, only 41 percent of the medical personnel of the sample on which the study was based, understood their responsibilities. Practitioners at the community level, did not know for example, that a dossier should be opened on each child; that medical attention, preventative, curative or rehabilitative, should be provided free of charge; nor that children should attend the clinic monthly. Only 25 percent of the sample knew that they should refer the child for specialist attention if necessary.

Problems of jurisdiction in medical attention can be explained partly by the structure of the health service. The Mexican health service is made up of several agencies each one covering particular social groups, e.g., the armed forces, civil servants, and blue collar workers (see Mesa-Lago 1991). Because of this, it was common for some doctors to deny medical attention, arguing that a child was not entitled to receive it since the child was not under the coverage group of that particular institution (ISSSTE or IMSS).

The rules of the programme were intended to assist any of the Children of Solidarity in the nearest health centre, independently of whether s/he was entitled to receive medical attention in one of the agencies of the health system, but doctors did not know this. When medical attention was provided it was limited to a superficial examination of the child.

Since the programme did not offer any kind of incentive to health workers but only more work, it was difficult to gain their co-operation. The political credit of the programme went to the federation or to the states and municipalities.¹²

Because of a lack of information and the exclusion of the Department of Public Education-SEP and associated agencies from the core of the programme, these organisations collaborated with the programme to very different degrees. 56 percent of the teachers did not inform the Solidarity Committee about the progress made by the selected children either through ignorance of the requirement or because they were not asked. Some did not consider it their responsibility and some did not know how to contact the Solidarity Committee. (National Solidarity Programme-UNICEF 1994, p. 16). The exclusion of teachers from the implementation process was responsible for the lack of knowledge of the

¹²Only DICONSA officials argued that their participation in the programme was not only grounded on the fact that its objectives were related with the objectives of the programme, but also that by participating this would give the change to be inserted in what they considered the most important programme in terms of social policy of the regime. Dr. Cano, S. (1994, September 1) Manager of Operations and Special Programmes of DICONSA, G. MIXCÓATL, Ed. (Mexico, D.F.).

programme. For example, in the municipality of Campeche,¹³ the process of scholarships distribution was handled wholly by solidarity officials, the Solidarity Committee and parents without teacher participation. The solidarity team carried out their meeting at the school without even asking for the permission of the head master.

The teachers' lack of information also distorted the objectives of the programme. The NSP-UNICEF study reports that some teachers believed that high grades were necessary to keep the scholarship and some of them increased the children's grades accordingly. Furthermore, some teachers believed that parents of sponsored children should carry out special activities in the school and forced them to do so. This was particularly the case in the school Lázaro Cárdenas in the municipality of Hopelchén. The head teacher of the school argued that when the school required improvements or collaboration from parents to carry out civic ceremonies, not only were the sponsored children the first to be called, but also their parents. 'Before, they had an excuse not to participate; now because the child is sponsored they do not have any pretext and that is good for the school'.¹⁴

The absence of pay-offs also discouraged teacher collaboration. Teachers were only given an operational role whereas the old SEP scheme of scholarships had relied upon their "natural" leadership as representatives in many community

¹³ Impressions taken during a reassignment of scholarships in the municipality of Campeche, in the school Lázaro Cárdenas. November 15 1994.

¹⁴ Interview with Sr. Rosado, R., Head master of Escuela Lázaro Cárdenas, October 18, 1994 (Municipality of Hopelchén, Campeche).

matters. Children of Solidarity significantly diminished their importance by bestowing on the community the decisions teachers used to make. In the end, this discouraged them from participating in the programme.

By removing the programme from its 'natural administrative environment' (SEP), the possibilities of gaining collaboration from this agency were diminished. 'While we [the education sector] receive the problems, Solidarity receives the credit'.¹⁵ For educational bureaucrats the operation of Children of Solidarity was imposed on them and yet it was under the control of SEDESOL. This was perceived as an intrusion into their natural jurisdiction and territory.

Solidarity officials however believed that the displacement of teachers, education authorities and local authorities from the selection process, would not only improve its targeting, but would also open opportunities for community mobilisation in the sector which at the same time would curb the professional power that education bureaucrats exerted. The officials believed that the targeting of the selection process could be improved if children and parents were involved in it. Therefore, in order to remove patronage-oriented allocation and to adhere to the criteria of the programme, the teachers' displacement seemed necessary. But by excluding the teachers from the selection process, the programme lost not only an important source of experience, but also support for the many activities that accompanied the implementation of Children of Solidarity.

¹⁵ Interview with Ojeda Macossay, M. C., Chief of the State Department of Education, Culture and Sports of Campeche, September 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

Of all the federal agencies involved in the implementation of the programme, one stands out because of its collaboration. DICONSA, the agency in charge of the preparation and delivery of the family supplies package, performed relatively well. Proper information and pay-offs were essential. According to the NSP-UNICEF study (1994, p. 24), the information received by the operators of DICONSA was sufficient and precise. They received booklets and verbal instructions and even promotional videos of the programme in some of the regional offices in the states ensuring that all the operators of the programme knew the content of the package. DICONSA operated under commercial principles since the family supplies package represented not only more work for the agency but also more income from increased sales. DICONSA needed prompt payment for sales in order to maintain its stock of products. Initially there were problems because DICONSA acquired large stocks of products for the programme by redirecting resources from its working capital. SEDESOL reimbursed the agency in a matter of days. DICONSA wished to collaborate because Children of Solidarity was one of the most important of the social policy programmes. It may also be relevant that for a period of time, the head of this agency was the president's brother.¹⁶

The problems DICONSA encountered were with communications, infrastructure and the existing distribution network of the company. Most of the time the distribution of supplies used existing routes for the normal distribution of

¹⁶Interview with Dr. Cano, S., Manager of Operations and Special Programmes of DICONSA, September 1, 1994 (Mexico, D.F.).

goods. On occasions, this lent itself to corrupt practices from intermediaries who offered their services to transport supplies beyond the existing routes to the localities. The Manager of Operations and Special programmes argued that if corrupt practices existed during the distribution of the packages, DICONSA ought not to be blamed, but rather, the community. 'Most of the lorry drivers of DICONSA are members of the community who receive a salary from the profits of the community stores which are also managed by members of the community'.¹⁷ It was also a common practice for the parents of sponsored children to be asked to contribute to the cost of transporting the packages. For example, in the community of Dzacabchén in the municipality of Hopelchén, the Solidarity Committee charged each sponsored child ten or fifteen new pesos for collecting a package from the nearest distribution centre.

DICONSA modified its normal operations for the delivery of the family packages because these required individual packaging rather than the bulk packaging which DICONSA normally used. It took sometime to perfect the new packaging so that the goods arrived in good condition.

In sum, the federal agencies involved in the implementation of Children of Solidarity showed different degrees of commitment and effectiveness. While the health and educational sector were rather ineffective and less committed to collaboration with the programme, DICONSA performed better. This contrast is

¹⁷Idem

interesting because more conflict from state and municipal governments might have been expected since this federal programme represented a direct intrusion into the state jurisdiction and territory. The minor role allocated to states and municipalities might have caused difficulty but there was the opportunity for them to gain politically while, some of the federal agencies perceived no positive pay-off for their collaboration. For some of them, the programme meant the invasion of jealously preserved territory and jurisdiction.

The predominant role of SEDESOL in the design and implementation of Children of Solidarity, also implied hierarchical relationships that militated against the collaboration required by the programme. Conversely, the relationship between SEDESOL and DICONSA was peculiar because their co-ordination was not based on a hierarchical relationship, but on co-operation and made possible because of the mutual benefit both agencies gained by participating in the programme; SEDESOL achieving their objectives and DICONSA increasing their sales. 'DICONSA is a system of distributing companies made up of sixteen subsidiary firms and all of them have been benefited in terms of sales of the family supplies packages of the Children of Solidarity programme. We are talking about 500,000 packages per month, something that has given DICONSA not only the image of a profitable trade company, but also one with social commitment because through its distribution mechanisms it is helping the people of the programme'.¹⁸

¹⁸Idem.

The failure of the programme to generate a pay-off for health and education reduced the collaboration of these agencies and hence the effectiveness of the programme to some extent. However the programme succeeded in its main objective-the involvement of the community and a change in the balance of power. The shortcomings of the health and education agencies and the civic activities programme did not detract from the impact of the programme and its transformation of popular attitudes of public services as a whole. In so far as individual component fell short of requirements this reflected a failure of the federal agencies to adjust procedures to the requirements of the programme.

THE COMPLEXITY OF JOINT ACTION AND CLEARANCE POINTS

In comparison with FOMUN or FONAES, Children of Solidarity involved a large number of participants and more complex implementation (see Table 4).

The leading actors (defined either in terms of their contribution to the design of the programme; their influence in the decision making process or by their role in the implementation of the programme) of the programme were, federal SEDESOL and its state branches in each state, and the Solidarity Committees along with the children in primary schools. These exerted the most influence in decision making and implementation. The auxiliary actors (defined as such because their contribution to the design of the programme, their role in decision making and in the implementation process was less important) were the other federal agencies involved in the process of implementation (SSA, IMSS, ISSSTE, DIF, DICONSA and SEP).

The obstacles to effective collaboration resulted from the different perspectives of the agencies, both vertically from federal to municipal and horizontally between agencies at the same level. Each varied in their sense of urgency, degree of scepticism, and wish to preserve their own benefits.

The lack of effective collaboration resulted in the delay in the allocation or the availability of economic resources, on average for three months. This was true in all the schools visited during the field work. For example, at *Villa Madero* in the municipality of Champotón, it was not until mid November that the scholarships due in August were paid and again the last four months of 1993 were not paid for until January 1994.¹⁹ Most of the time the delays were related to the procedure through which the funds were allocated to each state on a twice yearly basis, Sept.-Dec. and Jan-Apr.²⁰ Payment depended on the approval by the Chamber of Deputies, who generally meet during the last two weeks of December. Therefore, the delays are not related to the number of actors and the way they perform in the programme but rather to the budgetary structure of the country.

The inclusion of the community also increased implementation complexity. In some communities, popular participation proved to be more of a problem than a solution. Cultural and ethnic issues were at the root of this. In one of the localities of the municipality at Hopelchén, most of their inhabitants came from twenty three

¹⁹ Interview with teacher of Primary School, November 7, 1994 (Villa Madero, Municipality of Champotón, Campeche).

²⁰ Interview with Lic. Arán, G., Former State Co-ordinator of the Children of Solidarity Programme of the State Branch of Federal SEDESOL, October 13, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

states of the country. This heterogeneity made it difficult to generate popular mobilisation because some of the groups had previous experience of participation while others had not, and therefore it was hard to generate agreements between them.²¹

Implementation however, did not fail because of the clearance points that the programme set down. By including the community in the implementation of the programme, new actors and clearance points were created, giving the community a significant role in the implementation process. Children of Solidarity's most significant attribute was that the children and the community made fundamental decisions in its implementation. The community also participated in the monitoring and managing of the programme's resources. There were cases for example, where a sponsored child did not receive the scholarship because his father was an alcoholic or the money was for the wrong purpose. Although this was rare, the Solidarity Committee was able to manage the scholarship directly without reference to the child's parents. However, most of the time, the members of the Solidarity Committees did not want to interfere in what they considered to be a private matter or they did not know how to cancel a scholarship without creating problems inside the community.²² Nevertheless, the range of decisions which the

²¹ Interview with Lic. Chávez, J., Secretary General of the Municipal Council of Hopelchén, October 17, 1994 (Municipality of Hopelchén, Campeche).

²² Interview with Sr. Canul Cobo, E., Member of the Children of Solidarity Committee, November 4, 1994 (Ejido Kilómetro 36, Municipality of Escárcega, Campeche).

community could make was extensive and this gave it a significant authority and influence in the programme.

According to the NSP-UNICEF study (1994, p. 16), in 90 percent of the schools where the programme was implemented, the selection process was carried out according to programme's regulation. Although politically productive, ethical considerations sometimes interfered with the original criteria. For example, children's decisions were always endorsed by their parents and the Solidarity Committee. In some cases, a child whose mother was a prostitute or a single mother was awarded a scholarship but then the community reversed the children's decision to grant the scholarship. In these cases Solidarity officials tried to convince the community that the children's proposal for the allocation of a scholarship should be accepted. However, if the community persisted with the idea then the decision was respected, on the grounds that the programme must respect community values and forms of organisation. Despite this, the programme was generally successful in introducing this procedure and in transferring key decisions to the children and the community.

Another two major clearance points were COPLADE and the delegate of SEDESOL. Once the selection and validation processes were over, COPLADE had to validate the scholarship proposals. There was no significant evidence that community proposals were rejected by this agency. Before the community proposal is submitted to COPLADE, it had already been validated by the representative of federal SEDESOL in the state.

In sum, the complexity of programme's implementation was increased not only because of its inability to solve problems either of territory and jurisdiction, or because it could not offer the sufficient incentives to gain collaboration as discussed earlier, but also because the programme was tied to the budgetary structure of the country, and as a result, delays generally affected the payment of the scholarships.

Despite this, the implementation of the programme showed that when the leading actors influence the design, the decision-making process and the implementation of the programme, it is more likely to succeed. Children of Solidarity, shows that by combining federal and community actors as leaders, it was possible to produce effective implementation. Successful implementation was also achieved because of the clearance points defined by the programme. It is clear that despite the large number of actors and the complexity of programme's implementation, it was successfully implemented.

Table 4. Participants and Perspectives of Children of Solidarity

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Connection with Programme</i>	<i>Perspective and Major Objectives</i>	<i>Sense of Urgency</i>
Federal Department of Social Development (SEDESOL)	Designed the programme in accordance with a Presidential Mandate.	The programme will support children at primary school of low income families to prevent them from leaving school.	Very High.
State Branch of SEDESOL.	Promotes the programme all over the country in primary schools and select a group of schools to be benefited by the programme.	The programme is of the greatest importance in producing a better quality of education by means of community involvement in education matters. The programme is not a <i>coverage</i> one, but primarily oriented to produce an <i>impact</i> on the quality of education by means of community participation.	Very High.
State Department of Social Development (State SEDESOL).	Collaborate jointly with the Federal Delegation of SEDESOL, for the funding and implementation of the	Share in full the objectives and perspective of federal SEDESOL.	High.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Connection with Programme</i>	<i>Perspective and Major Objectives</i>	<i>Sense of Urgency</i>
	programme.		
Mayors and municipal authorities.	Propose a primary group of schools to benefit from the programme and to pay on a monthly basis the scholarships, as well as to follow up the implementation of the programme.	Regard the programme as an additional source of economic resources as well as a possibility for political credit among their constituencies, but they share the objectives of the programme.	High.
Federal Agencies of the National Health System (IMSS, SSA, ISSSTE, DIF)	To provide medical care when needed and offer monthly clinic examinations to the children selected by the programme.	The programme was just a presidential initiative to be supported, and that would only increase their load of work.	Moderate (some problems regarding territory and jurisdiction as well as lack of identification with the programme).
Department of Public Education-SEP.	Collaborate in the promotion of civic activities among the schools selected to reinforce positive attitudes towards the programme and produce a better impact.	An additional programme of scholarships similar to that managed for this Department for a long time. The objective was to support a Presidential Initiative.	Moderate (some problems regarding territory and jurisdiction).
National Subsidised Staple Products Company-CONASUPO, mainly through its Distribution Agency-DICONSA.	Provision of the family supplies package.	An opportunity to be engaged directly with a presidential initiative as well as an additional source of sales for their products.	High (both because it is a presidential initiative, but also because it is part of their rationale to work with high standards of performance).
Solidarity promoters.	To introduce the programme in the selected schools and to give all sort of information about the programme to educational authorities and the community.	Varied according to each promoter.	Varied according to each promoter.
Children of the first three grades of primary schools.	To make a primary election of their classmates to be benefited with the programme.	To help some of their classmates that they consider to be poor.	None.
Teachers and head masters.	Validate children's' primary selection of classmates and follow up and report performance of those selected.	Confused image of the programme and to sustain their leadership position in community.	Moderate in general, but it varied according to each teacher.
Solidarity Committee and Parents.	Definitive validation of the selection of children, jointly made with Teachers, Deans and Solidarity Promoters.	The programme supports poor children so they can finish primary school. The objective for them is to allocate these scholarships to those children who are more vulnerable in economic terms.	Very High.
Children of Solidarity Sub-Committee inside the COPLADE.	Operative group which includes all the state and federal agencies involved in the implementation of the programme.	To facilitate the implementation of the programme by means of periodical meetings to solve "bottle-necks".	Varied, according to the problems the programme face.

STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

It is evident that the programme was effectively able to sideline teachers' influence in the implementation process. Considering the authority and powerful position teachers still have at the base of the pyramid, it is surprising that a programme like this openly ignored them during the selection of children. Following Lipsky's (1976) arguments, it is rather surprising that the programme did not cause more problems. Such displacement may however cause serious problems in the long term because teachers' participation is as important as that of parents.

The teachers did not behave passively. During the first stages of the programme, they tried to have their stake in it.²³ Teachers criticised the programme on the grounds that the children would not be able to make a proper selection of their classmates. When the solidarity promoters introduced the programme in the schools it was not surprising to find that the teacher already had a list of the children who should benefit from the scholarships. At the beginning of the programme in Campeche, the former Secretary of the Department of Public Education in the state objected to the programme because it was not under his jurisdiction. Some other teachers complained that they were merely used to sign the reports that had to be submitted to the SEDESOL field offices.²⁴ Furthermore, teachers' reaction to the role they had in the programme was even more adverse in

²³ Interview with Lic. Arán, G., Former State Co-ordinator of the Children of Solidarity Programme of the State Branch of Federal SEDESOL, October 13, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

²⁴ *Idem.*

rural areas. In rural schools teachers reacted with anger to the fact that they could not decide who would receive the scholarship.²⁵

Following Martin's (1994) arguments, both displacement of teachers and parents have a strong impact on the drop-out rates at primary school. In the short term the programme was surprisingly successful in spite of the teachers having been ignored. Therefore, it seems that Lipsky's arguments might be right in the long term, but for the moment, he seems to be wrong, because the programme performed well without taking into account the attitudes of these "street level bureaucrats".

FLEXIBILITY IN IMPLEMENTATION

The programme had to work with a great deal of flexibility to adjust its procedures to different scenarios, for example, in areas with difficult access, where it takes days to reach a major town or city. People from these villages only come down from the mountains a few times a year to obtain supplies and exchange goods or as with the programme, to receive every three months a scholarship payment. One of the most significant elements of the programme was its flexibility in adapting to local conditions.

One of the guidelines of the programme is that the payment of the scholarship must be on a monthly basis. However, for some municipalities in the

²⁵Interview with Balán Chan, E. de la Cruz, Co-ordinator of the Children of Solidarity Programme in the Municipality of Hopelchén, Campeche, October 17, 1994 (Hopelchén, Campeche).

country, geographical conditions make it extremely difficult to pay according to the norm. Some communities are isolated areas where communications are not good and where travelling from their homes to the city council may take three days. Under these circumstances, some Solidarity Committees and mayors decided to change the norm and make three monthly payments. It also happened that in some regions money does not have much value since barter is still the traditional practice. In some regions the procedures of Solidarity were adjusted to the particular situation. Additionally, where the levels of poverty were generalised, the scholarships and the supply package were shared among the children in that school.

In urban areas the situation is more complex because here it is still possible to find poor children and very poor children. The community cannot validate the selection of children because, in this large population they do not know each other. Under these circumstances, the validation process was carried by visits from members of the Solidarity Committee to decide if the children's proposal could be endorsed. On the other hand, in isolated or indigenous areas, everybody knows one another and there are no such differences between poor and very poor. In such cases, Children of Solidarity distributed the total of resources among all the children and the payment is rotated each month so that every family could benefit from the programme.

In some other situations where community participation did not facilitate the selection process strange methods were adopted. For example, in the locality of *Santa Rita Bacabchén* it was very difficult to organise a general assembly among

parents for the introduction of the programme and the selection of children. The two scholarships that had to be assigned in this group were assigned through a raffle. As a result, one of the scholarships was assigned to a teacher's child and the second one to a family who had an average income.²⁶ In the primary school of *Villa Madero* in the municipality of Champotón the selection process was changed in an effort to adapt the programme to local conditions. In this school the Solidarity Committee, teachers and the head-teacher made the selection of children, arguably because everybody involved believed that teachers should participate more in this stage of the implementation process.²⁷

LOCAL POLITICS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Community participation was one of the main objectives of Children of Solidarity, but it underestimated the influence of traditional political structures at the local level. This became clear at an evaluation workshop with mayors at the National Institute of Solidarity-NIS. One of the participants explained that in his municipality the former mayor had delivered nearly two thousand scholarships using different criteria from those established by the programme. The scholarships had been granted to friends or for political benefit. In addition, the inadequacy of the health component and the complete lack of information about the programme brought a huge number of complaints. When a different municipal administration

²⁶ *Idem.*

²⁷ Interview with teacher of Primary School, November 7, 1994 (Villa Madero, Municipality of Champotón, Campeche).

took office (the one he represented), 1,409 scholarships were reallocated, information was delivered to all the agencies involved in the programme and effective co-ordination with the health agencies was achieved. Since then there have been few complaints.²⁸

The workshop showed that the implementation of the programme at the municipal level is largely dependent on the political discretion of the mayor. Solidarity promoters and members of the Solidarity Committee have a responsibility to report anomalies to the state branch of federal SEDESOL and to act as allies of the federal programme. Nevertheless, for the community and solidarity promoters confronting the mayor has a high cost. If, in addition, no resources are allocated for supervision activities, the detection of these situations is even more difficult.

Local politics also influenced the implementation of the programme through the creation of the Solidarity Committees. The guidelines required that they should be created democratically. However, some were created using the traditional structures of the PRI, mainly in the people's neighbourhoods (*barrios or colonias populares*) in urban zones. Political mobilisation for the PRI in urban areas rests significantly on neighbourhood leaders (*lideres de colonias*) many of whom are women and who are sponsored and supported by the PRI. When committees were formed using these leaders the entire process of reallocation of

²⁸ Interview with Dr. Peña Gastélum, M. E., Secretary of Social Development of the Municipal Council of Guasave, Sinaloa, August 10, 1994 (Mexico, D.F.).

scholarships was corrupt. During the field work it was possible to observe during a re-allocation of scholarships in the primary school *Lázaro Cárdenas* in the city of Campeche,²⁹ how these leaders, acting as presidents of the Solidarity Committee, managed the whole process, controlling the access to information, intimidating adversaries and even establishing personal links with top officials of the programme at the municipal level. These people know most of the parents in the community and control the flow of information before the general meeting occurs. By then, they have already discussed and made a decision about who the recipients of the funds would be, most of the time for their supporters. The voting is then rigged to secure the desired result. The idealistic organisation of the programme did not anticipate circumstances like these thus revealing the limited capabilities of a centrally designed programme.

However, these political considerations are not under the control of the programme. This was another variable that affected the implementation process. Even if the president of the Solidarity Committee was not a member of the PRI or was democratically elected and even if s/he has the support of the programme, it was still very difficult to confront a leadership supported by the traditional political structures of the PRI and the state and municipal government itself. 'Solidarity leadership is constrained by the traditional one previously created'.³⁰ The situation

²⁹ The re-allocation of scholarships was carried out in November 15, 1994.

³⁰ Interview with Lic. Esquivel Campos, A., Director of Social Organisation in the State Department of Social Development, September 26, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

was aggravated by the fact that most of the traditional leaders are still financed by the PRI. One leader stated: 'The people always look to her in all the aspects related to the Solidarity Committee and not to the committee itself.'³¹ Indeed, in this respect Children of Solidarity had an idealistic design. Even the political support that enjoyed the programme was not enough to counteract the deeply rooted structures of caudillismo and clientelism which have characterised the political culture of the country. This is something that the programme could not confront.

Indeed, in this respect Children of Solidarity had an idealistic design. Despite the political support that enjoyed the programme, it was not enough to counteract the deeply rooted structures of caudillismo and clientelism which have characterised the political culture of the country. The political problems confronting the programme were not confined to the municipal level. At the state level there were situations where the whole programme could not operate as originally intended. In the state of Chiapas, during the governorship of Patrocinio González Garrido, the programme had to modify its structure and channel its resources in the form of "school breakfasts" because of the governor's refusal to accept the programme as it was structured.³²

³¹ Interview with Mrs. De Guillén Moreno, M., President of the Solidarity Committee of Children of Solidarity of the Primary School "Lucila Alayola," October 27, 1994 (Isla del Carmen, Campeche).

³² This was mentioned by a solidarity official during the workshop of evaluation with mayors in the National Institute of Solidarity, August 10, 1994. Mexico city.

Interesting parallels can be drawn between the Oakland project that Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) described and the implementation of Children of Solidarity. In the same way that Washington tried to involve the minority groups in the programme to gain the support that the state of California and the city of Oakland would not provide, so SEDESOL and the federal government tried to stir up local communities to root out what was perceived as corrupt or inefficient local politics. In both cases the federal government was seeking to establish a direct channel of communication between themselves and certain excluded minorities in the case of California, and with poor groups in the case of Mexico. Solidarity used its appeal to the people to bypass certain bureaucratic and party structures that are unresponsive to new political challenges.

PILING-UP

Children of Solidarity aimed to change community attitudes in relation to the quality of educational provision in the country by involving the community in implementing the programme. This was a means to this end, making it profitable for parents to keep their children in school. The programme also aimed to produce certain adult behaviour desirable in itself and desirable for improving school attendance.

However, the overall effectiveness of the programme was diminished by attempting to cover these two objectives at the same time. Bardach (1977) calls this a 'piling-up' process, the adding of objectives and goals to an existing policy. In general, the addition of objectives weakens policy implementation. In the case of

Children of Solidarity, in addition to the formally declared objective of the programme, which was to increase children's school attendance, there was an additional one which attempted to promote a certain kind of adult behaviour in relation to how families spent their money. The scholarship money was intended for the material needs of the child, (shoes, clothing, notebooks and pencils). The designers of the programme, however, made the objectives of the programme unrealistic and difficult to implement by attempting to control the behaviour of the families as well as to secure school attendance.

Quite frequently the money was used for other purposes. The programme worked in the sense that the money encouraged parents to keep their children at school but it did not change the families' spending patterns. Once in possession of the money, the families spent it as they wished, not necessarily for the benefit of one particular child. That school attendance and family expenditure would be linked in the family's thinking was an incorrect and idealistic assumption of the programme's designers. In sum, the family priorities and preferences for expenditure remained beyond the control of the Solidarity Committee. It became too difficult a task to ensure that the money was used as intended in an environment of such deprivation and economic pressure.

Although the assumption was idealistic it was also grounded in political considerations. The policy designers had to present a comprehensive programme in which the money granted would be used for the benefit of the selected children in

order to gain political support. It was not politically acceptable simply to bribe families to keep their children in school.

CONTRADICTORY OBJECTIVES

Although community participation seemed to be desirable from many points of view, it also produced contradictory effects on the programme. One of the objectives of the programme was to abolish the paternalistic pattern that has characterised the provision of welfare in the country. Children of Solidarity required that in exchange for the scholarship, parents should participate in activities aimed either at reinforcing the programme in the community or to refurbishing and improving school conditions. Eventually, officials of the programme realised that they could not make this compulsory. According to a federal official of the programme, the parents of the sponsored children who had been expected to improve the conditions of the school, were not always willing to collaborate in these activities.

Instead of generating a co-operative attitude among the community, as Solidarity hoped, the scholarships created a division between sponsored and non sponsored families. For example, head teachers and teachers not only demanded the collaboration of the parents of sponsored children in improving school conditions, but also asked them for money. One Solidarity Committee president reported that when the head teacher's wife was the president of the Solidarity Committee she asked for money from the sponsored children, threatening them with the loss of the scholarship if they did not pay. 'If money is required, the

sponsored children are the first to be called; if some activities have to be carried out in the school, again the sponsored children were the first'.³³ As mentioned by the mayor of the municipality of *Álvaro Obregón*, Michoacán, 'at the end of the day the poorest work more' (*el más jodido trabaja más*).³⁴

Instead of developing unity in the community, this only reinforced the existing differences. In a way the programme was attempting to ride two horses which were travelling in different directions!

Another contradiction in Children of Solidarity was that it assumed that the participation of the community would improve the quality of education. However, community participation was not accompanied by that of the teachers and in the end this militated against that objective. As Martin (1994) notes, early leaving in the primary school will only be prevented when both teachers and parents work together to keep children in school.

Initially the Solidarity officials assumed that the whole community would become involved in the programme of activities. But while parents of sponsored children had a "moral" commitment to collaborate in school improvement activities, such as painting the classrooms and cleaning, frequently they were the

³³Interview with Mrs. De Guillén Moreno, M., President of the Solidarity Committee of Children of Solidarity of the Primary School "Lucila Alayola," October 27, 1994 (Isla del Carmen, Campeche).

³⁴Notes taken during the evaluation workshop with mayors at the National Institute of Solidarity. August 6, 1994, Mexico City.

only ones who took part. The parents of the other children argued that, since their children did not have a scholarship, they had no such commitment.

Again, sponsored children were sometimes the only ones who participated in the civic ceremonies and festivals. Those activities had a related cost that was affordable with the scholarship. These situations were more the exception than the rule but they showed that the expected community participation was not realised.

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

A relatively simple evaluation of the programme could be done by comparing its declared objectives with the final outcomes. However there are no studies to verify whether the programme produced a significant impact on early leaving. There is some information about the final effect of the scholarship payment on the children and their families and the influence it had on family decisions about taking their children out of school. Neither is the state of the children's nutrition as a result of the intervention of the programme known. Despite this, some results of the programme are encouraging.

For example, the programme partially changed the attitude of some parents to the education of their children. One president of a Solidarity Committee reported 100 percent attendance of sponsored children since the programme started.³⁵ There are some indications too that Children of Solidarity was useful in

³⁵Interview with Mrs. Pol Novelo, V., President of the Solidarity Committee of School "Lázaro Cárdenas," October 17, 1994 (Municipality of Hopelchén, Campeche).

improving the children's academic performance. In the municipality of *Alvaro Obregón* in Michoacán, two sponsored children obtained the first and second places in the municipality in the municipal test.³⁶ The programme also influenced the way mayors and municipal authorities fulfil their responsibilities. 'Social participation has put much more pressure on us, that is why we have had to change our procedures'.³⁷ Federal officials of the programme openly encouraged the communities to 'occupy the municipal offices if that helps you to be heard by the municipal authorities'.³⁸

It is encouraging too that the programme transferred significant economic resources to nearly half a million children in primary schools all over Mexico in two years of its operation (Salinas de Gortari 1992, p. 40). Similarly, the programme introduced a strategy aimed to provide children in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty, with the necessary resources to stay at school. In order to do this, the programme had to impose centralised control of the main components of the programme to ensure its success. But Children of Solidarity transferred important decisions and powers to new actors, assuming that this would influence the way public services, such as education, are provided.

³⁶Notes taken during the evaluation workshop with mayors at the National Institute of Solidarity. August 6, 1994, Mexico City..

³⁷Interview with Lic. Chávez, J., Secretary General of the Municipal Council of Hopelchén, October 17, 1994 (Municipality of Hopelchén, Campeche).

³⁸Mixcóatl, G. (1994, August 6) Field Notes (Mexico, D.F.). Comments made by Lic. Jesús Ma. de la Torre, Director of Municipal Programmes of SEDESOL during his participation at the evaluation workshop with mayors at the National Institute of Solidarity.

Community participation was essential to stimulate the response of the participating agencies both in terms of performance and in curbing the power of entrenched bureaucracies.

Politically, the experience of community involvement in the programme highlights an important element in Mexican politics. The programme demonstrates that it is still possible to establish direct contact with actors at the community level, bypassing the state and municipal levels. It is important to note that this demonstrates that the federal government can still command popular support. In terms of political culture, the analysis shows that the community still feels that the federal government has something to offer. This is surprising, considering the scale of the programme and the hostilities and indifference of some state governments. It represents the survival of the popular elements in Mexican politics.

The response of the bureaucracies was different. On the one hand, federal agencies which perceive no positive pay-offs were reluctant to collaborate. For them the programme was only producing an overload of work. On the other, collaboration was achieved from those agencies that obtained positive pay-offs. For state and local governments, the incentives for collaboration mainly came from the resources they would receive which could be translated into political support for their administrations. However, this depended on the opportune allocation of funds by the federation and the state. In the end, what could have been an opportunity turned out to be a problem because of delays. The municipal authorities were to blame for these delays, in the eyes of the community.

The role of the solidarity promoters and officials was to provide information in such a way that the Solidarity Committees could exercise all the opportunities granted by the programme and boost the performance of all participating agencies. However this information was sometimes lacking and led to inefficiencies in implementation.

The actions of SEDESOL during the programme showed how the federation controlled political manoeuvring at the state and local level. First, the mayor or the Solidarity promoter had to deliver the community's proposals directly to SEDESOL for approval. Neither the mayor nor state officials had any independent role during the selection process. Second, the formula for funding the programme (75 percent from the federation and 25 percent from state resources) ensured that the control of the programme remained in the federation. Still, the fact that the programme clearly represented a presidential initiative was not enough to generate the necessary collaboration from several participating agencies.

Children of Solidarity offers some lessons for policy implementation. The first one is related to the administrative setting in which the programme operates and the role assigned to actors within the implementation process. The programme shows that some centralisation is needed to bypass traditional bureaucratic actors under whose authority the implementation of the policy would have failed. Children of Solidarity officials considered that its effectiveness might have been diminished if the Department of Public Education-SEP had managed the programme. Instead, the main actors were SEDESOL itself and its field offices in

each state and community. Even so, the allocation of scholarships by SEDESOL or any other agency, federal, state or municipal, would not have been accepted without the participation of the community. Since the demand was much greater than the available resources, substantial though these were, the government transferred to the community the responsibility for the allocation of benefits. The 'mutual adaptation' or flexibility which allowed variations according to particular circumstances also devolved responsibility. Decisions taken by the community may be right or wrong, but at the end of the day, they were the community's decisions.

The second lesson is that by giving the community the allocation of the scholarships, it was easier to ensure that the resources were managed according to the criteria set down by the programme, and to curb the discretion teachers, head masters, and educational authorities have developed inside the sector. In sum, the minor role assigned to the Department of Public Education in the implementation of Children of Solidarity, must not be seen as accidental or as a design error. Instead, it reflects the need to bypass the bureaucratic structures that have permeated public performance in the country and which make it increasingly difficult to reach target populations.

Naturally, the centralised character of the programme was reflected in the subordinate role given to the states and municipalities concerning decision making, management of funds, and their allocation. It was also argued that much of the centralised character of the programme was aimed at counteracting the discretionary decisions and actions that still permeate the administrative culture in

Mexico. Therefore, the possibilities of a greater decentralisation are dependent on the state's ability to enforce the guidelines of the programme and to reduce discretion in the selection of schools. Whether the programme was more or less centralised depended upon the federation/state relationship and also upon the ability and willingness of state and municipal government to perform according to the rules.

In terms of collaboration with the programme the federal agencies involved showed different levels of commitment to Children of Solidarity. The reasons for this were a lack of information, jurisdictional and territorial problems and most importantly, a lack of positive pay-off for some actors. The contrast shown between DICONSA and the agencies of the health sector is illustrative of this. Another important obstacle to collaboration, notably that of SEP, was the displacement of the educational bureaucracy from the programme, something that was regarded as an intrusion into its territory. The effects of the different levels of commitment to and collaboration with the programme, however, did not affect its core objective because of a lack of interdependency.

Children of Solidarity enjoyed only partial success because while the economic benefit encouraged families to keep their children in school, the addition of rules about the use of the money received presented problems which could not be overcome. It was argued that the main reason for this was that the programme considered the family as a single entity which would use the funds according to the expectations of the programme and did not consider that once money becomes part

of a family's budget, it would be used according to the family's needs and priorities, not necessarily according to child's needs or the policy designers' expectations. As in similar programmes in the past, the social distance between the policy designers and the target population of the policy made the programme overambitious and unrealistic. Future policies may increase their chances of success if they diminish the gap between the policy designers' expectations and local attitudes and orientations. Although the verdict on implementation is positive, critics of the programme might deem it rather superficial. It could be argued that it was successful because it did not try to do very much. If attitudes toward education or educational concerns are treated as part of the stated objectives of the programme its success is reduced, but in fact its aims were less ambitious. This partially explains why the displacement of teachers did not seriously affect the implementation process.

Pressman and Wildavsky's assumptions would have led to the view that the likelihood of the programme being effective would be diminished by its complexity and large number of actors. However this did not turn out to be the case. Children of Solidarity showed that by reassigning responsibilities, and by giving access to actors who had a direct incentive in the effective functioning of the programme, the chances of a programme success improved in spite of the number of actors involved. Even though some of the components of the programme did not go according to plan, the general objective of the programme was achieved.

The experience of Children of Solidarity also showed the extent to which the flexibility of a programme may help in obtaining effective implementation. The ability of the programme to adjust its procedures to different settings, was possible because of the direct link between the designers of the programme and the community, in charge of its "street level" implementation. The evidence presented here suggests that state or municipal actors would have had less success. Flexibility and mutual adaptation proved to be rather nonbureaucratic and effective elements of the programme.

Finally two further elements are worth mentioning. First, the importance of considering local politics must not be underestimated. Even if a programme has full political support, it is still difficult to overcome the obstacles created by traditional political actors. At the community level local politics are rather autonomous from national politics and guidelines. Second, the programme also showed the bias of federal programmes to idealistic objectives. Instead of aiding the poorest children, by attracting attention to them the programme divided the community reinforcing the gap created between sponsored and non sponsored children and their parents. This was reflected in the composition of the Solidarity Committees which gradually changed and started to include more parents of sponsored children (Programa Nacional de Solidaridad-UNICEF 1994, p. 43).

In sum, the programme offers interesting lessons in public policy implementation. In an attempt to improve the probabilities of success of the programme, Children of Solidarity gave back responsibilities to the community,

one of the essential elements not only to improve academic performance but also to prevent children leaving school early. The strategy used was relatively simple, that is, by offering an economic stimulus to poor families, the programme tried not only to redirect the priorities of parents, but also to convince them that it was profitable to keep their children in school. Solidarity workers hoped that this would increase the parents' attention to their children as a means of keeping the scholarship. These attendance objectives were achieved, but in the attempt, Children of Solidarity left out the other essential element necessary to improve academic performance and prevent early leaving: the teachers. Short term success was gained at the cost of long term failure because of the exclusion of teachers.

By displacing them, it reinforced, what Martin calls, the corrosion of a relation which is fundamental for the success of any policy in educational terms. The situation shifted from one extreme of not considering the role of the community in educational matters, to another, in which the role assigned to the community nullified that of the teachers. Future programmes should not only put together the political willingness and the economic resources of a programme committed to correct the causes of early leaving but also they should try to avoid the overwhelming presence of the federation in community matters and to reinforce the role of states and municipalities in the framework of a federal structure. Although effective, this is not sustainable in the long term. This depends on the ability and political willingness of structuring strong institutions to eradicate the reproduction of patronage-oriented practices and discretionary decisions. Future

programmes in the sector will have to attend to this in order to create an equilibrium among the actors who are directly concerned in educational matters, that is not only parents but also teachers. This depends on the teachers' and educational authorities' ethical and professional willingness to participate. Future attempts must direct their efforts at the community and teacher level in co-operation with states and municipalities. This is not an exaggerated demand, considering that the other two programmes under analysis seem to point in the same direction. The task will take time but programmes such as Children of Solidarity represent a good beginning.

Chapter 5

The National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises-FONAES: The Need for Centralisation and the Limits to Decentralisation

INTRODUCTION

The National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises-FONAES started its operations on November 14 1991 as one of the productive components of the National Solidarity Program-PRONASOL. To some extent, the initiative was useful in counteracting the criticism that the Solidarity strategy was demagogic. The design and implementation of FONAES represented the government's attempt to offer a productive option by not only providing communities with the minimum welfare benefits but also by creating jobs.

FONAES was formed with the objective of generating and supporting financially viable and socially feasible enterprises which would create jobs for a well-defined target population. This included peasants with or without land, indigenous groups, as well as urban dwellers living in poverty and therefore, with limited access to financial support from commercial banks. FONAES operated according to the same principles as the other Solidarity programmes: respect for the wishes of individuals and communities; full and effective participation and organisation; joint responsibility, and clarity and efficiency in handling the resources. In spite of this, the programme differed from the remaining sub-programmes of PRONASOL in very important ways.

First, the target population and the context in which the programme operated imposed serious limitations on implementation. FONAES worked with social groups in a sector characterised by low productivity; primarily oriented to self-sufficiency; with limited access to credit from commercial banks, and with a history of failure to refund government credits. These groups carried out their activities in an economic sector neither fully commercial nor social. Instead, they were located in a "soft commercial sector", where operating mode and the rationale differs substantially from those of the private sector and from the sector which has largely depended on public subsidies and self-sufficiency. It is argued here that the most important obstacle to the success of the programme, was that the sector which has relied on public support and which the government now wished to become market oriented had neither the technical, managerial nor the cultural elements to achieve this change.

Second, FONAES had a strongly centralised structure. This was partly because of the difficulty of finding an intermediate layer between a fully commercial sector and a fully social one, and partly because of the risks involved in decentralising the programme to the states. The implementation of FONAES offered a good example of a policy sector in which centralisation was necessary to cope in a context prone to politically motivated meddling. FONAES officials considered that the decentralisation of the programme to the states, would have introduced more risks than guarantees for successful implementation. It is argued

here that an indispensable reference to political, economic and even cultural conditions is essential in deciding between the centralisation or decentralisation of a policy.

Third, FONAES experienced interbureaucratic tension because of the unfounded expectations which many government agencies and actors had regarding the programme. The tight control under which FONAES worked, created in practice problems of political dissatisfaction and bureaucratic tension between the programme and state agencies, mainly because the latter made political demands to which FONAES could not agree. There were a few but significant cases, however, where the centralised manner of operating programme could not cope with the political demands of the state.

Fourth, FONAES differed from other programmes in the way the community was involved in the implementation process. The programme displaced community participation by means of centralised control and rigid procedures, presumably to secure the programme's objectives. In practice, centralisation caused rigidity and lacked flexibility.

We shall also discuss the issue of the number of actors and the success of the programme. The implementation of FONAES shows that a limited group of actors is not a sufficient condition for successful programme implementation. The lack of effectiveness was not related to conflicting points of view nor to the existence of many clearance points. Instead, the programme's effectiveness was

diminished by firstly, the centralised administration of the programme which did not allow flexibility for adaptation to changing circumstances. And secondly, there was difficulty in matching the rigid structure and procedures of the programme to both the target population and the context in which it had to work.

Finally, it is argued that the analytical framework which the programme was based and the political distortions to which it was exposed affected its implementation and limited its possibilities of success. The chapter is structured as follows. After describing the context of the programme, the structure of the programme is discussed, followed by an analysis of its implementation. Finally, the effectiveness of the programme will be discussed and some conclusions will be drawn.

THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF FONAES

THE TARGET POPULATION OF THE PROGRAMME

Its target population was engaged in diverse economic activities: peasants with or without land; forestry producers; fishery and aquaculture co-operatives of different economic potential; small scale mining groups; coffee growers and urban and rural groups and individuals who were likely to develop sound economic projects. Despite the wide range of economic activities they performed, all of them had several things in common: little market power; a reduced potential for the creation of jobs; weak potential for profitability and low returns and limited current capital for day to day commercial operations. Generally they are located in isolated areas

and depend in turn on merchant middlemen who usually keep much of the profits. In addition, their production sometimes depends on climatic conditions or is limited to particular seasons of the year.

Because of all these conditions, they are categorised as risky financial operations for almost any commercial institution and as a result, their access to conventional programmes of economic support and commercial loans is restricted. Moreover, many have been denied further bank loans because of their inability to repay earlier loans.

While FONAES dedicated some resources to industrial and service activities, because of the risks associated with agricultural activities these received most help and also the political aim of FONAES was to respond to the end of the long established land distribution policy, an important pillar in Mexican politics.

In sum, FONAES aimed to deal with a group whose economic and productive characteristics did not fit fully either in the commercial private sector or in the public one, and who are not prepared, economically and technically, to compete with fully commercial logic. However, according to FONAES' aims it was no longer possible (nor politically desirable) to support them using the mechanisms of the past. The "soft commercial sector" in which they have developed their activities, has produced a twofold situation. On the one hand, it has prevented the people from acquiring the economic and technical abilities required to compete in the market, and to qualify for commercial economic

schemes of support. On the other, what started as a political commitment with less favoured groups, only resulted in dependence on governmental institutions that created and reproduced patronage, and corruption.

The programme was committed to support almost any economic venture with a potential for profitability and for the creation of jobs, but which faced difficulties in applying for traditional commercial or governmental support. FONAES would help a wide variety of social groups and individuals in urban and rural areas collectively known as micro-enterprises. They are small woodwork shops, saw mills, flour mills and *tortilla* factories, cement block factories and brickyards, commercialisation firms (mainly of fisheries, fruits and vegetables or honey), community staple stores and handicrafts. As long as the eligibility criteria were met, FONAES could support a wide range of economic ventures. It was in this sector that the programme was distinguishable from similar programmes of the past. FONAES could finance economic projects presented by collectivities or co-operatives and individuals. It reflected the neo-liberal stamp of the Salinas administration. If ejidatarios had constituted the main target group of the programme, emphasising collective action against that of individuals, the same causes of failure might have emerged. But field work showed that particularly in urban areas, individual enterprise was supported.

In general, FONAES was created to meet the demands of peasants and farmers affected by the process of modernisation in the agricultural sector and

hence agriculture absorbed most of its efforts. The end of the land distribution process and the constitutional amendments to the ejido system, marked the transition to a new model in which peasants, who had grown up under the protection of the government, would now have limited alternatives¹. As Nelson (1989, p. 109) notes programmes for the poor are less costly than land reform policies which imply a major cost in both political and institutional terms.

THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN MEXICO

Understanding the characteristics of these groups will show why FONAES insisted on economic viability before offering support. After the Mexican Revolution and during the consolidation of the political system, there were three types of agricultural producers. The peasant sector was made up of landless wage labourers (*jornaleros*), beneficiaries of land reform (*ejidatarios*) and owners of very small properties (*minifundistas*) or "middle peasants". The new economic and political model followed by Salinas, aimed to link middle farmers whose operations could become commercially viable with domestic and international agribusiness that can provide them with finance, technology, and marketing opportunities. For the subsistence farmers, *ejidatarios* and *jornaleros*, the government had to create alternative programmes, such as PRONASOL, aimed to support small-scale peasant agriculture (Cornelius 1991, pp. 85 and 86).

¹ Interview with Lic. Bernal Miranda, G., General Director of Planning and Technical Assistance of FONAES, July 26, 1994 (FONAES Central Office, Mexico D.F.).

When the Salinas administration took office (1988-1994), the government's policies changed significantly from those of previous administrations in relation to: decentralisation; deregulation; tax reform; privatisation and an opening up of the economy. For Gates (1993, p. 51), Salinas' response to the crisis of the agricultural sector started by purging the corrupt agricultural development agencies, namely BANRURAL, which became a normal banking institution after two decades of a paternalistic attitudes in relation to deficits in production. Under the new scheme, BANRURAL would only grant credit for crops, and to regions, and producers that were likely to show an adequate return on investment, leaving many peasants without the support on which they had relied for a long time. The main components of the Salinas administration in the sector, were to open the sector to the market as well as to create productive oriented support programs for marginal producers which would allow them to move away from the traditional 'administration of poverty' (Gates 1993, p. 52).

Salinas' objective was to develop the productive side of the sector by creating a "business ethos". Despite the emphasis on productivity, profitability, and recapitalization, Salinas' approach also stressed the responsibility of producers in the process.

This is the framework in which FONAES operated. The creation of the programme had two main objectives. The first, formal and economic, was to provide its target population with alternative resources from the conventional

development banking institutions which were likely to create permanent jobs as well as to discourage migration from the countryside to the urban centres. The second, informal and political, was to compensate for the end of the agrarian reform which resulted from the amendment of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. Because the policy of land distribution had been terminated, it was necessary to create associative legal frameworks to generate jobs for those groups who traditionally demanded land.

THE NATIONAL FUND IN SUPPORT OF SOLIDARITY ENTERPRISES-FONAES

On December 4, 1991 the National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises-FONAES became the productive component of PRONASOL, to augment the provision of the welfare benefits by promoting the creation of small enterprises with a well-defined target population. The purpose was to generate the jobs that the welfare component of PRONASOL had not created.

The promotion of economic activities supported by FONAES were subject to two main conditions: all proposals had to be financially sound, and socially feasible. That is, any proposal must show potential for profitability but at the same time, it must represent a worthwhile alternative for the community in terms of the generation of jobs or other social benefits. In practice, however, some projects could be supported even if they were not economically viable.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme was structured around the following objectives. Firstly, to encourage productive projects among social groups living in conditions of poverty so as to reinforce their economic autonomy through the allocation of temporary risk capital or financing them via the creation of guarantee funds to allow them access to soft line credits. The former, is a direct contribution from the programme to a chosen project wherein the risk of the economic venture is fully shared with the social group. By means of this partnership, the programme ensured that such funds were used in an efficient and productive way; if this requirement could not be satisfied, FONAES had the right to terminate the 'partnership'(SEDESOL-Empresas de Solidaridad 1993).

A second objective of FONAES was the diversification of economic activities based on location and productive potential within the regions and areas of priority. In this respect, it represented an important departure from traditional practice in which a bureaucratic agency decided the kind of crop, cultivation area, price, and market, on behalf of producers.

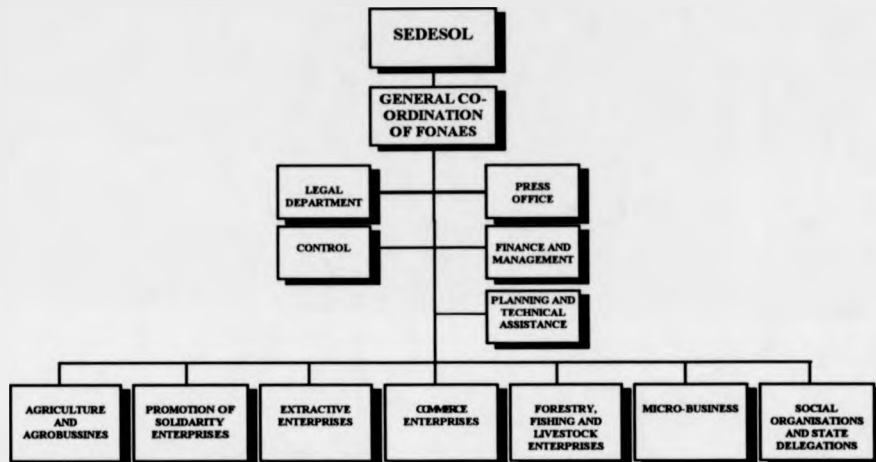
The programme was also committed to increasing the production and productivity of economic units through capitalisation, technological innovation and the optimum utilisation of resources. This was perhaps one of the most ambitious goals of the programme because of the generalised lack of managerial abilities and expertise both in the countryside and urban areas.

FONAES also aimed to encourage the integration of economic units into productive chains at the municipal, regional and national levels in order to give greater emphasis to production and to improve its terms of exchange with other sectors. The productive ethos of the programme aimed to encourage an aggregated economic effect by supporting micro-productive units around the country which would give security and welfare improvements to low income social groups. Finally, to support these objectives the programme provided resources for training and technical assistance.

STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme acted as a deconcentrated unit within SEDESOL which dealt directly with applicants at the local level via its branches in each state. FONAES is internally organised in several departments according to the nature of the projects, such as, agricultural and agro-business enterprises, mining, distributing projects, fishing and aquaculture, micro-enterprises, and the department in charge of the creation of state and regional funds to grant producers credit. Approval of projects was taken at the federal level and many basic functions, such as, evaluation, follow up, development, and training programmes, was carried in central offices with the help of state branches. Unlike other programmes of Solidarity, such as Children of Solidarity or FOMUN, where evaluation, control and management of the programme was a community responsibility, in FONAES these responsibilities were supervised centrally.

Figure 1.
THE NATIONAL FUND IN SUPPORT OF SOLIDARITY ENTERPRISES (FONAES)
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



At the local level, the state branch of federal FONAES had to promote and develop investment projects brought forward by the community; it had to deal with the initial application for support, and give advice to the groups working with the programme. Formally, the state branches of FONAES were under the supervision of the state branch of federal SEDESOL to avoid bureaucratic duplication. In practice, however, the state branch of FONAES worked independently from the state branch of federal SEDESOL and it reported directly to the federal headquarters of FONAES in Mexico City. Consequently, interbureaucratic

collaboration and co-ordination² between them was poor and sometimes, conflict occurred. Furthermore, during the field research, the different perspectives of the state branch of federal SEDESOL and the state branch of federal FONAES, became apparent.

FONAES, like the Regional Funds of Solidarity-*FORESOL* (see Fox 1994), a programme primarily managed by the National Indigenous Institute-*INI*, kept relative autonomy even though it was in line with federal SEDESOL. This lack of integration of FONAES presented administrative problems. The state branch of federal SEDESOL sometimes proposed initiatives more politically oriented than following the rules FONAES would allow³. Similarly, the relative autonomy of the *FORESOL* programme from SEDESOL, enabled it to keep its funds from a potentially political use at the state level. Therefore both were rather loosely co-ordinated at state level and both reflected a conflict of purpose between the state and local level actors and the FONAES and *FORESOL* objectives. This helps to explain the interorganisational lack of co-ordination.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The programme aims to support those groups which meet the following criteria:

² Co-ordination and collaboration refer in this context to the activities of all the agencies involved in the implementation process which are necessary for a successful implementation. It does not refer only to bureaucratic collaboration in a vertical axis, but across the spectrum of federal, state and municipal agencies.

³ Interview with Antropólogo Salinas, A., Representative of the State Branch of Federal FONAES in Campeche, October 10, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

- Those groups in conditions of poverty, willing to associate with FONAES, and whose objectives are coincident with the programme.
- The investment proposal, had to be presented to the programme, either designed by themselves or with the assistance of independent professionals.
- Groups had to contribute some resources or cash and had to possess the knowledge and experience needed in the particular area of investment.
- They had to have a healthy financial position and must not be in debt to other banks.
- Projects had to be technically, socially and financially feasible, and likely to generate jobs in the short to medium term, thereby encouraging social groups to settle permanently in their community.
- Each proposal must have had an adequate supply of raw materials, the necessary infrastructure and a potential market for its products or services.
- The operation of the project had to include appropriate processes and techniques to sustain ecological equilibrium in the community or region.

GENERAL RULES FOR OPERATION

One of the interesting elements of the programme is that cost-effectiveness was not applied to the projects. Once the projects were granted funds, the officials of the programme monitored the activities of the groups with monthly visits when accountancy evaluations, sales reports, expenses analyses and general problems of operation were discussed. If the business was working relatively well and no misuse of funds was detected, the partnership continued. Otherwise, the contract could be terminated and officials could take legal proceedings to recover funds. According to SEDESOL the 'initial contribution was not given as a loss or a

donation, but the state keeps control which allows it to guarantee that the objectives of the investment are achieved. If the goal for which the investment was made is not achieved, the Fund will bring its participation to an end and try to cut its losses.' (SEDESOL-Co-Ordination of the National Solidarity Programme 1993a, p. 131).

In financial terms, the resources were allocated in the form of risk capital, or through the creation of guarantor and financing funds.

Risk capital funding scheme

The first option was used when the Fund provided direct contributions to the group. FONAES acted as a partner and shared fully the risks of the project. The contributions were granted in favour of social groups which had already been legally constituted. The rationale behind this was that such groups were likely to have some experience of economic affairs. FONAES did not insist on the creation of a new legal form, but instead aimed to respect the existing legal structure of the group. In practice, however, many groups viewed the programme as a means to obtain funds that, otherwise, could not have been obtained. Consequently, many "enterprises" and associations were created impulsively with no previous organisational or economic experience. The partnerships established with FONAES did not give the programme any prerogative over the constitutive capital of the group or its infrastructure, and therefore, the members of these social groups were the proprietors of the Solidarity business.

Before a legal association could take place, the programme organised a meeting with members of the group so as to make clear the objectives, structure, rules, the amount of money granted by the programme, and other related considerations. Once the group knew about the terms of the partnership, this was legally constituted in the form of what the programme called a "partnership with limited participation" before funds were made available. According to SEDESOL, this new legal instrument was a way of supporting the social sector as a minority shareholder, without converting these companies into state owned businesses (SEDESOL-Co-Ordination of the National Solidarity Programme 1993a, p. 131). As the programme catered for groups possessing widely varying productive experience, productivity and abilities, FONAES strived to remain flexible in the structure of the partnerships so as to allow for all possible legal configurations.

Under this scheme the programme financed up to 35 percent of the total cost of the project. This comprised FONAES support as well as the group's contribution in cash, machinery and equipment, buildings, land with or without commercial facilities, animals, labour, raw materials, or transportation and equipment. The value of all these things was determined by a commercial valuation or through a value certificate carried out by personnel of FONAES. FONAES could grant up to 35 percent of the project's total cost. Under no circumstances was FONAES to pay previous liabilities. If the contributions made by the group and FONAES were not enough to cover the total amount of the project, the

programme sometimes allowed resources from commercial banks and other programmes of Solidarity, such as *Regional Funds of Solidarity-FORESOL* or *Solidarity Funds for Production-FOSOPRO* to be taken into consideration, even though they might be provided under a different economic rationale.

Because the partnership was based on sharing the risks of the venture, FONAES was entitled to a maximum of 35 percent of any profit. When a project was successful, profit sharing could take place during or after the first year of operations, depending on the financial situation of the enterprise. Should the group decide not to give FONAES any profits during the first year, this portion of those profits had to be reinvested in the company. The group could also decide to repay part or all of the FONAES investment. When this occurred such funds were re-directed to new projects or used to constitute what the programme called Technical Assistance Funds. This was an important element for the success of the programme because technical assistance and training are significant components for the success of small and medium enterprises. But because community repayment was highly unlikely the programme had to confront serious risks in this respect. 'For our partners, there are no current incentives to pay back; really the only incentive for them to pay is their honesty and a tradition amongst the poor of doing so. Even more, in cultural terms, our members consider themselves silly if they pay. There are neither the legal constraints nor the incentives to pay-back the

money they receive from us. We are currently working towards the definition of such incentives, because they do not exist at present.⁴

In any case the repayment had to be made by the end of the fourth year. If the group decided to change the objectives of the project, repayment had to be made immediately. The programme also allowed for repayment of funds by instalments, provided that the final amount repaid equals the original capital granted by FONAES.

Guarantor funds scheme

The second scheme with which FONAES supported the creation of enterprises was by arranging guarantor funds (*fondos de garantía o inversión*) with development banking institutions such as *Nacional Financiera-NAFIN* or the Rural Credit Bank (*Banco Nacional de Crédito Rural-BANRURAL*), for projects that could not normally obtain loans from commercial banks. Trust funds were set up with both the resources of rural or urban producers organisations, and with funds from state governments, FONAES and other Solidarity contributors. These contributions were the initial patrimony of the trust fund, which NAFIN or BANRURAL then used to open a line of credit for as much as ten times the initial capital. From this line of credit came the resources to finance viable projects. Within this financial framework, organisations could be the recipients of the trust and a large number of

⁴Interview with Lic. Bernal Miranda, G., General Director of Planning and Technical Assistance of FONAES, July 26, 1994 (FONAES Central Office, Mexico D.F.).

producers could benefit. A Technical Committee was the governing authority and included a representative of FONAES, members of the trusteeships and representatives of the financial institutions, usually, NAFIN and BANRURAL. FONAES could withdraw its contribution if any misappropriation occurred.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

In theory, the process started when a group submitted an idea to the programme for financial support. During the first meeting with the interested group, FONAES provided general guidelines and required as much information as possible in order to consider the project further. If the project showed promise both in financial and social terms, the group was asked to prepare a formal investment project, assisted by professional boards selected by FONAES. Once the project was ready, personnel of the state branch of the programme made field visits to corroborate the information given by the group. If everything was correct, the state branch prepared a preliminary evaluation of the programme and verified whether necessary social and financial criteria were met. The report had to include a financial viability study detailing marketing procedures, the potential market, expected profits and the time required for the project to mature. The proposal was then sent to Mexico City for final approval.

Once the project was evaluated at the headquarters of FONAES in Mexico City, they submitted their verdict notifying the interested group of the conditions of the partnership. When the group agreed both parties signed a contract establishing

dates for repayment and the way the profits would be divided. The allocation of FONAES funds took place through a direct deposit in a bank account in one or several instalments, depending on the financial needs of the project. If further funds were required they were considered as a new application and followed the same procedure as a new project. Finally, the control and follow up of the new enterprise was not carried out by members of the group but by officials of the programme as part of their responsibilities as a partner. Monthly meetings were organised between the group and FONAES to audit the financial situation of the business, to verify goals and projections, to solve managerial problems, and to check that the firm was working in accordance with the guidelines and procedures agreed in the contract. In each state branch of FONAES, the Director of Managerial Development was the person responsible for this area of the programme, and s/he had full authority as a partner of the enterprise. The whole procedure took from one to six months. However as described later, the process was much more complex and slower when the political context is taken into consideration.

CAJAS SOLIDARIAS (CS)

Another means by which the community participated in the FONAES programme was by constituting the so-called Cajas Solidarias. These peasant co-operative banks were one of the most important elements of FONAES. Because the

programme only provided up to 35 percent of the total cost of the project, the rest had to be found from the group's contributions or from other sources.

The *Cajas Solidarias* were created as a peasant credit and savings institutions to meet the particular characteristics of these groups. A peasant banking system was formed, managed by the peasants themselves. This encouraged rural savings, and increased the financial resources available for this sector. Funds were made up of the returns made by those groups who received economic support from the Regional Funds of Solidarity (FORESOL)⁵, Production Solidarity Funds (FOSOPRO)⁶ and FONAES.

The interest rates, both for saving and credit were fixed according to the cost of money, and in relation to the rates offered by commercial banks. But the main difference was that they represented an accessible source of credit. If credits were used for the acquisition of raw materials for production, machinery and equipment, the interest rates were equivalent to the cost of the money so as to encourage productive activities in the sector. But if credits were used for other purposes, six percent was added to the cost of the money and the loans had to be

⁵These funds are part of the solidarity strategy for the development of indigenous peoples. The programme is aimed to 'counteract the economic backwardness which is prevalent among ethnic groups' (SEDESOL-Co-Ordination of the National Solidarity Programme 1993a, p. 173).

⁶This fund was created to support the activities of agricultural producers that, because of the size of their property or because they are in non-irrigated areas and prone to natural disaster, achieve a low yield and in many cases they are self-consumption oriented. Because of this, many of these groups credit is highly limited, and when it is granted, it represents more a heavy burden than a solution to their problems. The programme is aimed to 'assist peasants excluded from coverage by BANRURAL, approximately 269,000 producers with 1.2 million hectares.' (SEDESOL-Co-Ordination of the National Solidarity Programme 1993a, p. 149).

approved by the partners of the *Cajas Solidaria*. In short, the basic idea was to make sure that the funds granted by FONAES or the other programmes of the productive component of Solidarity remained in the community.

As with the programme, the *Cajas Solidarias* were in a middle layer between fully commercial activities and fully public ones. The *Cajas Solidarias* were both agencies which aimed to distribute public funds to the agricultural sector and, at the same time, they represented the beginning of a peasant savings bank. However, their success depended on the willingness of the groups to repay the funds which they were granted in the first place. Unfortunately, as Gates (1993, p. 48) notes an 'ethos of institutionalised failure' prevails in the sector and repayment is highly unlikely. Paternalistic and patronage oriented programmes of the past reinforced the idea that government loans were merely a donation or that they were tied to political support. It became clear during the field work, that peasants choose not to repay because, for them, once that money gets back into the government coffers it is lost money. 'I prefer to pay-back the money if it remains here in the community. If I pay-back, the money will enter into the bureaucracy and they will keep the money. I prefer not to pay-back then.'⁷ The participatory element of FONAES depended then, on the programme's ability to eradicate such an attitude towards government support. In a way, the more FONAES moved away from a pure agency for the distribution of funds towards the establishment of

⁷Interview with a recipient of FONAES support, October 28, 1994 (Junta Municipal de Candelaria, Municipality of Isla del Carmen, Campeche).

a peasants' savings bank, the more real the participatory element became and the more successful the programme was. However, at the time of the field work, the results were uncertain. While in some localities paying back was occurring in others the results were very poor. For example, in the locality of Nuevo Michoacán in the state of Campeche, there was a 100 percent recovery of funds, while in the Atasta Península non had been recovered.⁸

ANALYSIS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

ACTORS AND PERSPECTIVES

One of the most significant elements of FONAES was the reduced number of actors involved in its implementation. Formally, the participants were the representatives from the Federal headquarters of the programme in Mexico City, its state branches in the states, professional boards of consultants to prepare the studies of financial viability, the target population and state authorities. Table 5 summarises the main actors and perspectives of the programme.

Table 5. Participants and Perspectives of FONAES

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Connection with Programme</i>	<i>Perspective and Major Objectives</i>	<i>Sense of Urgency</i>
Federal Department of Social Development (SEDESOL)	Design of programme in accordance with Presidential Mandate.	To support target group of producers who do not qualify for commercial credits and who could create enterprises for the generation of jobs.	Very High.
Federal Co-ordination of the Programme.	National implementation of the programme and to choose projects to be funded.	The programme aims to accomplish two major objectives: to become the productive component of the National Strategy of Solidarity	Very High (but mediated by rigid and strict procedures).

⁸ Interview with person in charge of the Caja Solidaria, October 28, 1994 (Junta Municipal de Candelaria, Municipality of Isla del Carmen, Campeche).

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Connection with Programme</i>	<i>Perspective and Major Objectives</i>	<i>Sense of Urgency</i>
State Delegation of the Programme.	Primary contact with the target groups; serves as a provider of information about projects and groups and executes important activities for the approval of funds.	The programme supports economic activities of a target population but works under strict and rigid procedures. Therefore, it puts particular emphasis on the procedures of the programme and acts as a filter for the selection of projects.	High (however, no decision will be made unless all the necessary information is available and verified, something that takes much time).
Professional boards.	To prepare a formal investment project on behalf of a particular group.	They regard the programme as a source of income. Therefore, their priority is to produce as many projects as possible.	Very High (not because of any commitment to the group they are working for or to the programme, but because there is a chance to make money).
Target groups.	To propose a viable economic project for funding.	To obtain economic resources for an economic activity.	High.
Governor of the State.	<i>De facto</i> actor who may decide what groups to support.	The programme may be helpful in solving economic and political problems in the state.	High to very high according to the group to be supported.

The first actor, the Federal Department of Social Development-SEDESOL, was in charge of the design of the programme and its participation was limited to this phase. The second actor, the Federal Co-ordination of the Programme, was in charge of the whole operation at the national level. Its responsibilities included the approval of projects and their follow up. The third actor, the state branches of the programme, had direct contact with the target population. Its responsibilities included the promotion of the programme at the state level and among the target population. It also provided information to groups looking for support and in general, operated as a bridge between the community and the headquarters in Mexico City. The sense of urgency of these three actors was high, but by keeping a tight control of the procedures for the approval of the projects, they produced many delays.

The fourth actor was the group of professional boards which prepared the studies of the financial viability of each project. Their perspective was rather "pragmatic" because it merely represented a potential source of income. These boards were selected and officially enlisted by FONAES to ensure their proficiency. However, in Campeche and around the country, such boards were few and did not have experience of the wide variety of economic activities that the programme embraced. Many boards were rapidly created when the programme was introduced. Their sense of urgency was high because their income depended on the number of projects they prepared. FONAES covered the costs, even if the project was subsequently rejected. The creation of these boards lent itself to criticism because many of them saw the programme as an opportunity to make money. 'These things did not exist before because they were not necessary. The money was given in a discretionary way, so studies such as these [financial viability] were irrelevant. Here in Campeche, one of those boards was created to prepare all the studies that FONAES required.'⁹

For the majority of the target groups the programme represented an opportunity to obtain economic resources that were not available from traditional banking institutions. Whether the group genuinely wanted to develop an economic activity or just perceived the programme as a cheap source of economic resources,

⁹Interview with Lic. Esquivel Campos, A., Director of Social Organisation in the State Department of Social Development, September 26, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

they considered the funds as a free donation from the federal government. Their sense of urgency therefore, was always high.

Finally, political authorities at the state level, in particular the State Governor, were one of the most important actors of the programme. He had a decisive role in the way the programme worked. The Governor could actually influence the decision about funding a group. He could even decide to support a group whose characteristics did not make it eligible for funding but where political considerations were more important. Very frequently, Campeche's governor used the programme to meet community demands and to keep the peace with rival political groups. Community requests for machinery, financial support, equipment or credit were channelled to FONAES, not because other state agencies could not respond to these petitions in the traditional way but because the governor tried to transform such demands, into an enterprise. However, this was not always possible. As soon as a group's demand was referred to FONAES, the programme easily assessed whether it was genuine or resulted from political compromise. 'The problem is that the Governor organises rallies all over the state to supervise public works, inaugurate others, but also to keep in touch with the problems of the state. But when he does that, suddenly we receive a bunch of petitions from his office asking us to deal with the matter because it was a Governor's compromise. Sometimes these petitions are not eligible for support from the programme because they only want to receive, but they do not want to offer or even worse, they do not want to work. Many groups still want everything for free and the programme is not

intended to work like that'.¹⁰ This would later cause problems between the governor and the representative of the state branch of FONAES as sometimes political compromises proposed by the governor were not supported by the programme, causing conflicts and political dissatisfaction between them. Not surprisingly some political actors and agencies at the local level took a dim view of the statutory criteria of the programme.

On the whole, the programme involved few participants, compared with FOMUN or Children of Solidarity. This was not a coincidence but reflected the desire of the programme to insulate itself from the influences of federal, state and local actors which could have jeopardised the productive rationale on which the programme was based. By means of a centralised structure and operation and the exclusion of actors, FONAES wanted to secure the achievement of its objectives. That is why the programme emphasised a vertical structure and the elimination of elements of horizontal co-ordination which usually imply a larger number of participating actors.

Despite the reduced number of participants however, the programme was characterised by delays and red tape. This was so because of the different perspectives between the state branch of FONAES and the federal office of FONAES. The norm was that projects which had been already endorsed at the

¹⁰Interview with Antropólogo Salinas, A., Representative of the State Branch of Federal FONAES in Campeche, October 10, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

state level by the state branch of FONAES, were turned down by federal FONAES. On average, the process for approval of a project took six months. Information was constantly verified so as to make sure that the allocation of funds was appropriate. These checks were made both by the state branch of FONAES and then by FONAES headquarters in Mexico City. However, these efforts caused more delays because of FONAES's determination that funding should not go to inappropriate projects. 'It is really ridiculous the sort of changes that federal FONAES requires to introduce to the projects for their final approval. Then the projects are returned to us and then we ask the group to make the proper changes which in the end takes a lot of time.'¹¹

Many of the delays in the programme were related to a generalised mistrust even between units of the same agency. Delays not only resulted from the centralised structure of the programme, but also from such mistrust and from the need to ensure that financial criteria were met in the approval of projects at each stage of the implementation process.

The implementation of FONAES seems to suggest that in terms of policy implementation, delays are not necessarily related to the large number of actors and perspectives, as Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) suggest. In programmes like this, delays are much more related to the structure and strategy followed by the programme to secure the achievement of its objectives. If major decisions are

¹¹ Idem.

centralised, as happened with FONAES, the delegates play a rather formal role. Ideally, the delegates of the programme should be in a position to take these decisions because they are in direct contact with the economic and political reality of the state, and because they have more and better access to the information provided by the applying group. However, FONAES' designers feared that a decentralised programme would represent an irresistible temptation to misappropriate funds.

For the FONAES' representative in the state of Campeche, this situation should be changed to improve the performance of the programme. As he put it, 'the programme should allow us to decide the funding of small projects. We could try with small projects first and then if it works, we could eventually approve larger ones and thus, decentralise the programme a little more. The whole process now is bureaucratised and this has to be corrected if social problems are to be avoided.'¹² Many applicants also call for a streamlining of the process for the approval of projects. For them, 'the representative of FONAES in the state is merely a messenger between them and central offices. He should take decisions because as the system now stands, it is too expensive, both in time and money. For example, from 20 proposals we have made, there has been not one single resolution; even more, the *proyectistas* [those who carry out the studies of financial viability] are

¹²Idem.

subsidising the programme with their money, because they appraise the projects and have not yet been paid.¹³

One of the unexpected results of the different perspectives of the actors involved in the programme, was bureaucratic tension and political dissatisfaction. When the programme started in Campeche, the State Governor called a cabinet meeting in which the representative of FONAES explained the programme's objectives, structure, guidelines and procedures. In this way, it was hoped that duplications with similar state programmes would be avoided, while gaining collaboration from state departments. Nonetheless, this precaution did not prevent many state agencies from conceiving the programme in different ways.

For some departments, such as the State Department of Rural Development (*Secretaria de Desarrollo Rural-SDR*), FONAES merely represented a source of economic resources that could be used to satisfy old demands that had not been properly addressed. In particular, the burden of work of some state departments, such as existed in SDR, had increased, either because of changing policies in the sector (privatisation, new rules for the acquisition of credit, etc.), or because many of the promises made by the government had not been fulfilled. SDR is responsible for all programmes and actions to promote and support rural development in the state and to co-ordinate the distribution of land in the state. But after the

¹³Interview with Francisco Gallegos Mendez, Applicant to the FONAES programme, December 6, 1994 (Ejido Alfredo V. Bonfil, Municipality of Campeche, Campeche).

Constitutional amendment of Article 27 regarding land ownership in the country, an increasing number of demands from groups of peasants and ejidatarios were channelled to FONAES, not for the provision of land but instead, seeking financial support for the creation of enterprises. These groups exerted permanent pressures, not only on this agency, but also on the Governor. Furthermore, some of them lobbied opposition parties who started to exert political pressure on their behalf. As a result, many groups of peasants withdrew their political support. In addition, increased activity from opposition parties in the state, particularly the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), increased the demands of these groups. For state agencies like SDR, FONAES was yet another programme with unlimited resources, which appeared to renew the pact between the state and the peasants that had been established after the Revolution. In the end some funds went to support projects with limited chances of success where the criteria for eligibility were ignored and where political considerations prevailed in the funding decision. 'On certain occasions, the principles of the programme are violated (*violentado*) and the result is that the paternalism and clientelism that the programme is trying to avoid reappear. For example, SDR made a proposal to fund a group of wood furniture makers in the locality of *Ixbacab*. The project did not meet the eligibility criteria, but because it had the support of the *National "Plan de Ayala" Coordinating Committee-CNPA (Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala)*, central

offices in Mexico decided to grant funds to the project.¹⁴ The CNPA leads 'the national process of peasant convergence around struggles for land which had been under way since the early 1970s.' (Moguel 1994, p. 173). The political ascendancy of this organisation stems not only from its ability to represent peasants' claims outside the affiliated organisations of the PRI, particularly from the National Peasants' Confederation-CNC (the rural sector of the PRI) but also because it can get political support from opposition parties, both at the federal and state level. That is why the state government was particularly interested in funding the project and in demobilising this peasant organisation.

Another state agency, the State Department of Economic Development (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico-SDE*), also believed that the programme was doomed to fail because of its unacceptability to the target population. Although there was no direct incompatibility with other state commitments, and despite the fact that everybody seemed to agree on the need to provide jobs for large groups of the population, agencies differed seriously regarding the way this should be achieved. For SDE, the programme would not be able to produce permanent jobs because its rationale was evidently political and therefore likely to have limited economic impact.¹⁵

¹⁴Interview with Antropólogo Salinas, A., Representative of the State Branch of Federal FONAES in Campeche, October 10, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

¹⁵Interview with Lic. Sandoval, A., Undersecretary of Economic Development in the State of Campeche, October 19, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

Increasingly, these misinterpretations created bureaucratic tension around the programme. An example will usefully illustrate the different rationales of FONAES and state agencies. The state of Campeche generates almost 70 percent of the total national oil production. During the 'oil boom' of the 70s in Mexico, the industry absorbed a significant number of the labour force and became the base for the economic development of Isla del Carmen, the second largest municipality in Campeche. Its economy is still based on activities related either to the oil industry or fisheries. When international oil prices fell in the 80s, PEMEX (*Petróleos Mexicanos*), the state-owned oil company, had to reduce its production and consequently the number of personnel in all areas. Campeche was no exception and a large percentage of the labour force found itself without a job and with no skills other than those related to the oil industry. Some turned to fishing as an alternative and a few, to agricultural activities. However, in recent years the environmental effects of oil production have started to appear affecting the amount of fish caught.

A group of fishermen on the Isla del Carmen (*El Gavilán Pescador*) many of whom had previously worked in PEMEX and had been affected by the job cuts, demanded support to buy more boats and nets. They were told that funds would be provided to that end. However, prior to FONAES intervention, the group had been in touch with officials of the State Department of Rural Development-SDR, which usually deals with problems of land distribution in the state. The fishermen's demands were channelled to FONAES by SDR assuming that funds could be

provided. But the groups of fishermen hardly complied with the programme's requisites for economic support. Even so FONAES granted funds to the group because some of its members had been in touch with opposition groups and with the state branch of the Party of the Democratic Revolution-PRD. However, predictably the money was used for other purposes; equipment bought as new was partially used and internal divisions appeared in the group which stopped working. One of the group members explained: 'This was a mistake from the beginning and a bunch of lies. I was never supposed to be part of the group, and now, for official purposes, I am one of the representatives of the group. When the group was asked to declare its equipment and infrastructure as part of our contribution, other members of the group invented boats we did not have. Others told me that I should not worry about such things, and that I should say such things, because then the government would give us money. But now, it has produced nothing but problems. Now we have conflicts we did not have in the past. Now, for the government I am a liar because when they came to verify the enterprise they discovered that everything was a lie'.¹⁶

This situation was unfortunately common. SDR and many state agencies constantly faced a wide variety of demands. The first way of resolving such problems was by referring the group's demands to the most appropriate agency. This approach was generally only useful in clarifying the nature of the problem, and

¹⁶Interview with Sr. Valencia, Member of the Co-operative "El Gavilán Pescador," October 14, 1994 (Península de Atasta, Municipality of Isla del Carmen, Campeche, Campeche).

was often an opportunity to shift responsibility to others. During the field work, it was common to find that, when the traditional bureaucratic channels had been explored and no solution found, then the problem was referred to FONAES, either because other agencies perceived it as a "cure all" agency, or because they thought that the new money could be used in the same patronage-oriented way as had been common in the past. 'SDR thinks that the programme is giving money and that its funds can be used for political purposes. When they cannot solve a problem, they send it to us. They think we have a lot of money to solve everything'.¹⁷ At the end of the day, the different perspectives that state agencies had regarding the programme produced difficult interagency relationships and an atmosphere of bureaucratic tension.

DECISION AND CLEARANCE POINTS

The programme's decision-making process started when a group submitted an investment proposal. Once presented, the state delegation of FONAES evaluated the information before deciding whether or not to formulate a more detailed proposal to evaluate financial and social viability. This stage was important because regardless of whether the project was finally approved, the financial viability study had to be paid for. It was therefore, in the FONAES' state branch interest to reduce the possibilities of failure. Once the project was properly formulated, state

¹⁷Interview with Antropólogo Salinas, A., Representative of the State Branch of Federal FONAES in Campeche, October 10, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

branch personnel carried out field visits to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the group. During this stage, the state branch of the programme made a preliminary evaluation to determine whether or not the project was suitable for funding and if the study of financial viability was to be carried out.

If the project was rejected by the state branch of FONAES, the proposal could still be considered using less formal procedures. This depended upon whether or not the group presenting the proposal was politically important. This is where the governor could reinforce his role as a major decision maker in the process. For example, it may be the case that a particular project had a political meaning not considered by the state branch of the programme, such as the change in political allegiance of the group of fishermen of Isla del Carmen or the wood furniture makers. When this was the case, a direct evaluation by the governor and federal FONAES officials was made and the programme's formal criteria were not considered. It is clear then that the governor of the state is, under particular circumstances, an important clearance point in the programme.

On the contrary, when a proposal was approved locally, the state branch of the programme sent the project to Mexico City for final approval, which, under "normal" circumstances was the third and most important decision point of all. Central offices could propose minor adjustments to the submission and in such cases, it was returned to the state for corrections and further consideration. Once these corrections were made, the group returned the project to the state branch of

the programme, which in turn sent it again to Mexico City. When the project was granted funds, the group paid the cost of project formulation.

Despite the significant role played by state political authorities, the weight of federal officials was overwhelming. According to the representative of the state branch of the programme, some projects were granted without any intervention, either from the governor or the FONAES' state branch. As he put it, 'suddenly I was informed that a new group had been sponsored and that it should be included in the periodical follow-up.'¹⁸

In short, three main decision points existed in the programme: FONAES' state branch, which acted as a filter; the Governor, and the Federal Co-ordination of the programme. In this respect, one of the most significant elements in the programme was the removal of the community as a decision point in the process. Community participation represented a major achievement in other programmes such as Children of Solidarity and FOMUN. The significant role that the community acquired in those programmes was cancelled in FONAES and replaced by rigid and complex technical criteria.

However, officials of the programme argued that its participatory element was embedded in the programme's aim not to create projects but to support those which were proposed by the community. According to FONAES¹⁹ officials, the

¹⁸Idem.

¹⁹Idem.

programme was designed to avoid past practice, when project proposals were drawn up by bureaucratic agencies, at the state or federal level, and then presented to particular groups for development. Instead, FONAES waited until initiatives were referred to it. The objective was twofold: first, to offer a more focused solution to a given local social or economic need, and second, to prevent the proliferation of "planning units" whose programmes were usually detached from local reality or merely reflected a bureaucratic perspective. However well intentioned, this objective restricted the programme's potential because it could not promote projects which would have benefited some groups in the state.

For example, one of the objectives of FONAES was to 'promote the diversification of economic activities based on the productive potential within the regions and areas of priority.' (SEDESOL 1993a, p. 130). However, since nothing could be set in motion until a proposal was presented by the community, possibilities for the development of economic activities with productive potential, financial viability and social feasibility were seriously limited. This was the case for a small group of producers of *achiote*²⁰. Although it has an important regional and national market, it was not promoted or encouraged, because the group never requested FONAES's support. For one Solidarity official at the state level²¹, the programme's strategy was flawed. 'The programme identifies projects already

²⁰ *Achiote* is a spice used to prepare one of the most important dishes in the Península de Yucatán.

²¹ Interview with Lic. Esquivel Campos, A., Director of Social Organisation in the State Department of Social Development, September 26, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

working but which require additional resources to enhance their operations. In this respect, the programme is limited because it should not be oriented to support projects already working, but new projects, by identifying economic opportunities where poverty has limited the development of communities. It is in those communities that productive projects should be encouraged and developed.'

This exemplifies the limitations of a "bottom-up" model of policy implementation and also the lack of flexibility of the programme. In the first case, it is clear that in programmes like this, where economic criteria decide policy implementation, community proposals may not be the best means of developing sound economic projects. SAM and agencies like BANRURAL are good examples of this. Backward mapping as a source of policy making then, can also produce undesired effects. It is encouraging that FONAES rejected the practice by which the identification and promotion of community projects is decided from a desk in the central office. But this should not have prevented the programme from promoting projects with economic potential, simply because the initiative did not originate in the community. In its attempt to differentiate itself from schemes of the past, FONAES failed to show sufficient flexibility to adapt to circumstances. 'It is necessary, of course, to encourage the development of certain economic activities, such as the production of honey, which represents the best in terms of support from the programme. However, we have not taken the necessary steps to do it, because we still believe that FONAES should not instigate community participation in this particular respect. Despite this, we believe that we have to find formulae to

take advantage of such opportunities and to induce community initiative but to respect its role in the definition of projects. This is a future task for the programme.²²

The analysis of decision and clearance points stresses a major issue. Community participation and decision making proved to be effective in programmes such as Children of Solidarity and FOMUN. Although it can be argued that the community was not displaced by FONAES because the decision regarding the nature of the project was a community prerogative, it is also true that the principles of the programme were relaxed according to the situation. On the one hand, FONAES was rigid in insisting that only projects initiated by the community could be considered, thus excluding promising activities such as the production of achiote. Conversely, it showed a great deal of flexibility by relaxing its procedures and rules to fund groups with no financial viability or that were politically motivated. The programme displayed an unhappy combination of political flexibility and economic passivity.

POLITICAL DISTORTION OF THE PROGRAMME

The risks of political misappropriation of the programme were ever present in FONAES. The bureaucratisation of the agricultural sector, its patronage-oriented performance and corrupt operations between government agencies and ejidal

²²Interview with Lic. Bernal Miranda, G., General Director of Planning and Technical Assistance of FONAES, July 26, 1994 (FONAES Central Office, Mexico D.F.).

authorities, prevented a more decentralised operation of the programme (see Gates 1993).

But political distortion of the programme also resulted from state agencies who regarded the programme as a source of political credit. Eventually, bureaucratic tension grew between FONAES and those agencies, because FONAES wished to adhere to its mission. The bureaucratic "give-and-take" caused delays in the approval of projects, because any community demand referred from other state agencies was considered with suspicion by FONAES.

Nevertheless, in spite of the clarity of FONAES' aims, it was difficult to avoid the temptation of using the programme for political purposes. For example, according to the rules, as long as the criteria of the programme were met any legal association was encouraged to take advantage of funding from FONAES. This would permit the possibility of a mix of resources from other Solidarity programmes, or even from the private sector. In one of the counties of Campeche, FONAES granted funds to a group that had been invited to participate in an existing poultry-breeding enterprise. "Avícola González" is a private and profitable enterprise throughout the Yucatán Peninsula. Because of its nature, the group was not eligible for FONAES support and therefore, it sought to establish an association with a small group of poultry-breeders who satisfied the requirements of the programme. The project was formulated by the private firm and a joint venture between FONAES, the small group of poultry-breeders and the private

firm emerged. As part of the partnership, the private firm offered its new partners the means of processing chicken excreta that might then be sold to the animal food industry. However, when the small group began to sell the material, the private group sued them arguing that they had not been informed of the transaction. The point is not the legality of the transaction but the political and legal pressures which FONAES had to confront because some members of the private group were being supported by top politicians of the state. Political pressures like this, gave rise to the eligibility criteria being disregarded so that a group could merge with a private firm whose managerial skills and access to commercial credit made them ineligible for FONAES support. This distortion of objectives occurred frequently. In this case the situation was the opposite of those quoted earlier. Here the project was economically viable although not socially within the boundaries of the programme.

The programme was also used as a tool for political demobilisation. Following the oil crisis of the 80s the inhabitants of the Península de Atasta (settlers from Tabasco state) in Isla del Carmen were without employment. The PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) took up their case. Formerly Isla del Carmen and the whole state of Campeche had been a political paradise for the PRI. And in response to the demands of the Atastecos the Governor instructed Solidarity officials to investigate and resolve the issue. Many Solidarity programmes were employed but special emphasis was given to the productive component of FONAES. For a year, Solidarity officials held workshops and meetings with the Atastecos to listen to their demands and find solutions. During

that time, FONAES channelled significant resources to the communities. PRD leaders were involved in these activities, though some of them did not want to participate in the scheme. These were ignored by their constituencies because other collaborating groups were working successfully and receiving support from the programme. After one year, several "enterprises" were formed, even though most of them lacked financial viability, social feasibility of the kind desired by the programme, and managerial skills. Loans were channelled through other Solidarity programmes with the result that anti PRI opposition was greatly weakened. This type of "solution" raised strong criticism of the programme (See Molinar Horcasitas 1994; Dresser 1991; Moguel 1994). Harvey (1993, p. 17) notes that the Salinas strategy towards independent peasant and urban popular movements rested crucially on a policy of negotiation (*concertación*). By creating new areas of grassroots participation in several regions, the government isolated the popular movements of the PRD and negotiated settlements through the direct intervention of the president using PRONASOL. Given the importance of political mobilisation, political, rather than economic criteria prevailed in the governor's decision, a distortion that the programme was trying to prevent.

Sometimes proposals did not come from community or organised groups, but from state agencies and political actors who were politically motivated. The programme was used successfully to offer not only a productive alternative to those groups but also to weaken the opposition in the Atasta Peninsula. This was a good example of how the programme showed its two major qualities: first, it

proved that the method used by Solidarity was effective in involving the community in the design and implementation of solutions to its own problems. Second, it demonstrated its effectiveness in bringing about political demobilisation both by action and by inaction in certain states.²³ 'On certain occasions the programme cannot work with a group on the Governor's request. We have problems with some governors because the programme does not distinguish between the members of one party or another; there are, for example, certain regions dominated by a particular political party with which the Governor would like us to work less. In the case of Chiapas, for example, although conditions existed for the creation of enterprises, we found a lot of resistance and obstacles from the state government to working in the state.'²⁴

CENTRALISATION AS A MEANS OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION?

FONAES is one of the most centralised programmes of the whole Solidarity strategy. From the point of view of FONAES' officials, its design was highly centralised so as to secure its objectives. There exist economic, institutional and political reasons that justify its centralised character.

In economic terms, the programme had to verify that funds were properly spent and, with this in mind, the programme centralised valuable information.

²³ Interview with Antropólogo Salinas, A., Representative of the State Branch of Federal FONAES in Campeche, October 10, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

²⁴ Interview with Lic. Bernal Miranda, G., General Director of Planning and Technical Assistance of FONAES, July 26, 1994 (FONAES Central Office, Mexico D.F.).

When an idea seemed to be financially viable and socially feasible, for example, FONAES asked the group to formulate a plan which contained detailed information on matters such as: the likely market of the project; evidence of sufficient raw materials; a description of possible consumers; expected levels of production, marketing strategies, and foreseen profits. FONAES received independent assistance and sent the group guidelines regarding the manner in which such information should be provided. However, programme officials often employed "best practice" learned from previously successful applications to improve the chances of getting central office approval for later proposals. Unfortunately, although this model was used by FONAES's officials to process new investment propositions it was not supplied to the group in charge of the formulation of the project. Therefore, when the final proposal was submitted for approval, it was frequently returned to the group for alteration resulting in delay. After several reformulations, the "proper" version of the project was finished and sent to Mexico City for approval. For officials of the programme, a detailed analysis of each project, particularly in relation to the financial and social benefits, was necessary to guarantee a proper use of funds. The rationale of the programme claimed that each project should be treated as an enterprise and a benefactor approach should be avoided. Thus, each project was expected to return profits, just like any other enterprise. So far so good. But, if the full details of "best practice" had been circulated initially probably one presentation of the project would have sufficed and much delay would have been avoided.

The State Director of Managerial Development²⁵ of the programme in charge of the reviewing and auditing activities in existing enterprises said that the main reason for not providing all the information to facilitate a proper formulation of the project, was that if those guidelines were given to the project designers, they would alter the information to increase the chances of obtaining funding. Therefore, the guidelines continued to be used as means of verifying and controlling proper funding.

A second reason for programme centralisation is the lack of institutional development. Soon after FONAES was set up, federal officials realised that one of the essential components for the success of the programme was the existence of independent firms to appraise projects. The requirements for the appraisal of a project were technically complex and difficult to achieve considering the lack of economic and managerial background of the target population. Besides, at the state and local level there were few professionals who were able to elaborate investment projects in areas such as agricultural, aquaculture, mining, poultry-breeding. According to the General Director of Planning and Technical Assistance of the programme at the federal level, this resulted in a major drawback as large regions of the country lacked such professionals. Most of them live in cities such as

²⁵ Interview with Lic. González, J. M., State Director of Managerial Development of FONAES, October 6, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey, and they knew little of the regions where the projects were to be implemented.

The related cost of taking a project designer from Mexico City, for example, to Oaxaca, Chiapas or Campeche to formulate a project was high. As a result, a number of consultancy firms were established although the qualifications and experience of their personnel was doubtful. Therefore, FONAES had to create an official list of reliable specialists to take charge of appraising projects. Firms not included in the list, had to pass an exam in order to obtain official recognition, and only then could they prepare projects. This lack of institutional development persuaded FONAES officials to centralise the programme in order to control the number and quality of project designers.

In political terms, centralisation of the programme was necessary in order to curb political misappropriation of funds. For the designers of the programme, a centralised structure prevented two problems: the political use of the programme by state governors and other political actors at the municipal level and the economic misappropriation of FONAES' funds. FONAES officials argued that decentralisation would allow state politicians to use the programme to continue the traditional pattern of clientelism and patronage politics at the state level. The examples already given however indicate that the programme could not prevent this: for example in the case of former oil workers in Isla del Carmen, and the federal approval of some projects without the intervention of the State or the

federal Delegation of the programme. Centralisation did not avoid the political use of the programme; rather it only secured its discretionary use by federal authorities, or in some cases, by the governor of the state.

In sum, for FONAES officials, centralisation was a pre-requisite for successful implementation, at least during a first phase. Centralisation was not an objective in itself, but a means: a necessary pre-condition for programme implementation that would later be changed. 'The conditions for a decentralised programme did not exist; the programme had not been able to produce clear rules, nor the necessary procedures that would allow all the actors involved at the federal and state level, to implement the programme according to its guidelines. This is a task for future administrations if the programme is to continue.'²⁶ In other words, centralisation of the programme was perceived by federal officials as a means of avoiding political intervention, particularly at the level of state governments. In practice, however, such centralisation did not prevent the political use of the programme.

The effects of centralisation on the implementation of the programme were visible in different ways. In the first scenario, the programme often supported large co-operatives, particularly those involved in shrimp production. Credit from commercial or developing banking institutions was not difficult to obtain; they had

²⁶ Interview with Lic. Bernal Miranda, G., General Director of Planning and Technical Assistance of FONAES, July 26, 1994 (FONAES Central Office, Mexico D.F.).

a long history in the fishery market, with managerial experience, and with an adequate size fleet and infrastructure. In many respects, co-operatives have been guided by market principles, and in these cases, the role of the programme was of a silent partner whose activities were limited to regular visits to verify economic performance and provide help if needed. In this scenario programme centralisation could not cope with the political misappropriation of funds. For many businesses in the country, particularly co-operatives or cases such as the poultry-breeder example given before, the funds of the programme represented a cheap source of credit. The impact of the programme in these situations was uncertain because these enterprises had been working relatively well in the past. Therefore, it could be argued that the programme was simply a source of funds, cheaper than those offered by commercial and development banking institutions, and which acted as yet another pork-barrel programme. These groups had the skills and managerial knowledge for a profitable venture. If they asked support for the programme, it was because FONAES funds were cheap and easy to obtain. Funds, particularly in the case of shrimp co-operatives in Campeche, were granted in exchange for the political support offered by these groups during Salinas' political campaign.²⁷ While, the centralised design of the programme should have prevented this situation, in practice, FONAES could not resist such political pressures. The apparent success of the programme in this scenario was due to their experience in

²⁷ Interview with Antropólogo Salinas, A., Representative of the State Branch of Federal FONAES in Campeche, October 10, 1994 (Campeche, Campeche).

their particular area and because they have been working as a profitable enterprise for a long time.

Another scenario occurred when FONAES supported those small producers, both in rural and urban areas, whose projects were not fully financially viable in commercial terms, but nevertheless, had potential for profitability. In this case, FONAES intervention was useful in several ways. First, it helped in developing an investment idea to create productive units, and by granting funds for these projects, it was possible to generate jobs. Second, follow-up activities were carried out by FONAES officials on a monthly basis and as a result, opportune audits prevented and corrected some economic problems. Third, FONAES provided these groups with technical assistance in the market they were exploring, and organised workshops to increase the managerial skills of these groups. The role of FONAES in these enterprises was essential for their development. Given both the characteristics of FONAES and the nature of the target population, this scenario represented successful programme implementation. According to official figures, during the two and a half years of operation in the state of Campeche, the programme was able to promote 37 businesses through the "risk capital" funding scheme; 70 under the "guarantor funds" scheme where repayment was required and 2 where profits were used to create community savings and credit institutions or Cajas de Solidaridad which could be used for further funding. According to FONAES figures, a total of 2,102 jobs were created that benefited approximately 2,346 people. The total investment of the programme for the three schemes

totalled 11,430 million new pesos, roughly US\$ 1,588 million (Empresas de Solidaridad 1944). At the national level, during three years of operation, up to 1994, FONAES established 20,000 Solidarity businesses and created 85,000 jobs (Salinas de Gortari 1994, p. 65). In this case, FONAES was able to achieve its objective because it offered economic support to small businesses where a productive potential existed, and where the projects were both financially viable and socially feasible. In this scenario, the centralised nature of the programme was a useful device, not only to formulate a sound economic project, but also to prevent the project's failure by carrying out vigilance and control activities for as long as the partnership existed. It is argued that once the programme recovers the funds granted to these groups, their economic future will depend on the managerial skills they learnt while working with FONAES. To this end, the programme assigned specific funds for training and developing managerial skills among the supported groups (Fund for Training and Technical Assistance). It is clear then, that the weaknesses and limitations of these groups were overcome by constant supervision with monthly visits to monitor their functioning as well as to resolve problems.

In short, in some cases, particularly in the second scenario, centralisation of decisions was a useful tool for programme implementation. However, under certain circumstances even centralised control of the programme, could not overcome the political misuse of funding. It is not possible, however, to conclude that decentralisation would have been a better strategy for successful implementation,

because there was, at the state level, a strong tendency for a discretionary use of programme funds.

Without the necessary reference to the context, neither centralisation nor decentralisation *per se*, can guarantee successful implementation. The decentralisation of the programme required certain political, economic and institutional pre-conditions. In a political context oriented by clientele and patrimonial politics, decentralisation of such large resources would have created the conditions to reinforce such behaviour. There still existed many worries regarding a situation in which many political interests found themselves with "free hands" as a result of federal attempts to expand decentralisation in the implementation of public policies. Moreover, decentralisation requires institutional development, a common agreement about goals and strategies, and most importantly, that rules and procedures are respected by all the actors involved in the programme implementation. The implementation of this programme seems to suggest that, no matter how centralised a programme might be, its success still depended on the political collaboration of local actors. Unfortunately, FONAES had a structure, guidelines, procedures and objectives which clashed with the prevailing political culture in many parts of the country.

In economic terms FONAES demanded from communities conditions which were hard to satisfy. This is what Derthick (1972) calls the propensity of central government to project idealist goals for its programmes. It was clear that

many of the groups for whom the programme was intended, lacked the technical, administrative and "entrepreneurial culture" necessary for success. The distribution of federal funds for the programme in each state, is a good indicator of how well the programme's expectations meet local needs. 'It is not possible to compare the resources assigned to Campeche with those of Oaxaca, because the levels and history of community organisation and levels of demand in Oaxaca are more significant than in Campeche'.²⁸

Under these conditions, the only way to generate jobs and bring welfare benefits to particular groups of the population, for genuine and not for political ends at the state and local level, was by centralising control of the programme. In reality, however, the more centralised the programme was, the more alienated it became from its target population. The generation of jobs on the desired scale remained an idealistic goal, since FONAES was not designed to offer an alternative model in terms of economic policy. Even under rigid supervision of the programme, some projects were a complete failure. For some applicants, FONAES represented little more than an extraordinary and cheap source of funds. To some extent, FONAES was a programme for groups whose economic demands for credit and support could not be met by commercial and development banking institutions. Finally, it is clear that when the programme proved to be successful, it was not only because the project was financially viable, but also because of other

²⁸Idem.

variables, such as existing managerial and technical skills. In these cases, FONAES intervention was limited to the provision of cheap funds as happened with some co-operatives in Campeche.

In institutional terms, one of the interesting aspects of the programme relates to Derthick's suggestion that a federal initiative must generate local collaboration to accomplish its objectives. At the state level, FONAES could not promote an appropriate image of its purposes and structure, nor avoid the political dissatisfaction it created among state agencies and other administrative units of the Solidarity strategy. Although FONAES started to work under the direct supervision of the State Delegation of SEDESOL, it moved to work directly with central office. At the state level, only the governor could obtain information about the programme. This created a lack of collaboration and institutional co-ordination.

In sum, neither decentralisation nor centralisation *per se* offers a guarantee of successful policy implementation. In a political context, where patronage politics is still one of the main influences in the development of public programmes, or in which corruption and deviation of funds takes place, a completely decentralised programme would erect insuperable hazards to implementation and would result in an invitation to prolong this attitude. How centralised or decentralised a programme should be, depends to a large extent on the nature of the political system in which it is implemented, the nature of the programme and its objectives and strategies.

THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF FONAES

The highly centralised structure of the programme was perhaps the most evident response to an underlying and more serious problem. This refers to the difficulty of trying to match the programme's regulations with the characteristics of its target population and the economic context in which it operated. It is apparent that the programme was trying to intervene in an economic sphere using misleading assumptions. The programme was trying to impose a commercial logic to a "soft commercial sector" that had never been commercially oriented, but depended on the government's populist and patronage-oriented support.

Accepting the existence of this soft commercial sector, the programme had to deal with two situations. The first was that good and financially viable projects brought forward and financed by FONAES could have been financed by ordinary banks. This represented a waste, as private money could have been used instead. The second was that more dubious projects were left for FONAES and in order to finance them, the programme had to relax its regulations and finance projects, the viability of which was neither economically nor socially sound.

Whether the programme had to work only with commercially viable projects and look for financial support from the commercial sector, or whether it should have to support non-viable projects in which its criteria and rules for finance had to be eased, is debatable. The latter seemed to be the tendency and, the programme had to consider more than merely financial criteria. By requiring

projects to be financially viable and socially feasible, FONAES introduced the possibility of funding only particular groups. If it required this and accepted projects on a financial basis only, there would have been no need to ask for public funds since financially viable projects could apply to private banks. By including the notion that some projects could be financed if socially feasible, the programme solved the dilemma of groups which did not qualify for financial help from commercial institutions. By arguing social needs, projects were financed more for political than financial reasons.

This dilemma of FONAES arose because it operated neither in a fully commercial nor a fully social sector, but somewhere between the two. The result was a "soft commercial sector" that might be an illusion. There are many reasons why it would have been preferable simply to allocate the resources with social purposes in a more straight forward way. It would then have been clear that a return on, or repayment of funds, was not expected and the programme would only have had to ensure that the funds had a social benefit. It would have been simpler to base FONAES on social principles rather than on those of profitability and enterprise.

However, by accepting that the programme was merely social and that the existence of a "soft commercial sector" was an illusion, the government would have encountered two problems: it would have reinforced the criticism about the

populist character of the programme, and it would have reproduced the schemes of the past that it was so eagerly trying to replace.

The programme was operated on three levels: a commercial profit-making and capitalist practice oriented level; another in which the government supported and subsidised projects with no real chance of them becoming fully market-oriented; and between these two, a soft commercial level where FONAES officials offered special support hoping that profits might result.

It seems that the insistence on the transfer of expertise, managerial abilities and the encouragement of an entrepreneurial culture, were designed to introduce a series of incentives in this soft commercial sector and to turn it into one oriented to market principles. Economic imperatives at the national level, such as the free trade agreement with Canada and the United States and, the liberalisation of the economy, will eventually require many Mexican small producers to develop better marketing skills in order to compete in a fully commercial way. Not surprisingly, Carlos Rojas²⁹, head of the Federal Department of Social Development-SEDESOL, noted that the importance of programmes like this should not be minimised. For him, the promotion of this kind of enterprise is essential and he suggests that small producers could play an important role in the Mexican economy, like the Italian economy which is based on middle and small size

²⁹Televised interview with Carlos Rojas, Head of the Federal Department of Social Development (SEDESOL) September 5, 1993. Interviewed by Rolando Cordera. *NEXOS* programme, Mexico City, Channel 13.

businesses. The World Bank has also stressed the importance of developing a small industry sector as one of the most significant elements which contribute to a country's economy (Webster 1991, p. xiii).

In political terms the programme was also aimed at facilitating the transition to a new policy model. 'The programme not only diminishes the related costs of the transition, but also increases its speed.'³⁰ FONAES attempted to assist the small business sector of an economy in transition.

The difficulties of developing the economic middle layer resulted from the transition from a highly protected and state-supported economy, to one more open to market principles. The difficulties were greater because in the past many large and smaller producers grew up under the protection of an overwhelming benefactor state, which under present conditions the state cannot sustain. The economic modernisation of many countries besides Mexico imposes serious challenges in economic and political terms. The programme found it difficult to deal with the "middle layer" because it was trying to stimulate, with its principles and regulations, a market ethos which did not exist. However, the mere existence of the programme reflected the government's preoccupation with the fact that such change is gradual and can not be produced overnight. In the North and other regions of Mexico where medium and large scale commercial activities have been

³⁰ Interview with Lic. Bernal Miranda, G., General Director of Planning and Technical Assistance of FONAES, July 26, 1994 (FONAES Central Office, Mexico D.F.).

successful, fewer problems may exist in the "middle layer". But in Campeche, the economy has been based largely on agricultural activities carried out under subsidised and populist policies. This partially explains why many of the enterprises in the state were located in Isla del Carmen and the capital city of the state, where a relatively dynamic economy has given social groups the abilities and expertise to start an economic venture. Paradoxically, while most of the enterprises supported by the programme are situated in the two most economically developed municipalities, very few projects are located in the municipalities with the highest levels of marginality and poverty. It is true that, on the whole, the 'success of the programme depends on the maturity of each group which is supported.'³¹ But it is also true that mature groups are not those which constitute the *raison d'être* of the programme, nor those which most need it.

In sum, FONAES worked with a rationale that was difficult to match with the economic, political and institutional context in which it was implemented. This incongruity between the rules and procedures of the programme, and the context, was not a design fault. On the contrary, for officials of FONAES, the highly centralised design of the programme, the lack of flexibility and the complex procedures it established, acted as a guarantee of it accomplishing its objectives. Despite this, the programme could not escape from the political imperatives set both at the federal and state levels.

³¹Idem.

CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing analysis, the first conclusion is that the implementation of FONAES showed that delays are more related to the structure and strategy adopted by the programme than to the number of actors and their perspectives. It is surprising that a reduced number of participants with a similar sense of urgency, could not avoid delays and red tape. In fact, the so-called relationship between cause and effect could not have been more direct. FONAES, as a deconcentrated unit inside SEDESOL, aimed to work as a single unit so as to reduce the intervening links in the process and also to avoid relationships of dependency with other agencies. Despite this, the programme could not reduce the time for the approval of projects.

Delays resulted, in addition, from the particular strategy used by FONAES to implement the programme. Because FONAES' officials feared a misappropriation of the programme by political interests at the state and local level, its design was highly centralised. FONAES assumed that rigid controls and constant supervision, would prevent the diversion of resources and the political use of the programme. In practice, however, the programme's rigid controls and the relative autonomy it enjoyed during the implementation process, merely resulted in red tape and bureaucratic tension, not only between the programme and some state agencies (SDR and SDE), but also between FONAES and other units of SEDESOL.

However, centralisation could not have solved the problem of an inappropriate causal model. Its attempt to impose an "entrepreneurial ethos" on groups who lacked the managerial, technical and economic abilities to manage a profitable company militated against its likelihood of success. FONAES could not avoid the persistent political demands and pressures which increased its range of action, and so, it had to support groups which did not fulfil funding requirements. At the end of the day, this corruption of the programme led to failure and criticism. 'PRONASOL should design alternative mechanisms to FONAES, not for the creation of enterprises, but to generate different types of productive initiatives. FONAES was not created to work with a population who live in conditions of extreme poverty. This should be a task, for example, for non-governmental organisations which could prepare groups and projects, and once they had achieved experience and developed technical and managerial abilities, then they could send them to us'.³² In short, the structure of FONAES and the groups with which it dealt did not match.

Many of the difficulties of FONAES are related to false assumptions and to its attempt to alter a political culture deeply rooted in the economic sector in which it applied. It is not the case that the subsidised sector, largely dependent on government patronage and support, is incapable of starting a business and learning managerial skills. The problem is that because they have been politically protected

³²Idem.

and subsidised by the government, they are unable to develop the skills needed to perform with market logic or according to a "entrepreneurial culture". But at the same time, this has resulted in a political culture in which the government's economic support for these groups is exchanged for political support, creating a patronage-oriented relationship. This partially explains why many of these groups still consider government funds as a donation and do not perceive the programme as a workable source of income and welfare. For Gates (1993, p. 48) 'many peasants feel that they are entitled to credit and other subsidies, irrespective of the harvest outcome, as ejidatarios promised social justice under the 1917 Constitution are still awaiting payment in full. As a consequence, an ethos of institutionalised failure has developed wherein deficit and debt have become the norm and deceit the only reliable economic strategy. Such a mentality, once established, is hard to alter and obviously militates against the success of future developments.'

For some groups (co-operatives) FONAES' funds represented a cheap source of funding to expand their economic activities. For others, it merely represented yet another source of money to be exchanged for political support. In between, in "the middle layer", there is indeed a group of producers who are able to initiate economic activity and generate productive opportunities for themselves and their communities, but who, in the past have seen their opportunities for doing so, severely restricted. In this case, the programme has provided them with economic support, training and supervision. Their success, then, depends on the ability of the programme to transfer, what Bullard calls, the 'know-how, vision and

self confidence to take charge of their own affairs, manage their own resources and participate in the building of institutions'. (Bullard 1995, p. 81).

Furthermore, an evaluation of the programme must take into consideration the transitional nature of the context in which it works. That is, it is obvious that the programme deals with groups in which a patronage-oriented culture is still deeply rooted, or with groups that are prone to take full advantages of cheap governmental funds. But it is precisely because of the transitional character of its context, that it should be much more flexible so as to detect productive opportunities that might bring about welfare opportunities for communities. This will be possible only if the programme makes its structure and decision-making process more flexible, allowing more decentralisation and the ability to react favourably to such opportunities.

But the decentralisation of programmes like this, requires economic, institutional and political conditions, that in turn, are related to the greater objectives of the democratisation of the political system as a whole. The bureaucratic procedures of the programme represented the institutional response to what the designers of the programme perceived as weak institutional development. It is, therefore, the nature of the political system that has prevented further decentralisation of the programme to the states. Decentralisation is also a problem of timing. When institutional weakness changes in the "rules of the game", and all the risks involved in a transition period are present, it may not prove to be the

proper time to 'increase discretion at the point of service delivery' (Elmore 1978). As Cornelius suggests, 'at this delicate and dangerous moment in Mexico's transition to a more competitive political system, a weak presidency could truncate democratisation, leaving large parts of the country under the control of 1920s-style warlords, particularly old-guard PRI state governors' (1995b).

The likelihood of further decentralisation of federal programmes such as FONAES, will depend on the institutional capacity they develop and the willingness of local political interests to implement these programmes in a way that ensures effectiveness and accountability in the use of public funds. In the meantime, the programme is constrained by the need for centralisation and the limits to decentralisation.

Chapter 6

A Comparative Analysis of Implementation of Three Programmes

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to carry out a comparative analysis of the implementation process of the three programmes so as to assess the theoretical arguments in the field of public policy implementation that result from the experience generated from such programmes. In addition, prevailing theoretical assumptions in the field of policy implementation will be reviewed along with possible alternative explanations based on these case studies. In doing so, the cases are considered as combinations of characteristics, their inherent features, the contextual variables that influence them, and the interactions that result from such combinations (Ragin 1987).

Using Browne and Wildavsky's (1984) definition of successful implementation, the chapter assesses each of the components of that definition to analyse, across the programmes, to what extent they succeed in the achievement of their objectives and how successful they were in the process of implementation.

The chapter is organised as follows. In the first part, the methodological approach used is presented. Then follows the comparison of the implementation of the three programmes which reviews the most important ideas in the field of policy implementation and assesses their usefulness in explaining the cases under study. Next, the parameters for successful implementation are discussed and the

differences and similarities in the programmes to which these give rise. Lastly some alternative explanations and conclusions are drawn.

COMPARATIVE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

VARIABLE ORIENTED VS. CASE-STUDY ORIENTED METHODS

According to Ragin (1987, p. 15), comparisons can be made from two different perspectives: 'variable oriented' studies based on the statistical method, and 'case-oriented' studies based on the comparative method. For him, the latter is a superior strategy for the following reasons. First, the statistical method is not combinatorial, that is, each relevant condition is examined at intervals, and comparison of the same condition across cases is not explored. Second, the comparative method is biased to produce tentative explanations of a certain phenomenon. Although such explanations may contain interpretative¹ accounts of one or more deviating cases, the comparative method automatically highlights these irregularities and requires the investigator to propose alternative explanations. Because of this, this approach is especially well suited for the task of building new theories and synthesising existing ones. Third, the comparative method does not use samples of populations and perform tests of statistical significance. The boundaries of a comparative

¹I will use the term interpretative as described by Ragin, that is, in a restricted sense. According to him, often the term is used to describe a type of social science that is only remotely empirical and concerned primarily with problems of meaning or hermeneutics. For comparative work, interpretative analysis is treated as a type of empirical social science: historically oriented, interpretative work attempts to account for specific historical outcomes or sets of comparable outcomes or processes chosen for study because of their significance for current institutional arrangements for social life in general (Ragin 1987, p. 3).

examination are set by the investigator and not in accordance with undefined populations of societies or points in time or events in societies. Fourth, the comparative method implies that the investigator is familiar with the cases under analysis. In this respect, a researcher's direct examination of the case under study is essential so as to make meaningful comparisons of cases and compare each case with all other relevant cases. The statistical method, by contrast, requires the investigator only to desegregate cases into variables and then to examine relationships among variables, not to conduct a direct examination of the differences and similarities among cases considered.

In sum, the possibility of offering interpretative explanations of differences and similarities among the programmes; the opportunity to work with cases rather than with variables in time, and familiarity with the cases selected, make this method particularly useful for the analysis of the three programmes in this study.

COMPARING CASE STUDY EVIDENCE

According to Yin (1994, p. 105) there are two general strategies for the analysis of case study evidence. The first is the description of a case that helps not only to identify the appropriate causal links to be analysed, but also to develop secondary strategies for the analysis of data. To some extent this task has been carried out in the chapters dedicated to each one of the programmes. The second strategy is to identify goals procedures and data collection which will focus attention on the theoretical propositions to be tested. For example, although other topics may be addressed during the analysis, the chapter will question whether decentralisation,

limitation of the number of actors, and the maximisation of discretion at the point of service delivery, actually result in successful implementation in the three programmes. However, this raises another important methodological consideration. If a comparison is to be made between successful implementation and actual results, then it is necessary to define the parameters of success. This will be discussed later.

TESTING IMPLEMENTATION THEORY

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN A FEDERAL SYSTEM

A recurrent topic in the discussion of policy implementation was the degree of centralisation employed. Martha Derthick (1972) was the first to discuss this problem in the field of public policy implementation. She argues that the collapse of a policy is related to the federal government's inability to control state and local governments, and to its limited power to influence implementation actions at the state and local levels. In other words, the federal government must work with state and local governments to produce political consensus around the policy, and then negotiate with them to implement it.

Policy implementation in a centralised political system

Academics who have studied the Mexican political system agree that it is highly centralised and authoritarian (Hellman, 1983; Levi and Székely, 1987; Cornelius, Gentleman, and Smith, 1989; Molinar Horcasitas, 1993; Camp, 1993). It is a political system in which only a few individuals have access to the decision making

process, and fewer still are in a position to exercise important political choices (Camp, 1993). This has given rise to a presidentialist model whereby authority is centralised and most political power lies in the hands of the president (see Calderón, 1972; Camp, 1993; Cosío Villegas, 1975; Carpizo, 1978; Villa, 1987; Meyer, 1993; Garrido, 1989).

One of the main problems of this centralisation is that states very frequently have no real power to confront or challenge federal initiatives during the design phase of a policy.

For example, legally articles 25 and 26 of the constitution constitute the framework of the National System for Democratic Planning (*Sistema Nacional de Planeación Democrática*) which gives the states, municipalities and even citizens the right to participate in the definition of the agenda of a policy by means of popular consultations (*consulta popular*). In practice, they are rhetoric. Meetings are frequently organised by public officials who have already decided on the guidelines of future policy and who frequently hold a position in the agency in charge of its implementation. Participants are carefully selected so as to hear what is needed to be heard. That is why it is not surprising to observe that the resulting policy adequately reflects the results of the *consulta popular*. In the end, the design of federal policies rarely expresses the needs of the states, municipalities or the community.

But in terms of implementation, things are different.² States and municipalities in Mexico can alter not only the way in which public policies are implemented but sometimes also their content. This results from the way the political system in Mexico is structured. By the end of the Mexican revolution the political imperative was to put together the multiplicity of regional and local powers in a system that would create political stability and shift power from one group to another inside the triumphant coalition. Legally, this was achieved by the principle of 'no re-election' and by the creation, years later, of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) which has acted ever since as a vehicle through which to access and remain in power (Camp 1993, p. 15).

Local powers in Mexico, both formal and informal have always challenged the political power of the politicians in Mexico city who remain at the centre of the political life of the country. But in order to keep political stability among the many groups that comprise the so-called 'revolutionary family', the system allows room for political manoeuvre to state and local political actors. This might not always be legal, but it has been quite effective when the federal government needs local collaboration for the implementation of certain policies and programmes. This has significant implications in terms of policy implementation. Federal guidelines can either be strictly applied or relaxed according to the political balance between the state and the federation. Very frequently the design of the policy is inappropriate

² Few references have been made to this topic. See Levy and Székely 1987, pp. 49-50 and Serrano 1996, p.7.

and it is left to the state and municipal officers and to the network of economic and political interests, to 'rescue' federal intentions in so far as they are able and willing to do so. Furthermore, in certain circumstances, the federal powers tend to lose sight of what is happening in reality.³ The result is a "factual federalism" based much more on 'unwritten' rules than grounded in the Constitution.⁴ It is a paradox that although there exists a legal framework to claim and challenge the initiatives from the federation, informal procedures are not only employed by the states but also they prove to be more effective and less risky in political terms.⁵

Given the centralised and authoritarian nature of the Mexican political system it is important to discuss how these characteristics affected the implementation of the programmes and to what extent they were immune to contextual influences.

For example, considering FOMUN, the Solidarity Committees accommodated the programme to their own interests and according to their own understanding. Again, in urban municipalities, for example Isla del Carmen, some

³It is difficult to believe that the political and economic situation in Chiapas took politicians in Mexico city by surprise. The situation in Chiapas, as happens with many other matters in the rest of the country, had gradually evolved and given many signs of alarm which were ignored.

⁴Aguilar Camín and Meyer (1993, pp. 253-254) suggest that 'the presidency must engage and negotiate with various powers, seeking to conciliate the different forces, who must act simultaneously with a great discretionary power and with a great need for conciliation and negotiation'.

⁵Perhaps one of the most interesting political events under the presidency of Zedillo Ponce de León is that for the first time in Mexico's recent history, the governor of Tabasco took to the supreme court of justice a presidential allegation to investigate the diversion of state funds for the Governor's political campaign. Paradoxically, by following the constitutional procedure, the governor challenged the presidency and for many, this only cancelled the possibility of solving the problem in the traditional and more effective way. Legal procedures usually mean in Mexico open confrontation and the cancellation of other arrangements by political means.

pressure was exerted by municipal officials to persuade the Solidarity Committees to forgo their responsibility in building the public works either in favour of private contractors whom municipal officials wished to favour or to facilitate the implementation process.

Something similar happened with Children of Solidarity. Although the programme was centrally designed, in terms of implementation it had to accept a great deal of flexibility in adapting not only to the heterogeneity of settings in the country, but also to the ethical and moral considerations that sometimes oriented the implementation of the programme.

In relation to FONAES, federal officials thought that highly centralised implementation using inflexible control and supervision, would prevent the misappropriation of funds at the state and local level. The programme was certainly more successful in displacing some actors and interests at the local level, but a closer examination suggests that despite its highly centralised character, it was quite difficult for both state and federal officials to resist the temptation of using the programme as an effective tool for political demobilisation.

In sum, although centralisation prevailed during the design phase of these three programmes, during implementation the search for local consensus and negotiations with local actors was also almost nonexistent and it was impossible for federal officials to impose rigid control. Moreover, the implementation of two of them, FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, showed a mixture of no consensus

building and no negotiation at the local level, but a great deal of flexibility in later implementation, something that was essential for effectiveness.

However, the implementation of FONAES neither created local consensus, nor negotiated with local actors. It lacked the flexibility showed by FOMUN and Children of Solidarity. Tight centralisation, combined with the lack of consensus and negotiations at the local level and most importantly, lack of flexibility or mutual adaptation, erected insuperable hazards for the programme. The evidence suggests that negotiation with local actors in formulation were not essential to produce effective implementation, as Derthick suggested. Rather, flexibility, mutual adaptation and a great deal of political negotiation at the local level were essential in the implementation process.

The question arises whether a more decentralised strategy during the implementation of the programmes would have produced better results. FOMUN and Children of Solidarity seem to suggest that when programmes give way to mutual adjustment or 'mutual adaptation' (Berman 1978), the results are better because strategies and objectives are redefined continually. If FONAES had shown this disposition for adaptation and had changed its strategies to connect its instruments of policy with the desired objectives, it is likely that its implementation would have been more effective. FONAES better illustrates Derthick's propositions regarding the limitations of centralisation and the impossibility of a federal government avoiding local modifications of a policy. However, she does not seem to understand that in particular circumstances, the implementation of a

policy must be carried out by means of rigid control so as to avoid misappropriation of the policy in a context prone to politically motivated meddling such as the Mexican one. Centralisation certainly makes procedures more difficult and complicates the process of mutual adaptation, but decentralisation, under particular circumstances, might produce even worse results.

However, an examination of the process of implementation of FOMUN, FONAES and Children of Solidarity, shows that even in a highly centralised political context like the Mexican one, it is during the implementation of a policy that federal power is confronted by state, local and community participants. Negotiation, rather than control and imposition, suggest both that the centralised and authoritarian nature of the Mexican political system might not be all-powerful after all (Cornelius 1995), and that decision-making prerogatives, both legal and illegal are being exercised at the state and local level.

Finally, whether the programmes were less or more decentralised depended on two things. A more decentralised operation in FOMUN and Children of Solidarity was possible because federal objectives and local ones were coincident. There was some degree of consensus and compatibility of interests within which to work, and in this respect, decentralisation and flexibility did not cause too many problems. On the contrary, in the policy area in which FONAES performed, there was a fundamental conflict of interest between rich and poor, between the business approach of FONAES and the sentiments of the target population. This made FONAES crucially different from both Children of Solidarity and FOMUN. The

popular and egalitarian ethos of FOMUN and Children of Solidarity coincided with the sentiments of their target population. Whereas the more business oriented ethos of FONAES was not coincident with the ethos of the target population, which diminished its chances of success. The crucial difference was the extent to which sharply conflicting interests were involved in the FONAES programme.

This does not mean that programmes like FONAES are not capable of being implemented in the context of Mexican politics. It might be the case that they are only possible in certain regions of the country where the principles of the programme are more coincident with the reality in which it is taking place. But for the state of Campeche, its regulations were unrealistic. That is why, for instance, the main efforts of the programme were located in the municipality of Isla del C armen and the city of Campeche and not in those municipalities in which poverty was much more persistent.

In analysing the centralised way in which the programmes were implemented some other elements have to be considered. According to Derthick (1979) three main conditions are necessary to avoid policy failure. The first one is to have local representation in the programme. FONAES certainly lacked this because of its centralised design and implementation. There was no opportunity in the normal operation of the programme for local views to be heard or adjustments made. In the case of FOMUN, state, municipal and community interests had the opportunity to state their points of view during the implementation, and the community was involved in the decision-making process. Although the design was

also centralised, the creation of the Solidarity Municipal Council and the Solidarity Committees, were formal structures that made local representation available, an element absent in FONAES.

In the case of Children of Solidarity, there were two main avenues for local representation in its implementation. The first, was the 'special day', on which the selection of the children was made, and the second was during the validation process in which the Solidarity Committee approved or rejected the selection made by the children.

Derthick's second condition for avoiding failure during the implementation process is the creation of local support for the federal initiative. The Solidarity Committees were not only one of the most important actors in two of the programmes, but also they represented allied organisations. FONAES was the exception which, rather than creating local support, created conflicts with other state agencies.

Finally, the third condition for avoiding failure is that federal programmes must be able to adjust their goals and means to the local interests. In the case of Children of Solidarity and FOMUN such adjustment was apparent because both allowed local participation in the decision making process. FONAES, on the contrary, by reinforcing its commitment to its objectives, and by making the procedures of the programme even more strict and firm, prevented the incorporation of other actors in the decision-making process. In fact, any sort of

adaptation to local interests, was perceived by FONAES officials as a deviation from the programme.

Resources and interorganisational collaboration

According to Derthick some conditions are essential to improve the implementation of a public policy. One of these is that there have to be appropriate resources and that these should be available on time. In the case of FONAES, its unlimited access to funds gave it an important advantage over Children of Solidarity and FOMUN. However, their final allocation to the applicants, was significantly delayed because of the complexity of its regulations and the advantage gained was lost.

FOMUN and Children of Solidarity faced some financial constraints both in the adequacy of their budget and in the way that the budget was transferred to the states. Most of the delays shown by these programmes were precisely as a consequence of this dependence. Despite this, FOMUN and Children of Solidarity performed better than FONAES because of their comparatively decentralised and flexible operation.

According to Derthick another necessary condition for success is that the federal government must be able to influence local actions. Where FONAES is concerned, the federal government was unable to gain collaboration or co-operation from the state agencies involved in the programme. Since state and local

agencies demands were not satisfied and the federal government would not relax its rules, institutional collaboration was not achieved.

In the case of Children of Solidarity, although state and local agencies collaborated fully in the implementation of the programme, this was not so of some federal agencies, particularly the health sector, such as ISSSTE, IMSS, SSA, and this generated the main problems for the programme. Such lack of collaboration resulted from the extra work load engendered by the programme without any compensations. By merely increasing the responsibilities of these agencies without offering them the proper incentives to obtain collaboration, the designers of Children of Solidarity lost an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of the programme. The same happened with teachers and head teachers. Their role in the supervision and continuous evaluation of the sponsored children, was neither recognised as extra work nor properly valued.

In sum, while in FONAES the need to stick to its rules and procedures and its lack of flexibility resulted in poor collaboration at the state level, in the case of Children of Solidarity, the government's ability to influence local actions was diminished not because of a lack of flexibility but because of the lack of incentives. This produced a lack of collaboration during the implementation of the policy (see Nelson 1989, p. 13).

By contrast, FOMUN, the programme that better influenced local actions and gained collaboration and co-operation, was more flexibly structured and open

to the definition of objectives. There was also a certain laxity in the regulations that opened up to its participants the possibility of obtaining compensations for participating in the programme, although not always legally grounded. Even when some of the actors perceived that their interests were being affected as in the case of private contractors and public officials who had benefited in the past from the awarding of such contracts, the rules of the programme were general enough to allow rewards for participating in the programme. By leaving open to interpretation the regulations of the programme, incentives were available to influence local actions, the participants simply had to find the way.

A continuum is discernible. At one extreme FONAES with all its resources was too rigid to offer incentives and gain the collaboration it needed. Children of Solidarity had limited resources and while it was more flexible it was unable to offer incentives to key actors. At the other extreme, FOMUN, in spite of limited resources proved itself to be the most flexible and to be able to offer incentives so as to gain necessary collaboration.

THE COMPLEXITY OF JOINT ACTION

Participants, perspectives and sense of urgency

According to Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) two main elements must be considered in explaining the success or failure of a public policy. The first is the number of actors involved in implementation. The second, the extent to which perspectives are shared. Pressman and Wildavsky believe that the probability of

success increases as the number of actors decreases and as they share similar perspectives about the programme. However, an analysis of the three programmes challenges this belief.⁶

An analysis of the programmes shows that extensive participation by government agencies in each programme certainly prevented direct and simple implementation, but it did not necessarily decrease its possibilities of success. One of the main characteristics of FONAES, was the small number of agencies involved in its implementation, as well as its apparently simple operation. In practice, its implementation was less successful because of the rigid rules and procedures it established which did not satisfy its target population. Furthermore, financial viability and social feasibility were frequently difficult to combine and problems arose in trying to achieve this combination. By contrast, Children of Solidarity and FOMUN had more participants but they achieved their goals in a more effective way.

Different perspectives and a different sense of urgency of even a small number of actors are important in explaining success or failure of a public policy. Fewer participants might have been expected to produce a better consensus about the goals and means of the programme, and more effective implementation.

⁶One of the main criticism of the probabilistic approach employed by Pressman and Wildavsky is that their model is used to explain and predict failure instead of success. It is argued that the use of a multiplicative model from probability 'leads to predictions of failure in all multi-stage implementation scenarios, even when the odds associated with success at each stage are high.' (Bowen 1982).

However, the implementation of the programmes show that participants' perspectives varied according to: the seriousness of their commitment to the objectives of the programme and their perception of the pay-offs from participating in the programme. In the first case, while for some FONAES officials at the federal and state level the dual goals of the programme (to generate productive alternatives for poor groups and to solve political problems related to the end of land distribution) were clear and non contradictory, others, for example the state branch representative of FONAES in Campeche, believed in close adherence to the objectives explicitly stated in the programme and regarded any deviation as improper, as it was the case in the Atasta Peninsula. The direct consequence of such disparities among actors, was the position the state branch representative assumed to try to secure the goals of the programme and to prevent inappropriate funding. This partially explains why the programme ran into so many delays. Even so, participants still managed to find ways to manipulate the situation. Delays in this programme then, resulted from the inflexibility of its procedures which produced delays in the allocation of funds and the mismatch of social feasibility and financial viability.

Finally, the participants' perspective also changed according to the pay-offs which they would receive from their participation. When an actor perceives that his participation would mean positive compensation, he will urge and facilitate the implementation of the programme no matter whether his perspective is positive or not. This was particularly the case of the professional bureau in charge of the

appraisal of the investment projects. For many of them, their sense of urgency was very high, not because of a commitment to the programme, but because it represented an opportunity to make some money.

The situation with FOMUN was different, both because of the large number of participants and because of the complexity this implied. FOMUN made use of a range of actors and government agencies each with a varying perspective and sense of urgency. As in FONAES, participants' perspective varied according to their commitment to the programme; their position during the implementation process and according to whether participation would produce pay-offs. Some of the FOMUN participants were not directly involved in the implementation of the programme, but they participated because of their legal and constitutional authority over important processes in the project. This was particularly the case of the Municipal Council (*Cabildo*) and of the COPLADE whose functions were much more extensive than those relating to Solidarity programmes, but whose authority was necessary to fulfil the legal procedures of the programme.

However, although they had different perspectives about the programme, the participants shared a similarly high sense of urgency. According to the evidence, it seems that even where participants may have different perspectives, they can still share the same sense of urgency. That is, private contractors may have a different perspective from that of the programme's officials and yet share a high sense of urgency. For the former, the programme only represents a chance to make money from public funds and therefore, they showed a high sense of urgency

in order to obtain more contracts. This is important because this suggests that the success in implementing a public policy rests not necessarily in shared perspectives, but perhaps in obtaining benefit by participating in the programme.

Different perspectives and senses of urgency about the programme also resulted from the position of some of the participants in the implementation of FOMUN. For example, the sense of urgency showed by the Solidarity Municipal Council varied according to the mayor's perspective. Since he is the highest authority in the Council, he could block or exert his *veto authority* for some projects according to whether he received their electoral support or some other political consideration.

Finally, the participants' perspective about the programme also changed according to whether they perceived a positive pay-off through their participation. Through its method of implementation, FOMUN offered pay-offs to all the actors involved. Although the programme was explicitly displacing traditional actors during its implementation, all of them showed commitment and a high sense of urgency, probably attributable to the benefits that the programme produced for everyone. For all of them, the programme represented one of three things: political credit for the Governor, mayors and federal agencies; economic benefit for private contractors and some corrupt public officials and the solution of a public problem for the community. Different actors gained different advantages.

In comparison with FOMUN and FONAES, Children of Solidarity involved a larger number of participants and produced a more complex pattern of interaction. As in the other two programmes, participants' perspectives about the programme varied according to their commitment to the programme; their position in the implementation process and their perception of eventual pay-offs. In the first case, the agencies responsible for children's medical attention generated most of the problems of the programme. Although collaboration with the programme was offered at ministerial level, in practice some problems of jurisdiction and territory became apparent during its implementation. Most community and mayors' complaints about the programme, were related to the quality of the service provided by these agencies and their lack of commitment to collaborate effectively in the implementation of the programme. This lack of commitment may be attributed to the fact that during the process of implementation a group of 'natural participants' was displaced, or their role significantly diminished, these were the Department of Education-SEP, as well as teachers and head teachers.

The participants' perspective about the programme was also affected by their position in the implementation process. For example, the Department of Education only provided its resources for the promotion of the so-called 'civic activities' among the schools selected. These activities were too general and rather ineffective, and instead of producing community mobilisation around the quality of education at the community level (the unstated objective of the programme), it only generated community divisions between the children and families supported

by the programme and those who did not benefit from it. This was because often the activities started for the repair of classrooms or general maintenance of the school, were performed only by those parents whose children benefited from the programme whereas, previously, parents recognised this as a general responsibility. It is even more significant that an educational programme like this was not managed by the Federal Department of Education-SEP but by the Federal Department of Social Development-SEDESOL. Despite this, all the problems directly impacted on the Department of Education. For the community, the school and its staff were the natural channel for make complaints about the implementation of the programme.

The programme also significantly diminished the role of two of the most important participants in the implementation of the programme, teachers and head teachers who traditionally had controlled the allocation of an earlier scheme of scholarships in primary schools. By involving the community, particularly children and parents, in the decision about who should benefit from the scheme, the authority and power of the teachers and head teachers was significantly diminished. Nevertheless, they had to collaborate with the programme by supervising and monitoring the progress of the children selected by the programme. In practice, this resulted in an extension of their responsibilities alongside a perception of the lowering of their professional status.

Finally, the programme was also affected because some participants found no incentives to perform more effectively in the programme. Children of Solidarity

not only required an increase in their workload from some agencies and actors, but also offered no additional rewards or compensations. That is, a programme which by its very nature was educational, should have been seen to stress the role of teachers and head teachers during its implementation and not to diminish it. By giving less importance to these participants, the programme lacked a significant source of support and diminished its effectiveness. It is not surprising, therefore, that public officials frequently complained about the lack of involvement of these actors during the implementation of the programme.

The experience of the health sector workers was similar to that of the teachers. For them, the programme only represented an increase in their workload. Although formal commitments to support this presidential initiative were made at a ministerial level, in practice, at the level of health centres in rural and isolated areas of the country, problems related to the organisation of this sector, proved to be a serious obstacle to the success of the programme. In spite of federal commitment, it seems that the programme officials did not anticipate how the conditions in the health sector would alter the impact of the programme. The teachers, head teachers and medical practitioners were in general agreement about the positive nature of the programme and if there had been some payment for their increased work load, perhaps more collaboration would have been secured.

By contrast, DICONSA, the agency in charge of the distribution of the family package supplies, had proper incentives to collaborate with the programme. For these officials the programme represented an opportunity to be directly

associated with a presidential initiative as well as an way to increase their sales, and therefore, their sense of urgency was high.

The reasons for the extensive delays in all the programmes merit examination. For FOMUN and Children of Solidarity the significant element responsible for this seems to be the structure and legal framework of the prevailing budget cycle in Mexico, which prevented the allocation of funds on time. FOMUN funds arrived six to seven months late. The delivery of scholarships to participating schools often occurred after a three months delay. This aroused community criticism and affected the outcome of the programme. Finally, FONAES' delays were related to the tight controls over funding exerted by the programme.

One significant element in the comparison of the programmes is the effect of the number of decision points in implementation. For example, FONAES had the smaller number of actors than either FOMUN or Children of Solidarity. However comparative analysis shows that it is not the number of actors, nor indeed the multiplicity of decision points which governs the degree of success of a programme but rather the participants' perspectives on the programme, and the rewards on offer. In relation to FOMUN, for instance, either political credit or the perception of getting 'easy money' from public funds, or even community satisfaction, had a positive effect on the implementation of the programme.

Children of Solidarity, by contrast, experienced a smaller degree of collaboration because of lack of incentives. This affected the health agencies and

some teachers who saw their authority being curbed by the way the programme was designed. Finally, in relation to FONAES, the existence of interorganisational problems arose essentially because the agencies of the public administration at the state level, could not satisfy certain political demands with the funds of the programme. By contrast, the professional bureau in charge of the appraisal of the economic projects enthusiastically participated in the programme because of the payment they received for the preparation of each project.

In sum, one of the main points to be highlighted here is that Pressman's and Wildavsky's assumption regarding the number of actors and the success of policy implementation is not borne out in relation to these projects. Research shows that incentives seem to matter more than the complexity of joint action irrespective of the number of actors. The contrast between FONAES with its small number of actors and least success, and FOMUN and Children of Solidarity with their large numbers of actors and comparatively high levels of success is noteworthy.

Implementation complexity and flexibility

Complexity in implementation arises not only from the number of actors involved but also from the degree of rigidity and the number of decision points employed in a programme. The particular policy area involved may also be significant. FONAES had a limited number of participants but its procedures and rules were rigid. There were only 3 points of decision: the state branch of the programme, central offices and the state governor. Even so, inflexibility and delays were the main characteristics of the programme.

FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, although they had significantly more participants, showed a great deal of flexibility and ability to redefine procedures "on the way": the 'evolutionary or learning view of implementation' (Browne and Wildavsky 1984, p. 230). Such complexity did not seriously affect the implementation of these programmes. Education and public works necessarily included community participation. However the generation of jobs is more complex than this. These policy arenas interact with other macro economic variables leaving little room for discretionary decisions in policy implementation.

Mistaken analytical framework

One of the most important suggestions of Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) relates to the 'causal theory' behind the implementation of a programme. That is, the extent to which the techniques used produced the desired change in each particular programme. FONAES offers an interesting example. The programme centred its efforts in urban areas, such as Isla del Carmen and Campeche, where, the main economic activity of the state takes place. The criteria used by the programme in order to fund projects, demanded from the target groups certain experience and a minimal level of 'entrepreneurial culture' as well as some evidence of their abilities to engage in an economic activity. It is clear, that these requirements could not be matched by groups who live in the marginalized areas of the state, or where levels of education are poor, or where the technology used in their particular area of production is out-of-date.

In sum these requirements could not be met where, following these authors, the 'informal connection with the job market has been atrophied'. (Pressman and Wildavsky 1984, p. 151). These are groups of producers with limited prospects for the development of a profitable economic activity. In such areas, presumably the poorest, the programme would not work⁷, not just because these groups did not fulfil the requirements of the programme, but also because in such conditions of isolation a reduced number of economic activities would prosper according to the requirements of FONAES. The programme, then, is an anti-poverty programme whose requirements and criteria to fund economic projects, are in contradiction with the reality in which it is working. Thus the efforts of FONAES are located in urban areas of the state-the most active in economic terms. FONAES is giving economic impulse to marginalized counties and communities where certain groups of producers urgently need that support.

Paradoxically, by the rigid and unrealistic procedures of the programme this was an anti-poverty programme which could only work in those circumstances where is no poverty. That is, the programme seemed to work better in those regions where some entrepreneurial ethos or certain business capacity already existed. Such regions were the Isla del C armen and the city of Campeche. This

⁷For example, from 9 counties in the state, FONAES worked primarily in 2 of them, Isla del C armen and the City of Campeche, that according to public officials, show the lowest level of marginality in the state. In opposition, in the remaining seven counties, the programme scarcely funded projects, presumably because it was quite difficult to find organised groups of producers who could fulfil the requirements of the programme.

represented a serious mistake in terms of the analytical framework in which the programme was based.

As an anti-poverty programme, supposedly designed to cover the financial needs of poor groups and to offer them economic alternatives by means of cheap resources, it would be expected that the programme would match the characteristics of the target groups. Nevertheless, the programme was based on a set of requirements that in practice could not be matched by those groups. If the programme was aimed at poor groups, with limited abilities and skills, so that they could engage in economically profitable activity, then the programme should have used techniques in accordance with the nature of the context it aimed to change. The use of rigid criteria, embedded in a strong commercial rationale, did not match the 'soft commercial' nature of these groups. At the end of the day, it seemed that the programme was more interested in the proper use of the funds, than in the creation of economic improvements for poor groups. The means prevailed over the objectives of the programme. It would have been preferable if, from the very beginning the programme had been designed with requirements and corresponding funding which would have allowed its social purposes to be met.

For Children of Solidarity and FOMUN the situation was different in that these two programmes were implemented in policy arenas that allowed community participation. The programmes were designed and structured with a rationale that established that the involvement of the customer in the provision of the service, would increase satisfaction and performance. Both programmes reflected both in

their design and practice, a coherent connection between instruments of policy and desired objectives. Both programmes, for example, required the creation of Solidarity Committees with power to make decisions within their structure.

BACKWARD AND FORWARD MAPPING

One of the most appealing approaches in the field is that which argues that most implementation problems result from the fact that the logic of implementation is back to front. Instead of a hierarchical, top-down, rigid and inflexible implementation (forward mapping), a policy should be implemented in a transactional, bottom-up, adaptable and flexible way (backward mapping). Two main arguments characterise this approach. The first is that implementation problems stem mostly from the interaction of a policy with its institutional setting, and that the policy outcome rests with local deliverers, not with federal administrators (Berman 1978). A successful implementation then, is characterised by a process of mutual adaptation between the federal and local organisations.

The second is that the closer one is to the source of the problem, the greater is one's ability to influence it; and the problem-solving ability of complex systems depends not on hierarchical control but on maximising discretion at the point where the problem is most immediate (Elmore 1979-80). Therefore, a 'backward mapping' process is regarded as a better strategy than 'forward mapping' in securing successful implementation.

Institutional setting, adaptation and maximising discretion

One of the main arguments in the political discourse of the Solidarity strategy in general, and of the three programmes in particular, is that their design would facilitate a more decentralised implementation process. It was argued that, in this way, the programmes could be implemented more effectively because they would be able to deal with local administrative, political and even cultural characteristics, that is, the institutional setting of the programmes. In addition, the whole process would be improved if the community could be involved. This would allow the programme to meet community needs and to respond to its problems in a more effective way.

However, each programme had a particular formula to adapt to its institutional settings as well as to involve the community in the implementation process. Again, FONAES is different from FOMUN and Children of Solidarity. The design of the FONAES programme and the way it was implemented, eliminated both the possibility for local deliverers to participate in the implementation process, and also any adaptation between the federal initiative and local organisations. The programme was designed in such a way as to diminish the intervention of state and municipal organisations during the implementation process.

By contrast in Children of Solidarity, adaptation to local needs or flexibility was essential. For example, different mayors delivered the scholarships in different ways according to the needs set by the geographical conditions of the country.

Also some mayors made the delivery of the scholarships and the family supplies package, an opportunity to improve their relationships with their constituencies and gain political credit. This adaptation to local needs was not only limited to the procedures used by local mayors, but was also present in the definition of objectives. The community played a significant role in the implementation of the programme and demanded from the federal government its acceptance of a certain deviation of objectives that in principle, contradicted the original purposes of the policy. For instance, the criteria used for the selection of the children varied and sometimes were governed by moral or ethical assumptions. The federal government allowed this, rather than impose any measures of control that could oppose internal community organisation.

In FOMUN, the situation was similar. Decisions and even the means to achieve the goals of the programme were dependent on the commitment of the local officials and community to the original objectives of the programme. For example the choice between public and private contractors for carrying out public works. In a similar way, the financial structure of the programme worked by granting funds for public works only if such projects were requested by a Solidarity Committee, something that shows that the initiative emphasised the participation of local deliverers.

In terms of adaptation to local needs, the programmes also performed in a different way. FOMUN was much more 'procedural' than goal-oriented; that is, in order to meet community demands and expectations in the best way possible, the

programme applied a great deal of flexibility accepting a wide range of options in the definition of public works. The refurbishment of the local church, for example, was hardly a priority in terms of the regulations of the programme, and yet, funds were granted for the project. Indeed, such laxity in the procedures and the definition of objectives, opened up the possibility of diverting funds and producing a lower level of performance of the programme, because such diversion of resources is not necessarily to the advantage of the recipients. In an institutional setting prone to politically motivated meddling, the maximisation of discretion may bring about more problems than opportunities for successful implementation.

The allocation of scholarships to children using other criteria than those set down by the programme, although congruent with community's perceptions, resulted in an improper allocation of funds. FOMUN and Children of Solidarity certainly showed this ability to maximise discretion where a problem arose, but in particular circumstances and according to the context, this also opened up the possibility for the distortion of goals. FONAES reduced discretion to the minimum at the point of service delivery. From the previous analysis it can be argued that at least for the cases under study, programmes which include community participation are more likely to emphasise local deliverers and flexibility in the implementation of the policy.

AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMMES

Neither centralisation, complexity resulting from the number of actors nor the adaptation of procedures is as important as the achievement of the programme's goals. This is the measure of success. But this complicates the task, because success for the designers of the programme (i.e., popular mobilisation around the construction of public works), was failure for others (i.e., those who criticised the strategy as a pork barrel programme). Similarly, while using the programme as a tool for political demobilisation was regarded as a success by political actors, it was nothing but a failure compared with its original purpose, working for the poorest in the community, i.e., for the state branch representative of FONAES. Furthermore, success is often measured from the perspective of designers rather than that of the beneficiaries. Nakamura and Smallwood (1980, pp. 149-50) for example, emphasise that policy evaluation should also accommodate the concerns of 'constituency groups'. This is not to say that the political implications of a programme like Solidarity should be disregarded. Many critics of the Solidarity programme have stressed the political aspects involved in its design and implementation (Cornelius, Craig and Fox, 1994; Dresser, 1991; Bertranou, 1993). Community satisfaction should not be ignored either. For many communities around the country the introduction of a sewage system or public lighting or drinking water systems represent a major achievement in their everyday life. For them, whether those public works merely represent a pork barrel strategy, or whether they are primarily oriented by electoral politics is not really important.

Because of the poor living conditions which they have endured for many years, their perspective is not only pragmatic but also comprehensible.

The problem seems to be one of defining success and failure. According to Browne and Wildavsky (1984, pp. 212-213) quantitative measures of goal attainment and efficiency are the most obvious criteria of successful implementation, but they are only a beginning. For them successful implementation should consider various factors. First, the policy must effect change in behavioural, organisational, or environmental conditions. Second, it should be able to structure the implementation process by means of clear objectives and priorities. Third, it should have a valid theory of causality connecting instruments of policy to desired objectives. Fourth, it must possess adequate financial resources at the start, and sufficient power-co-operation among implementing organisations. Lastly it must have the ability to get the clientele involved as desired. This definition is followed here because it takes into consideration elements that traditional evaluations leave out but that are relevant to the evaluation of the implementation of a public policy.

COMPARING GOAL ACHIEVEMENT, EFFICIENCY AND QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

One of the main problems in evaluating goal achievement in relation to FOMUN, Children of Solidarity and FONAES is that they each had a double set of objectives, stated and unstated ones. In evaluating the programmes' performances a distinction must be made between these.

In relation to its stated objective, FONAES was less successful than the other two. The exigency of matching its regulations with its target population and the fears regarding the misappropriation of funds, limited its performance. For example, many of its projects were concentrated in areas with a high level of economic activity which showed minor levels of marginalization in the state. FONAES' supported projects which could have obtained funds from commercial institutions, rather than helping the poorest groups. By contrast, FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, produced better results, limited only by the size of the demand or by the availability of resources. Furthermore, the approval of projects different from those originally intended in FOMUN (e.g., the refurbishment of a church), and the increase in the quota of scholarships for each school in Children of Solidarity, enable them to achieve more than FONAES. There is one point to make clear in relation to the achievement of objectives of the Children of Solidarity programme. Although during the field work it was repeatedly suggested by officials of the programme that it had already produced an impact on scholar attendance, there is no assessment of the impact of the programme on early leaving. 46 percent of a sample of 378 children increased their attendance (NSP-UNICEF 1994, p. 36). Despite this, a more thorough analysis covering a longer period is still necessary.

Concerning the unstated objectives, FONAES and FOMUN were comparatively more effective than Children of Solidarity. While FONAES showed the possibilities of political demobilisation, FOMUN generated significant

community participation around the construction of public works, something that imposed a dynamic on local governments and required them to change their way of operation. But Children of Solidarity failed to perform better in this respect because the scholarship scheme only benefited a limited number of children per school and, therefore, the majority of the children and their families, considered that their responsibilities in collaborating with the programme were limited.

In terms of efficiency, FONAES represented a good cost-benefit option for the projects which could match its regulations because its funds were cheap in comparison with those offered by commercial credit institutions. However, in terms of the time involved for the approval of a project, the programme faced serious delays, again, due to its complicated procedures. FOMUN in contrast, was able to lower the cost of public works because using the community labour force saved money. As a direct result of community participation, the work was finished in good time and the level of satisfaction of the community was increased. When the public works were carried out by private contractors, however, the quality was not as good and complaints from the community increased. The most frequent delays were related to the structure of the budget cycle, rather than to procedures. The inefficiency of the Children of Solidarity programme was directly related to the poor performance of the agencies of the health sector and their lack of collaboration with the programme. As with FOMUN, the delays of the programme resulted from the dependence on the budget cycle in the country.

Qualitative evaluation includes the ability of the programme to effect change in behavioural, organisational or environmental conditions. Again FONAES is different from the other two. By using the programme as a tool for political demobilisation, it merely reinforced the values and practices that had prevailed in the Mexican public administration and political system. FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, by contrast, introduced institutional changes such as the Solidarity Committees and Solidarity Municipal Councils that allowed the participation of new actors in policy areas that were previously dominated by bureaucratic actors. This is a significant element because it influences the way public institutions have to perform in the future at the community level. This is one of the most significant elements of the solidarity strategy. It created institutions that opened up opportunities for actors that traditionally have been excluded from the decision-making process.

Qualitative evaluation of the implementation process, is related to the programmes' ability to restructure the implementation process. Although FONAES had clear objectives, the procedures and rules governing its implementation limited its efficacy and efficiency. By concentrating on the criteria for the allocation of funds, the programme lost its social aim. The procedures and rules were only relaxed as a result of a political imperative and not in a search for social feasibility as was stated. FOMUN and Children of Solidarity were flexible and their objectives and means were redefined as necessary to allow the programmes to operate with maximum efficiency and efficacy.

Another component of qualitative evaluation concerns the analytical framework behind the implementation of the programmes. As far as FONAES is concerned, it applied rigid requirements of a commercial nature to an economic sector characterised by its inability to meet commercial criteria. However, it is too soon to say whether the programme produced a behavioural or organisational change, and even if that was possible, it is significant that the largest number of groups supported by the programme, were in urban areas, Isla del C armen and Campeche, and thus, it is easy to suppose that if change in behavioural or organisational terms occurred, it might have been as a result of their previous experience in economic activities and not as a result of the programme. By contrast, FOMUN and Children of Solidarity programmes developed a coherent relationship between the instruments of policy and the desired objectives

FONAES had unlimited access to funds in contrast to FOMUN and Children of Solidarity. These two faced problems throughout of insufficient and unreliable funding because of their dependence on the budget cycle.

In terms of power and ability to gain the co-operation among the participating agencies and to get the clientele involved, FONAES again was the least effective particularly because its design did not contemplate community participation. FOMUN obtained collaboration from the agencies involved and was able to involve its clientele, because it offered benefits to those who participated. Children of Solidarity, was only partially able to involve its clientele in the process, namely those children that benefited from the programme. The health agencies

failed to collaborate adequately, because their participation implied increased work and no extra pay.

Finally, in so far as the programmes overcame their problems, this was because they all had presidential support, popular mobilisation and access to funds. In relation to presidential support, this allowed FONAES, for example, to have unlimited access to funds or, as happened with Children of Solidarity and FOMUN, to displace actors that traditionally had controlled some policy arenas such as the allocation of contracts, or the allocation of scholarships (see Streeten 1994, p. 140). Although resistance had to be overcome and informal negotiations and concessions made, the programme still managed to perform as desired.

The allocation of resources in the three programmes was also a common element. Popular mobilisation was a *sine qua non* in Children of Solidarity and FOMUN. In both, popular mobilisation was perceived by public officials as essential to improve the quality and, in the case of FOMUN, even the quantity of the provision. Community involvement, however, was not essential in FONAES. Here it was limited to the presentation of projects and was relatively unimportant.

The analytical framework that underpinned the programmes was adequate in FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, but not in FONAES. Paradoxically, the programmes with limited access to funds, showed better results than FONAES with unlimited funding. Children of Solidarity and FOMUN showed more power than FONAES in gaining collaboration and co-operation between agencies and

clientele. The characteristics that would have made FONAES a decentralised programme were never apparent because it was not a service-oriented programme like FOMUN and Children of Solidarity. This programme was not offering a service like Children of Solidarity and FOMUN, both of which required continuous interaction over time between the deliverer and the recipients of the service.

Community participation was only possible in those programmes where the delivery of a service was involved. The inclusion of the community in the process was less costly and more effective in terms of matching needs and resources, and thus increasing the level of satisfaction. While in Children of Solidarity and FOMUN this component was fundamental, in FONAES it was more a formality than the real thing.

EXPLAINING DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES

According to Yin (1994), if there are more differences than similarities empirical generalisation is not possible and the study will become one of historical interpretation. But if there are more similarities than differences, then generalisations can be drawn and the study will become one of causal analysis.

From the previous analysis the programmes show the following similarities:

- All programmes had presidential support.
- All of them are part of the government anti-poverty strategy of Solidarity with a bias to project idealism.
- All experienced delays
- The programmes had a hidden political agenda, that is, their unstated objectives.

Their differences are:

- The programmes are different in their degree of centralisation, FONAES was centralised and FOMUN and Children of Solidarity were equally decentralised.
- FONAES showed less local representation than FOMUN and Children of Solidarity.
- FONAES gained little local support whereas this was strong in the case of the other two programmes.
- FONAES had fewer actors than FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, each of which had an equally large number of actors.
- FONAES was not dependent on the budget cycle, as were the others and was also much more generously funded.
- Two of the programmes, FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, aimed to provide a service and not to produce a process like FONAES.
- FONAES showed no flexibility to adjust its procedures to local conditions as with Children of Solidarity or FOMUN.

It is clear that the study was more fertile in identifying differences than similarities. In general, FONAES stands alone, while FOMUN and Children of Solidarity share more characteristics. This suggests an historical interpretation and not one of empirical generalisation. The atypical case is FONAES which although included in the anti-poverty strategy, showed, by virtue of its objectives, strategies and methods of implementation, a mismatch with the solidarity strategy. Its achievements are to be seen in the long term, and as such, its natural bureaucratic environment cannot be tied to a presidential term. If it had been possible to insert this programme in a long term strategy, rather than in a conjunctural anti-poverty initiative, success would have been more likely. By contrast, FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, are suitable for short term strategies because they represent a trend in terms of anti-poverty programmes, that is, the inclusion of non bureaucratic actors whose participation has been temporal and tied to certain political projects.

However, when comparing Children of Solidarity and FOMUN, the similarities are overwhelming. They only differ in the incompatibility shown with other commitments. While the old scheme of scholarships was considered by some teachers and head teachers a better strategy, FOMUN represented a better option because in many cases the programme increased the funds that local and state governments had received traditionally by the normal federal funding scheme.

One condition necessary to produce better implementation is to offer to all actors involved, attractive pay-offs to gain their collaboration and increase their sense of urgency. If a programme cannot offer pay-offs to the actors involved, it will not generate collaboration and an appropriate sense of urgency. In fact, the sense of urgency only seems to be important to participants when they perceive that their collaboration will bring positive compensations.

The number of actors involved in the implementation of a programme is not an important factor for a policy to be effective, rather the kind of actors involved, the nature of the programme and the set of norms which establish their interactions.

From the previous analysis, the inclusion of the target population in designing a policy and in the implementation process is important, no matter the number of actors it may require and the perspectives they have. Collaboration and co-operation with the programme will be obtained from all the actors involved if, by participating in the process, they receive compensations. Perhaps one of the

problems with policies aimed to effect change in behavioural, organisational or environmental conditions, is that they usually represent threats to bureaucratic actors within any area of policy. A policy is more likely to succeed if it transforms such threats into opportunities. FOMUN clearly exemplifies this. Although its rules were clear so as to minimise the diversion or misappropriation of funds at the state, municipal and community level, they were also vague enough to accommodate the interests of all its participants. All they had to do was find the way. Sufficient allocation of funds is essential but FONAES demonstrates that this does not guarantee successful implementation.

There is no one single cure-all technique for a successful implementation. The context, the programme, the participants and the rules of the programme, can all produce different combinations. That is why few recommendations may be drawn from the analysis of the implementation of each programme. When considering the cases under study as a whole, as combinations of interactions, the possible results will always be different.

Although Derthick (1972) and Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) have different measures of successful implementation, they conclude that only limited and relative success is possible. For Derthick, mutual adaptation essentially means that no federal programme will be a complete success. The process of mutual adjustment will necessarily produce a programme which is not federal, nor local, but a mixture of both. This mixture also explains the delays, costs, and lack of achievement of the objectives which are the natural consequence of the process of

implementation. For Pressman and Wildavsky, on the other hand, success will always be a function of the technology required to effect change in behavioural, organisational and environmental conditions, and also, will depend on the size of the problem and the magnitude of the change required. As Browne and Wildavsky (1983, p. 230) argue 'in our evolutionary (or learning) view of implementation as mutual adaptation a little anticipation and a lot of resilience go a long way. Combining the two so that there is continuous mutual adaptation between programme and experience, implementation then being both prospective and retrospective, is admittedly a compromise. It is neither insistent on existing programmes or on systemic change but on the gradualism implied in the evolutionary metaphor. Error remains, but, we think, it is not as great as if either approach were followed alone.'

Therefore, there are no absolute criteria for success because any products from the learning process which result from the implementation of policies, will be incorporated into the design of new policies. In this sense, the innovations or the results of the learning process will remain in the area of design and not in the area of implementation, an area that has to be open to trial and error and continuous learning.

CONCLUSIONS

An examination of the process of implementation of the three programmes illustrates that even in a centralised political system like the Mexican one, local

actors successfully challenge the rigid procedures that such centralisation implies during the implementation of public policy. Indeed, the FONAES programme supports Derthick regarding the limitations of centralisation and the impossibility of a federal government avoiding local modifications of the policy. But conversely, decentralisation or maximising discretion at the point of service delivery in a context prone to politically motivated meddling, without effective means of control, may result in worse results. Furthermore, the evidence presented suggests that Children of Solidarity and FOMUN were successfully implemented despite fundamental decisions remaining centralised and despite the lack of consensus and negotiations with local actors. This was because the programmes were flexible enough and adapted their procedures and goals according to the context. Nevertheless, flexibility seemed to be much more important than building a local consensus or promoting negotiation with local actors.

In relation to the allocation of resources and interorganisational relationships, the evidence suggests that the availability of substantial resources, as in the case of FONAES, does not guarantee effectiveness. The analysis suggests that in order to influence local actions and gain collaboration, the creation of incentives seems to be essential. FOMUN offers the best example in this respect and FONAES the worst.

Local representation proved to be important in the implementation process. FONAES again stands alone because spaces for local representation were not created. The same situation accounts for the generation of local support during the

implementation. Finally, in two of the cases, Children of Solidarity and FOMUN, an adaptation process allowed the goals and the way they were achieved to be transformed or adapted to the needs and expectations of the target population, an element absent in FONAES. By doing this, the Children of Solidarity and FOMUN programmes achieved more effective implementation.

It is clear that the number of actors involved is not directly related to the success of the programme. Perspectives and rewards, rather than the number of actors, matter most. However, complexity is certainly related to the number of participants but also to the particular policy area. In this respect, FONAES shows that although the number of participants was comparatively small, its implementation was less effective. Whereas Children of Solidarity and FOMUN were complex but yet more effective.

An important element in the effective performance of the programmes was the analytical framework that oriented their implementation. While Children of Solidarity and FOMUN rightly connected instruments of policy with objectives, FONAES failed to do so. Maximising discretion is not necessarily effective in improving the implementation of a public policy. The conditions in which this occurs determine its usefulness.

Finally, there is a distinction that has to be made in understanding the differences between the programmes. This refers to procedurally-oriented programmes and goal-oriented ones. If a programme can be successfully expressed

in procedural terms, if its success depends upon the adoption of certain procedures and on the involvement of certain people, then its chances of successful implementation are much greater. In a goal oriented programme, where success depends on results and not on procedures, then the chances of successful implementation are less. It is true that FOMUN and Children of Solidarity are both committed to the achievement of goals and procedures but they are more representative of the first case in which the objective was to get people involved. But even if the construction of public works or increasing school attendance were partially achieved, popular involvement was important for its own sake. In FONAES on the contrary, the whole structure was subordinated to producing real jobs and if the programme could not do that, then the programme was a failure. Because of this, it was more vulnerable to implementation failure. While FONAES depended only on one measure of success, Children of Solidarity and FOMUN depended on two, in terms of process and in terms of goal achievement.

In short, this research shows that there are some areas in which we have confirmed existing theory and other areas in which we have added new knowledge to the understanding of the process of policy implementation. What the implementation of the programmes shows is that there are no formulae for the implementation of a policy, which can be applied without considering contextual variables. This is the problem with the three theoretical approaches reviewed in this chapter. Decentralisation seems to be a better strategy to connect federal initiatives with local needs. It is logical to think that the more participants in the

implementation of a policy, the more complex it gets and the less chances it has of succeeding. Or that maximising discretion at the point of service delivery will improve the effectiveness of a public policy. Nevertheless, all sorts of recommendations with such degree of generality are condemned to fail if they do not take into consideration the context in which they will be eventually implemented. It is necessary therefore to insist that the implementation of a public policy be considered as a whole, as a combination of characteristics which include the inherent features of the policy and the contextual variables.

In political terms the research has also produced useful information. The comparison of the programmes showed that in Mexico the presidency still exerts important influence in policy making and implementation. But we must not overlook the importance of the political manoeuvring of bureaucratic actors at federal, state and municipal level. Studies like this one are useful in illustrating the means by which bureaucratic actors can obstruct policy implementation. This reinforces the assumption that the governing coalition in Mexico is far from homogeneous. Because of its multi regional composition, interests at the federal level may not be coincident with those in the states. Indeed, policy design does not reflect this, but during the implementation stage local interests and perceptions emerge, frequently erecting insuperable obstacles to the implementation of federal policy.

The disparities between federal intentions and local ones, also reflect the extent to which the intra-elite struggles of the governing coalition in Mexico are

affecting policy making and implementation. This partially explains why the communitarian model of policy implementation of Solidarity was so unanimously rejected by party actors at all levels in Mexican politics, who perceived it as a threat to vested interests and to the patronage and clientelistic oriented model in which policy making and implementation had been based for decades.

Because of this multi-regional composition of the political elite, it was difficult to find a single and recurrent pattern in the country. In some places the programme achieved more because the implementation of the programme encountered a balance of power receptive to the model embedded in Solidarity. In others, like Chiapas, the programme was perceived as a federal attempt to change that balance of power and the successful implementation of the programme was seriously diminished. Likewise, in Campeche the results were mixed. While in some municipalities the programme performed well (Hopelchén), in others (Campeche and Isla del Carmen) its performance was less effective.

In sum, because the implementation process is political, the success of Solidarity depended largely on the extent to which it affected the balance of power in a given situation. Where resistance was significant, presidential power, availability of resources and incentives, and community participation were essential to overcome it. Because of this, policy implementation may well be a process of mutual adaptation, but most importantly it is a process of political negotiation which cannot be anticipated and which has to be directed with flexibility, resources, clear objectives, and as Wildavsky notes, with a bit of luck.

Chapter 7

From Solidarity to the National Alliance for Welfare

INTRODUCTION

Presidential transitions in Mexico represent an opportunity for the governing coalition to redefine the political agenda and to alter the distribution of power in the country. Changes may show certain continuity (Miguel Alemán/Ruiz Cortines) or signs of rupture (Cárdenas/Ávila Camacho); these may be restricted to certain policy areas, while others may show some sort of continuity. But such changes are a key element in the political and economic reshaping of the Mexican political system.

However, there are other causes of change. In a political system in which the President has a significant role in the designation of his successor (the Calles syndrome), the new president and his administration are nevertheless urged to show autonomy and independence in the design and implementation of policies. Presidential transitions in Mexico then, allow the incoming coalition to impose its vision of the country and to break with the previous one. This partially explains the lack of continuity in many areas of policy. This is aggravated by the fact that presidential initiatives have traditionally been the most important source of policy making in Mexico. Therefore as soon as the new administration takes office, those policies that have the former president's personal stamp are either modified or abandoned.

But the country has also changed in the last 12 years. Economic and political circumstances have limited the manoeuvring of new administrations. In the context of economic disaster, growing social concern, and political instability, the chances of designing radically different policies have been seriously reduced.

The context in which the last presidential transition took place was hardly smooth. Economically, the Zedillo administration had to cope with several problems: a devalued peso; a banking system on the brink of collapse; eroded international reserves; increased external debt and capital flight.

Politically, although Zedillo's presidential election was legally recognised by all parties, the new president took office facing a lack of political support and credibility and in general, a political crisis of a kind not seen in the country for more than 50 years. Political assassinations, an alarming increase in crime and public insecurity, not only in the city but around the country, coupled with growing repression by recalcitrant governors, characterised the first days of his administration. The problems of Chiapas, far from being solved, have been added to by the guerrilla movement in Guerrero. There are signs too, that similar movements exist elsewhere suggesting the growing militarisation of the country. During the first year of government, important changes at ministerial level reflected the lack of political stability inside the new administration. The Home Secretary,

considered as a moderniser, was replaced by an old politician identified with PRI's hard-liners and the governor of the state of Nuevo León resigned¹.

Economically and politically then, the new administration must find policy innovation difficult. Some sort of continuity is more likely. In economic terms, the Zedillo administration has strengthened structural reform by further deregulation, privatisation and the reinforcement of a market oriented economy (Carstens and Schwartz 1996). In terms of social policy, the new administration is also following an antipoverty programme that does not differ greatly from that of the Salinas administration. The so-called National Alliance for Welfare-NAW has replaced the PRONASOL and although many of the sub-programmes of solidarity have disappeared, the most important still remain.

The objective of this chapter is to describe the new anti-poverty policy of the Zedillo administration, the National Alliance of Welfare-NAW, and how the current political and economic context has affected its design and implementation. The main differences with its predecessor will be highlighted less in terms of procedures than in terms of the politics involved in its redefinition. Some remarks will be made concerning NAW's future before drawing some conclusions.

¹ This is an unwritten rule of the Mexican Political System. Governors are not responsive to their electorate but in formal terms. In practice, they do not resign to their posts unless the President decides so and only if there exist serious concerns about their loyalty to the President. Publicly, their resignations are justified on the grounds of 'health problems' or serious scandals of corruption. Although the Rizo administration incurred in nepotism and influence trafficking, it is commonly accepted that the Governor's personal relation with former President Salinas played a more significant role in his resignation.

NAW'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

The context in which the National Alliance for Welfare is being implemented is completely different from that of Solidarity where there was a plethora of resources produced by a major process of privatisation, a strong fiscal reform and a re-negotiation of the Mexican external debt. The economic situation within Mexico changed radically in December 1994 and the new administration under Zedillo was inaugurated in a context of severe austerity. As Pánuco-Laguette and Székely (1996, p. 189) note, a combination of an overvalued exchange rate; the lack of a clear policy in this matter and a high trade deficit as well as the rise of interest rates in the United States, resulted in massive capital flight and the devaluation of the Mexican peso. A severe financial crisis followed due to a lack of international reserves to meet short-term obligations, namely *tesobonos*, amounting to more than \$40 billion. This ended with an impressive rescue plan from the United States and the International Monetary Fund. Internally, the Mexican government took measures both to increase domestic savings and to reduce public expenditure. The prices of some public sector goods and services such as electricity, gasoline and petrochemicals were increased and government expenditure was reduced by 1.3 percent of GDP (Carstens and Schwartz 1996, p. 123).

Politically the situation was not easy either. Although factionalism inside the governing coalition had dominated the political scenario since 1982, when a new group of politicians joined the presidential office, it was under Salinas that this was problem became more severe. This caused political turmoil that directly

affected old forms of political control used for a long time by hard-line PRI politicians. The arrival of the so-called modernisers posed a threat to their interests. The exacerbation of the political violence of recent years could partially be explained in this way.

Unlike previous presidential transitions in Mexico, this political and economic context not only seriously restrained the government's room for manoeuvre but also gave continuity to certain areas of policy. The reasons for this are: first, Zedillo shaped his political career inside the Salinas camarilla or clique where he was appointed first as Secretary of Planning and Budgeting and later of Education², and therefore, many of the policies implemented now by Zedillo were already known to him. Second, continuity is likely to be the tone of the Zedillo administration because he holds that an economic policy of deregulation, an increasing role of market forces in the economy and the retrenchment of the state apparatus, are, under present conditions, the only viable and feasible economic alternative for the country. Finally, continuity is more likely because of the constraints imposed by the international climate. The process of integration implicit in the NAFTA and more importantly the conditions imposed by the economic rescue package granted jointly by the IMF and the government of the United States in 1995, limit the room for action of the new administration.

²For a study of the Salinas political clique, see Camp 1990.

Despite the fact that continuity is likely to be the tone of the Zedillo administration, his policies of new federalism and decentralisation, the reinforcement of the rule of law and his apparent distance from the PRI, deserve particular attention.

ZEDILLO'S NEW FEDERALISM AND DECENTRALISATION

The "new federalism" of the Zedillo administration aims to redistribute authority, responsibilities and resources to states and municipalities in the country, as well as to bring to an end the historical inclination towards centralisation and authoritarianism which has concentrated resources, decisions and incentives and which has discouraged the participation and balanced development of Mexican regions. It is his conviction that by means of a decentralisation process, a more effective use of resources and a more sensible response to local needs will be achieved. Implicit is the fact that by transferring resources and decision-making responsibilities to states and municipalities, it will be easier to palliate the effects of the economic crisis and the related costs of the stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes. So far, according to Zedillo's Second State of the Nation Report (1996), specific actions have been taken to ensure the achievement of this objective, such as the transfer of two thirds of the national resources allocated to anti-poverty objectives and the increase of power in states and municipalities, allowing them to control levels of taxation in their jurisdictions. It is too soon to evaluate whether these policies have fulfilled their administrative purposes; but their meaning in political terms is significant.

The new federalism and decentralisation policies of Zedillo serve to bring the government political legitimacy in times when it is badly needed. Many policies under Salinas were implemented with a firm and tight control from the presidential office. Indeed, the centralised way in which federal programmes are implemented around the country is not new. But there is a general agreement that it was under the Salinas administration that such centralisation reached its apex. In the case of Solidarity for example, the role of the state branches of federal SEDESOL competed and sometimes seriously confronted the authority of state and municipal political actors. The role played by the state branches of federal SEDESOL was a source of conflict with governors and mayors who either perceived Solidarity officials as a threat to their vested interests, or as a threat to their authority. Political differences between the federation and some states were so strong that by the end of the Salinas' administration, 17 governors had been forced to resign (Serrano 1996 p. 17). It is true that the country can no longer afford the costs of centralisation in the current economic and political circumstances. But, it is also true that the policies of the new federalism and decentralisation may well serve the purposes of re-establishing the balance of power that the Salinas administration seriously disrupted.

This is one of the differences between the Salinas and Zedillo administrations. While Salinas had the resources, both political and economic, as well as international support, to bypass entrenched bureaucratic and regional political interests, Zedillo is highly limited in this respect. Salinas could afford the

implementation of an ambitious social initiative by bypassing bureaucratic interest and by actually confronting the traditional forms of political domination and party politics. But Zedillo is seriously constrained and he cannot afford to shake-up the political structures and institutions as Salinas did. On the contrary, he has to clean up the political mess left by Salinas and try to calm the intra-elite struggle that Salinas seriously altered. This is partially why the changes introduced to the NAW reflect the ascendancy of bureaucratic actors in the implementation process.

However, while those changes may bring political support from governors, federal advocates, and in general from those groups who were affected during the Salinas administration, they are not visible for ordinary people. Instead, the Zedillo administration is looking for popular support by presenting his administration as one morally concerned, based on honest and rigorous performance, and by reinforcing the rule of law. This is the basis of his political appeal and presumably that is why he does not need spectacular new policies.

THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR WELFARE-NAW

Based on a philosophy of new federalism, decentralisation, regional development, and community participation, the new government's anti-poverty policy aims to be comprehensive, federalist and participatory, all-embracing and effective. In accordance with the National Development Plan's guidelines, the NAW will implement its programs to pay appropriate attention to Indian peoples, agricultural day-workers, young people, the disabled, and the elderly. Like Solidarity, the

NAW covers essential areas that according to international organisations (ILO 1995, p. 25), any anti-poverty strategy must cover in periods of economic adjustment. In the new anti-poverty strategy of the government, programmes such as the Emergency Employment Programme, the modified version of the FONAES programme, and a programme for the decentralisation of health services, seem to echo this preoccupation.

The NAW is made up of 5 national Funds: the Fund for Social Municipal Development (FSMD), the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Groups, the Fund of Support of Social Groups, the Regional Development Fund and the National Fund in Support of Solidarity Enterprises (FONAES). Four other programmes are also included. These are the National Programme for Family Nutrition, the Emergency Programme for Temporary Employment, the National Artisanship Fund and a programme in support of arid zones through the National Commission for Arid Zones-CONAZA.

The NAW differs from Solidarity in two important respects. First, it has redefined both its target population and the regions which deserve urgent attention. While the resources of Solidarity allowed broader targeting, the NAW is more narrow in its scope and therefore less politically beneficial. This is so because better definition of target groups diminishes likely spin offs which, as with Solidarity, carries political advantage. Rigid targeting as in the case of Solidarity was not necessary because the programme wished to accomplish two objectives: it had to palliate the effects of the major economic restructuring process of the

country, and also to build new political relationships. By means of loose targeting, the programme created spin offs from which political support was gained and this was reflected in the 1991 elections. However, NAW has a more strictly economic rationale and so rigid targeting had to be applied. Thus the popular support that usually accompanies more broadly targeted programmes is lacking.

A second difference with Solidarity is that the policy of decentralisation has actually reinforced the role of states and municipalities in the decision-making and implementation process of the programme, something that had been diminished under the solidarity scheme. In practice, decentralisation has meant the reallocation of more resources to states and municipalities and the reinforcement of their authority vis-à-vis the federation. According to Zedillo's second state of the nation report (Zedillo Ponce de León 1996), 7,150 billion pesos of the 11 thousand billion of the anti-poverty budget, the so-called Brand XXVI, in 1996 have been transferred to municipal governments.

FUND FOR SOCIAL MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT-FSMD

The Fund for Social Municipal Development-FSMD aims to provide poverty pockets with minimal urban services by the allocation of funds in areas of basic, social and productive infrastructure. Basic infrastructure includes drinking water projects, sewage, health and educational infrastructure, electricity and rural feeder roads. Public works of a different kind can also be funded upon the decision of the Municipal Development Council (MDC), the basic unit of operation of the programme. The FSMD also allocates federal funds in municipalities for the

implementation of educational programmes such as the Incentives for Basic Education-IBE (*Estimulos a la Educación Básica*), which replaces the Children of Solidarity programme. Finally, in productive terms, the FSMD allocates funds for the implementation of the programme Credit on Word-CW (*Crédito a la Palabra*), which substitutes Solidarity Production Funds and the objective of which is to share the risk with producers in zones of barrenness. Compared to Solidarity, an important element has been added to the operation of the programme. This is the funds allocated for projects aimed to strengthen the administrative abilities of municipal governments by including in its operation budget allocations for courses, the acquisition of equipment as well as studies that might help to develop administrative and institutional capabilities at the municipal level of government.

The allocation of funds to states and municipalities is made according to their level of income as well as levels of poverty. The FSMD now transfers up to two thirds of national funds of the anti-poverty budget branch 26, 'Poverty Suppression' (*Superación de la Pobreza*)³ to the municipalities through the state governments which must distribute the funds in their territory according to a formula based on population distribution.

As with the PRONASOL, community participation in the funding of the projects is important. The community has to contribute at least 20 percent of the total cost of the project, either money, manpower or local materials. If the projects

³Under the PRONASOL this budget branch was called 'Solidarity and Regional Development'.

are for pavements or streets, the percentage must be 35 per cent, and in the case of parks, civic squares and small sport facilities, the community must contribute 50 per cent of the total cost of the project. It differs however from Solidarity in that more is expected from the community. Again the limitation of resources seems to be at the root of the problem.

In organisational terms, the Fund creates the Municipal Development Council (MDC) which substitutes the Solidarity Municipal Council as the central operative part of the programme and which replaces the community in deciding the projects to be implemented in the communities of the municipality. No allocation of federal funds is made to the municipality if it has not created its MDC. Although the Fund limits the kind of public works to be implemented, municipal governments may decide with the MDC the kind of public work, even if this has not been originally considered in the regulations of the Fund. Additionally, the MDC may be replaced by the Planning Committees for Municipal Development-COPLADEMUN, a bureaucratic board in each municipal administration that centralises the planning efforts at this level of government and which is also chaired by the Mayor. The new Fund, however, stresses that this can only be done if social participation is encouraged inside the COPLADEMUN. But this is a municipal prerogative

A municipal proposal of the number of public works to be carried out in each municipality is submitted to the state government for validation and funding. On submission, each project must be accompanied by technical files in which

details of the project are given. Community projects where the total value does not exceed £3,500 (roughly 40,000 new pesos) will be approved directly by the MDC without the State Government endorsement. Projects which exceed £3,500 have to be approved by the State Government. In both cases the resources are allocated to the municipality once they have been approved by the State government. Each community whose project was selected must create a Communitarian Committee which will be in charge of the implementation of the project. As with PRONASOL, the committee is selected in a community assembly and it is made up of a chair person, one secretary, a treasurer and a spokesperson from vigilance and control. Similarly, the implementation of the project must be carried out by the community, but if this cannot be done, it is up to the MDC to decide whether the project is contracted to a private company or carried out directly by the municipal government.

Differences from FOMUN

An obvious difference is that the new programme is less comprehensive than its predecessor. Although several programmes have been cancelled, the highly sensitive areas have been maintained. Because of the political discredit that the cancellation of certain programmes would cause, the former Children of Solidarity programme keeps its aims but with a different system for the allocation of the scholarships. Under the new regulations, the selection of children is made by a committee made up by parents and school authorities. Almost 800,000

scholarships were delivered to poor children around the country during 1996 (Zedillo Ponce de León 1996).

In organisational terms, the new Fund presumably works in a more decentralised way by transferring important decisions regarding financial and operational matters to states and municipalities. The Fund has reinforced the authority of mayors and state governors in the implementation of the programme. While Solidarity aimed to bypass recalcitrant governors and mayors who often diverted public funds, the FSMD now reinforces their role in the decision making process with regard to the kind of projects to be implemented, the management of resources and even in defining the modalities of community participation in the programme. One of the reasons for the centralised way in which the Solidarity programme was implemented was both to bypass some political actors at the state and municipal level who frequently divert public funds and at the same time to displace the power that bureaucratic actors have traditionally exerted in the implementation of public policies. But the new programme has reversed this. By introducing important institutional and financial changes, the role of state and municipal authorities in the decision making process has been reinstated.

Institutionally, the objective and functioning of the Municipal Development Council (MDC) has changed. Projects are now approved for implementation inside the MDC. While under the Solidarity programme community projects were funded as long as they were presented by a Solidarity Committee and met the regulations of the programme, now the approval of projects depends on the decision of the

MDC and not on the community's initiative. In this respect, under Solidarity municipal authorities sometimes played a rather formal role. Even if they blocked a community proposal, the state branch of federal SEDESOL, could still grant funds directly for the project, overriding municipal jurisdiction. Institutional and direct links existed between the community and the programme, in cases where reluctant municipal authorities could obstruct community initiatives. Now, although community proposals are considered by the MDC the decision for funding is taken inside the MDC which is chaired by the mayor, and who controls the whole process. It is then at the municipal level where community proposals are approved. Furthermore, the support which the community received from the state branch of federal SEDESOL, has been reduced. According to the Fund's manual of operation, the representative of federal SEDESOL can participate in the MDC with a voice but not with a vote.

Financially too, the role of the federation in the implementation of the programme has been diminished. Under Solidarity, for example, if a project met the regulations of the programme, and the municipal authorities blocked the project for any reason, the state branch of federal SEDESOL could fund the community proposal bypassing municipal jurisdiction. The direct link between the community and the source of funds created under Solidarity no longer exists. This has seriously diminished the community's bargaining position because, once presented for approval inside the MDC, the mayor will have an important say in deciding which projects are funded. The new role assigned to federal SEDESOL is that of

merely ensuring that the regulations of the programme are met and reporting the implementation of the programme to Mexico city. The role that bureaucratic actors lost under Solidarity, has now been restored. The problem is that in a bureaucratic structure like the Mexican one, public funds are frequently diverted by bureaucratic actors whose performance is oriented by patrimonial and parochial values and where public accountability does not exist.

The decentralised way in which the FSMMD now aims to work, must be analysed against the unwavering and determined way in which federal SEDESOL and the President himself implemented the Solidarity programme. Although the federal spirit of the new programme is positive, there is still the question of how such an spirit will be interpreted and implemented by recalcitrant governors and many other municipal governments who still rule in their territories employing and reproducing the same centralist attitude which they reject and where the rule of law is frequently displaced by discretionary decisions, patronage and clientelism.

THE NEW NATIONAL FUND IN SUPPORT OF SOLIDARITY ENTERPRISES-FONAES

Important changes have also been introduced to the FONAES programme. Under the new regulations, the state branch of the programme now allocates funds to productive projects in urban areas while those for rural one, are managed by the Credit on Word Programme. The projects are funded only if they have been jointly selected by a committee made up of representatives of the municipal government, the state branch of the National Chamber of Transformation Industry-CANACINTRA and representatives of state and federal SEDESOL. The funds are

now managed by each municipal government and the state branch of FONAES merely ensures that the regulations are met.

Proposals are now presented by individuals through the municipal government, which also helps the group with the formulation of the project. If the project meets the social and economic criteria of the programme, funds are allocated through an agreement between the programme, state SEDESOL, and the mayor. It is at this level that the control and supervision of the projects funded by FONAES are carried out. Federal and state SEDESOL simply monitor the management of the programme.

Differences with the old FONAES

The most significant difference from the old FONAES is that decisions regarding the approval and funding of a project are no longer taken in Mexico city. The central role of the federation in controlling the resources of this programme has been diminished. The more decentralised way in which the programme now operates will presumably speed up the process of allocation of resources to community projects but most of all, will presumably allocate resources in a more effective way. Under the old scheme, the time for funding a project took on average 6 months and sometimes, the projects which received funding were not necessarily the neediest. The new scheme assumes that by allowing the participation of local actors who are more familiar with the economic situation of the municipality, to select the projects, there will be better and faster targeting.

However, left to local politics, the selection of projects will not necessarily improve. First, if the regulations of the new programme regarding the use of funds are similar to the previous scheme, the degree of technical skills required for the elaboration of the project could hardly be met by municipal authorities who now must help individuals in the design of the projects since the private firms that used to do this have now disappeared. Second, the replacement of federal decisions by a collegiate and local body, will not necessarily translate into less time or better targeting, rather it might increase the time for deliberation since several actors (the mayor, the representatives of local business associations and those of federal and state SEDESOL) are now involved. The priorities of the governor, the mayor and local business may differ. Because it is highly unlikely that local politics will change during the next few years, the governor or the mayor will end up deciding what projects are funded. This was so in the old scheme but their role was held in check by the federation. Now that their role has been strengthened, there is less reason to be optimistic.

Another difference between the new FONAES and its predecessor, is that rural projects are now funded with resources from the Credit on Word programme, while FONAES will fund only those in urban areas. Better targeting could hardly be the reason for the new structure of the programme. In a state in which the main economic activity is agricultural, and in which the main pockets of poverty are located in rural areas, the exclusion of rural projects from the programme will seriously limit its impact, not only because the kind of enterprises that can be

created in the cities of the state will produce fewer jobs, but also because the population is already better off in the cities than that in the rural areas.

THE LIKELY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAW

Some features of NAW cause concern about problems which may arise in its implementation and its ultimate success. These were elements of importance in the Solidarity programme which have not received priority under NAW.

BUREAUCRATIC PREVALENCE OR MASTERY

A common thread runs through the new programme, that is, that the role of bureaucratic actors has been strengthened in comparison with that of the community. The new regulations of the programme have increased the power of bureaucratic actors in the implementation process. This can be justified to a limited extent. As noted by a municipal officer in the city of Campeche⁴, allowing the community to decide and implement public works does not necessarily translate into better results. In some communities, for example, it is quite hard for its members to reach agreement about very simple objectives. Deliberation, meetings, deciding whether the project will be public lighting or pavements, are processes that take time and which are not always coincident with the timing set by the federation for resource spending.

⁴Personal correspondence. March 7, 1996.

A second reason that reinforces bureaucratic leadership in the implementation process, is that community participation frequently represents a source of conflict among its members and political problems for municipal authorities. For some communities, approving projects in this or that area, usually reflects the preferences of the authorities for some groups inside the community. As mentioned by one informant, 'if you give to one, you have to give to all'⁵, a common situation is one in which projects only benefited members of the community who supported the mayor during his political campaign or the clientele of powerful neighbourhood leaders who grew up with PRI support.

Municipal authorities then not only decide where and the kind of projects to be carried out in the communities, but also implement the public works so as to speed up the building process and to diminish the conflict between community members and authorities.

NUMBER OF ACTORS AND PERSPECTIVES

The inclusion of new actors in the decision making and implementation of the programme is a significant element of the NAW. It is true that, particularly in the case of the Fund for Social Municipal Development-FSMD, the number of actors has not been increased compared with that of FOMUN. But in terms of policy implementation, it will be interesting to find out whether the FSMD is effectively

⁵Personal correspondence. March 7, 1996.

implemented having changed the norms that regulate the interaction between the actors involved in the implementation process.

Although the FSMD has not increased the number of actors, the likely success of its implementation has been diminished because the actor with a direct incentive for a successful implementation has been relatively displaced by the preponderance of bureaucratic actors. In contrast with FOMUN in which the reinforcement of institutional mechanisms increased the community's bargaining position in the implementation of the programme, the NAW in practice discourages community involvement and confines important decisions to state and municipal actors.

The new FONAES offers an interesting contrast. Under the old scheme, because the number of actors was very small, more effective implementation was expected. However, the results of the programme did not support such an assumption. Although in the case of FONAES the explanation for such a failure was not related to the number of actors but to the misleading analytical framework used by the programme, it proved that the programme was highly ineffective regardless of its reduced number of actors. Although it is too soon to evaluate the new programme's performance, it is likely that the increased number of actors involved in the decision making process will require more time, and the resources will not necessarily be better targeted because of the influence of local political actors.

PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

Presidential support proved to be an important feature of the implementation of the Solidarity strategy. The personal link that Salinas established with Solidarity gave the programme the necessary vigour to curb the administrative and political obstacles at the local level and to surmount the political inertia and technical flaws rooted in state and municipal administrative structures. But it is perhaps because of this personal link between the programme and the former president, that the new programme has not received the same political support from the presidential office. The enthusiasm of the Salinas administration for Solidarity was set aside and NAW was implemented like any other federal policy with only official support. But, as became clear with Solidarity, more than official support is required if anti-poverty programmes are to succeed in the context of weak institutions bedevilled by patronage and clientelism. Some groups may oppose the channelling of funds through local communities where this might interfere with patronage and where alternative power centres may develop. In the absence of a Salinas-style Presidential/community link, NAW is empowering bureaucratic actors in the process of implementation and decreasing the community's bargaining position, that is indirectly supporting patronage and the old order.

CONCLUSIONS

The policies of new federalism and decentralisation of the new government have introduced important differences in the operation of the NAW compared with Solidarity. The programme was designed not only to carry out a major transfer of

resources to states and municipalities, but also to give them a more important role in the decision making process as well as in the implementation of the programme. It still remains to be seen whether such decentralisation actually translates into more effective bureaucratic performance and satisfaction of local needs.

It has been contended here that bureaucratic structures and institutions in many states and regions in Mexico, are still under the control of local bosses and local governing coalitions who are unwilling or incapable of developing institutions that guarantee accountability and democratic procedures. Besides, the administrative skills in many municipalities in Mexico are too weak to receive and implement policies efficiently in a context of scarce resources.

It is too soon to know whether the NAW with its new framework will be effectively implemented. What is clear is that it has reversed some of the elements which made Solidarity a successful programme. It is true that recent changes in the economic and political circumstances of Mexico have limited the availability of resources and diminished the government's room for manoeuvre. But by empowering bureaucratic actors and depriving the community of an important ally in presidential support, the new NAW is putting aside important lessons from the Solidarity programme that could improve its chances of success.

But as in the past, it seems that the chances of improving bureaucratic performance in the implementation of public policies are not related to the learning process that is stressed by many authors (Brown and Wildavsky 1984; Korten

1980, 1984). Because the process of implementation is by its very nature a political one that alters the balance of power in a given society, it is subject to a complex process of political negotiation in which learning from the past is limited. This is precisely the way in which social policy in Mexico has been designed and implemented; not prospective nor retrospective, but short term oriented and always defined in the heat of the political moment.

Chapter 8

The Mexican Context: Lessons for Effective Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Drawing lessons in the field of policy implementation is not simple. One problem is that it is frequently assumed that by means of an improved design, problems related to the implementation stage will be minimised. But by placing the emphasis on the design of a policy it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the particular context determines the way in which a policy is actually implemented, regardless of whether it is well designed. Therefore, particular care has been taken to highlight the influences of the context.

Related to this, there is a problem of generalisation. Because many of the lessons emerge from and are confined to a particular context, it is difficult to estimate their value under different conditions. Despite this, the research provided significant information both for a re-examination of theory in the field of public implementation and for a discussion of the nature of the Mexican political system.

The objective of the chapter is to present a group of propositions that have emerged from the analysis of the implementation of the three programmes and to reflect both on the kind of obstacles that future implementation will encounter and on the changes required to improve the effectiveness of a policy in the context of the Mexican polity.

LESSONS OF IMPLEMENTATION THEORY IN THE MEXICAN CONTEXT*INSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND POLITICAL INERTIA*

The implementation of the programmes was substantially improved by an institutional reform, the aim of which was to empower relevant actors during the implementation of the policy and to curb the professional power that bureaucratic actors had retained in delivering public goods and services. This institutional reform opened up opportunities for communities which affected the vested interests of bureaucratic actors and political bosses in some regions of the country. The creation of the so-called National System for Democratic Planning during the De la Madrid administration (1982-1988) and the creation of official opportunities such as the Solidarity Committees and the Municipal Development Councils (*Consejos Municipales de Solidaridad*), created an institutional means of allowing community involvement in an area that had previously remained under the control of bureaucratic actors. The empowerment of these new actors explains many of the tensions that arose between traditional leaders who had grown up with PRI support and the new kind of leadership created by the Solidarity strategy.

In terms of implementation theory, the research shows that even though accompanied by institutional reform, the addition of new actors does not necessarily increase the probabilities of failure of the implementation process. This is so because the new set of rules altered the whole logic of the programme. It was not a mere addition of a new actor to an old programme, but rather a new actor in a renovated institutional setting.

The institutional reform introduced by the PRONASOL also exposed some of the problems and opportunities embedded in the Mexican political system. But this institutional reform had more than a single objective. On the one hand, it served the purposes of reinforcing the image of the president and helping to rebuild the bases of political domination in the country (Dresser 1991). On the other, it created the conditions for implementing public policies that, in practice, increased the communities' bargaining position in the implementation process. This affected the interests of the old bureaucratic actors and opened the possibility of producing new political relations between the state and society.

In a similar way, the progressive establishment of institutions, first with the creation of the National System for Democratic Planning and a few years later with the Solidarity Committees, as the basic unit of operation of the National Solidarity Program, must be regarded not only as a step forward in the creation of more accountable and effective public institutions, but more importantly also as a further development of the intra-elite struggles between the modernizers and hard liners of the PRI which have characterised Mexican politics for more than a decade (see Knight 1990, p. 13). Whether such an institutional reform has had an impact on the balance of power in the country is still subject to debate. But in the end the institutional opportunities that opened the programme, actually empowered new actors and affected the way in which political bosses and cliques appropriated public funds. This is something that should not be minimised.

Internationally too, there are some interesting experiences which show that even when the stated goals of a policy are not entirely clear and consistent, the process that comes with the implementation of the policy nevertheless produces results of major importance. Consider for example the way in which health policy in the United States was 'reorganised' by involving community participation in planning activities in the sector. According to Morone (1995), community mobilisation became the backbone of a federal strategy to control the growing costs of medicare. But because legislation was not easy to achieve in the context of the 'antistatist ideology and weakness of political institutions' of American politics, federal control of the problem was not viable. Therefore, the new strategy appealed to the people to diminish the power of health 'professionals' in the field and to control growing costs. Once the strategy started to operate, community involvement in the field created problems in the sector. As the author notes, 'in the end, the lack of power which secured the legislation doomed the agencies. They did not have the political authority to achieve their policy goals. However, it is the process that mattered. The simple repetition of the HSA's regulatory circus, year after year in community after community, stripped the medical profession of its authority over medical politics.' (1995, p. 199).

However, the institutional reform initiated by the programme had to challenge the political inertia which is normally encountered in programmes that are subject to change. This was particularly evident in the sort of conflicts that emerged between old community leaders systematically cultivated by the PRI and

new leaders supported by the Solidarity strategy. Such conflicts were more acute in urban areas where vested economic interests have developed around public funds in Mexico. It was not surprising for instance, to find that some municipal authorities colluded with old community leaders against the new leaders supported by Solidarity. The re-allocation process of scholarships described in the chapter dedicated to the Children of Solidarity programme, and the disagreements between the municipal treasurer of Isla del Carmen and the federal representative of Solidarity in the municipality, not only highlights the problems that arise when a programme aims to effect change in structures and bureaucratic practices, but also provides evidence of the political nature of the implementation process.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL LEARNING

Community involvement in national programmes is frequently criticised because it presumably 'ends up as a set of programmes centrally designed, implemented by bureaucratic actors and highly unaware of local preferences' (Korten 1984, p. 176). However, this research shows that community participation can actually improve the process of implementation if accompanied by institutional reform.

First, although centrally designed, the Solidarity programme allowed opportunities for community participation in the decision making process and therefore, community preferences, needs and orientations were reflected either in the kind of works carried out in each community (FOMUN), or in the selection of children, as was the case in Children of Solidarity. Less obviously, the reluctance of FONAES officials to actively promote the creation of economic projects in

communities responds to the same logic. By allowing the community to come forward with economic projects that reflected its needs and preferences instead of forcing communities to engage in activities that might not be of interest to them, a direct link and a more clear identity between federal objectives and local needs and preferences was achieved. However, the importance given to community mobilisation in the three programmes varied. While in FOMUN and Children of Solidarity it was the priority, in FONAES it was subordinated to the creation of jobs.

Second, instead of merely assigning to communities a role in the decision-making process, their participation was extended to the implementation of the programmes. By this means, the dominant bureaucratic structures, which have usually captured public funds during the implementation process, were to some extent displaced. This produced not only political legitimacy for the new government but also more effective implementation because resources were better targeted. In short, in a favourable institutional environment through community involvement in the decision-making and implementation processes more effective implementation was accomplished.

Politically, community involvement in the programme was a significant political asset. The community participation element of the programme also produced an interesting debate. The institutional reform that the programme inaugurated opened up opportunities for actors who had traditionally been excluded from the decision-making and implementation process of public policy.

Apart from a more effective achievement of policy objectives, it is contended here that it helped to develop a process of social learning that can eventually transform the way in which communities interact with authorities in the provision of public services. The political significance of this process of social learning must not be underestimated. By means of a continuous interaction between authorities and communities the bureaucratic processes of decision-making and policy implementation are uncovered. This increases the community's knowledge of and bargaining position in the policy process.

The learning process generated by Solidarity has also a political meaning. It helped to develop what Somjee (1982, pp. 17-18) calls the community's political capacity which eventually can transform the political relationships between authorities and community. Cornelius (1975, p. 10) has also noted in analysing urban popular movements in Mexico, that a significant process of political learning results from the interaction of political and government agencies with communities. For him, this has important consequences not only for future political participation, but also for the development of attitudes and values towards the political system as a whole. Although a direct relationship between the implementation of the programme and government credibility and political performance is debatable (see Bruhn 1996), the recovery of the PRI in the 1991 elections is an indicator of the impact a programme like this can have on the political system (see Molinar Horcasitas and Weldon 1994).

Critics of the programme tend to neglect this issue arguing that even if the programme succeeds in creating new political structures, they are doomed to fail because they cannot escape from the control of the state. The root of this is a conceptual problem because for many the community approach of the PRONASOL was identified with a 'radical' tendency of community work which was 'primarily in the business of seeking ways radically to transform our present society into a very different one and was seeking to utilise community work to that end.' (Twelvetrees 1989, p. 46). It is in relation to this that the main criticism arises. Although some interpretations suggest that the National Solidarity Program was much more than a single anti-poverty strategy (Dresser 1991; Craske 1994) with wider and more significant political implications, its political importance should be carefully considered.

As an anti-poverty strategy, both its stated and unstated objectives were limited. In relation to the former, it is clear that the reduction or elimination of poverty requires more than a single administration¹. In relation to the latter, the programme could never have achieved a radical political transformation in such a short period of time because this was not its purpose in the first place. On the contrary, the social and political learning implied in the implementation of the programme must be regarded as an official effort in which popular demands have a specific place and are carefully limited in political terms. As the research shows,

¹For a discussion of the evolution of poverty in Latin America, see Lustig 1994.

when political alliances emerged between communities and opposition parties, as happened in the Atasta Peninsula in Campeche (see FONAES chapter), the programme used considerable amount of resources to break the link between the communities and those parties. The Salinas administration may be labelled with many things but not naivety. The programme certainly affected the balance of power in many communities around the country, but it was far from re-shaping political domination in the country, which requires much more than resources and strong political leadership to be accomplished.

The role of community participation in the programme has been exaggerated in another way. It is commonly assumed that there is a relationship between popular movements and democratisation. Hellman (1994, pp. 137-139) notes that there is a difference between 'a group dedicated to the day-to-day struggle for life's basic necessities and a political party that more properly bears the burden of theorising and organising to promote broad societal change and the expansion of institutionalised forms of democratic expression.' It is precisely such a difference that should be kept in mind when assessing the role of the programme in promoting community mobilisation. The programme aimed to improve the design and implementation of the anti-poverty strategy by involving community participation, and by means of this, to counteract the political power that bureaucratic actors had had in the process. It never attempted to transform the political system or the bases of political domination in the country. If the programme was successful in achieving a political objective, it was, as Craske

(1994, p. 45) notes, the establishment of a process by which traditional corporatist structures would be changed or displaced by new forms of corporatism.

This political evaluation of the programme is not necessarily at odds with the positive evaluation of Solidarity in terms of its policy implications which is implicit in the main body of this research. It is clear that different evaluations may result depending on the areas under scrutiny. While the policy implications of Solidarity were interesting and encouraging, the political meaning of the programme may be less promising. Therefore, the reader must not confront the political evaluation of Solidarity with its policy one. While Solidarity produced positive results in terms of policy, it also could have produced new forms of political cooptation, something that it is not necessarily contradictory.

The social learning process and the development of the community's political capacity that resulted from streamlining the implementation process, was the more immediate and pragmatic result of the programme and should not be minimised (see Haber 1994). The experience of the programme shows that in those places where previous experience of community involvement had taken place, implementation was substantially improved, showing that social learning has pay-offs not only for communities but for the political system as a whole. Indeed, the programme by no means attempted to transform the political system, its aims were less ambitious. It established on the contrary, a different pattern of interaction between authorities and communities which could eventually develop new political relationships. This is important in a country like Mexico where the prominence of

bureaucratic actors has led to a system of corruption and lack of accountability and where a programme like Solidarity represents an opportunity that must be fully exploited.

The social learning process also had an impact on the authorities' response to community needs. Responses varied from place to place depending on their perceptions, on how the programme affected the web of interests of certain actors and on the way it altered the balance of power in each community. This was not an unplanned objective of the programme either. As described in the FOMUN chapter, Solidarity officials and even the president himself, exhorted communities to bypass local authorities if they repeatedly obstructed the programme.

Finally, community involvement in the programme had another political significance. For a programme which was committed to effect changes in people's attitudes and to affect the interests of bureaucratic and political coalitions, the search for allies was essential. One of the assets of the Solidarity strategy was the creation of allies in the form of Solidarity Committees. The alliance between presidential political power and local communities was important in producing a shake-up in the balance of power and local established interests. The limitations on presidential power and on federal initiatives in the implementation process, were reduced by establishing such alliances with local actors. This was particularly evident in the case of the FOMUN programme in which central power achieved more than was expected considering the web of interests which surrounded the implementation process.

DECENTRALISATION: THE CASE AGAINST

It is commonly accepted that a process of decentralisation is not only essential for the modernization and democratisation of the country, but also would produce a more democratic exercise of power in the Federation. Nevertheless, the Mexican context a decentralisation process might not bring about the expected results. In some regions of the country, where institutions are weak and where in general the rule of law has been supplanted by discretionary decisions, politics are still dominated by recalcitrant local bosses. While in some states the programmes of solidarity were implemented according to their original purpose, in others, particularly where local political leadership differed from the *Salinista* project, objectives and resources were misappropriated. The states of Chiapas and Durango (see Haber 1994) are perhaps the most evident, where recalcitrant governors and local political elites saw in the programme a threat to their vested interests. Any decision to undertake further decentralisation in Mexico should bear these contrasting responses in mind.

Decentralisation may be helpful in advancing the modernisation of a country if, and only if, institutional strength and political commitment converge. If decentralisation is implemented in a context which lacks institutions and where the rule of law is weak, federal initiatives may be captured by local coalitions hostile to federal power (see Knight 1990, pp. 33-34).

This is not however a case in favour of centralisation. Historically and politically, centralisation is no longer viable nor desirable in Mexico. Centralisation

is only a means by which certain policies can be better achieved in a context characterised by weak institutions, where the rule of law has given way to discretionary decisions and in which there are no mechanisms and procedures that guarantee public performance. The new regulations of the new anti-poverty strategy introduced by the Zedillo administration, are presumably designed to this end. Zedillo has put special emphasis on mechanisms to accompany the new federalisation policy in the country. The question, however, remains whether such mechanisms, namely the Supreme Auditing Office of the Federation (*Auditoría Superior de la Federación*), will have the power and autonomy to overcome the political inertia of a political system in which the rule of law has given way to the discretionary powers of many regional and state political authorities. The flagrant violation of human rights and peasant assassinations in the state of Guerrero or the misappropriation of funds for political purposes as was the case in the state of Tabasco, leave little room for optimism.

INCENTIVES

The research has been useful in identifying incentives as an essential element in successful implementation. From a review of the literature in the field, only a few authors (Berman 1978, 1980; Hucke 1978, Luft 1976) explicitly recognise the importance of this issue. Incentives are particularly necessary in Mexico where bureaucratic performance in the country is characterised by rent-seeking practices (see Heller 1993).

Both the regulations of the programmes under the Solidarity scheme and those of the National Alliance for Welfare, leave room for discretionary decisions that at the local level, are usually transformed into opportunities for rent-seeking activities, as happened in the municipality of Isla del Carmen (see FOMUN chapter). These activities offered greater incentives than mere compliance with the federal mandate. In particular, some regulations of the programme, such as the possibility of transferring the implementation of public works from communities to municipal officials, speeded up the process of implementation and helped to gain collaboration from local authorities. They clearly perceived the benefits of managing the resources of the programme instead of allowing communities to control and spend such resources, as was intended by the regulations of the programme. But the search for incentives for participating actors and agencies in the implementation of the programme was not limited to economic and illegal benefits. Political credit and even bureaucratic prominence proved to be effective incentives in gaining collaboration from certain actors and agencies, as in the case with the DICONSA agency. As noted by an official of DICONSA, the political prestige that stemmed from participating in a presidential programme was also important. The lack of incentives diminished the collaboration from the health sector actors, for example, in the implementation of the Children of Solidarity programme.

Previous experience in Mexico support this argument. Redclift (1981, p. 9) notes that the SAM programme gave a 'boost to some government agencies which

were given priority under the programme...[particularly to CONASUPO that]...under the SAM it assumed a much more central role.' According to him, this helped the programme not only to gain the collaboration of its most important component, but also to improve its effectiveness. During the implementation of the Integral Programme for Rural Development-PIDER programme, the use of incentives to gain collaboration was also a determining factor. Cernea (1992, p. 9) notes that participation often fails because 'such programmes have not taken the *organisational* steps to translate the desirable participation into practice, or did not provide economic gains to the people expected to participate.'

BUREAUCRATIC AUTONOMY

The literature recognises that bureaucratic autonomy, that is, the degree to which certain public agencies are autonomous from pressures from other powers, i.e., legislative, or other bureaucratic agencies as well as from pressure groups, is an essential element in successful implementation (Davies and Mason 1982; Gunn 1978; McMahon, Barret and Hill 1982; Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979, 1981, 1983). Politically, however, the emphasis given to such bureaucratic autonomy might be detrimental to some of the foundations of a democratic government, such as federalism or the system of check and balances. However, its importance can hardly be exaggerated in a context which lacks institutions and effective means to ensure that the objectives of a federal policy will be achieved.

In the Mexican case, bureaucratic autonomy was achieved not only by granting the federal agency in charge of the programme (SEDESOL)

representation at ministerial level, but also by strong and direct political support from the presidential office. Thus, SEDESOL bypassed state and municipal powers undermining their constitutional authority. Severe criticisms were voiced about the so-called centralist and authoritarian way in which the programme was being implemented. Coupled with this autonomy and strength SEDESOL was also reinforced with an impressive budget for the implementation of the programme, which sometimes was used for different purposes from those established by the programme.

However, both the experience gathered from previous programmes and the nature of a context prone to politically motivated meddling with public funds, reinforced the assumption of the officials of Solidarity that a centralised decision-making process along with control of resources and isolation from political pressures from other agencies and powers, was actually an effective way of achieving the objectives of the programme.²

But the kind of bureaucratic autonomy achieved by SEDESOL was not in contradiction with the ethos of the community participation element of the programmes. That is, while bureaucratic autonomy implies the respect for the rules, levels of professionalism and efficiency, community involvement implies relaxation of rules and poor performance. Such a contradiction however, was diminished by making coincident the objectives of SEDESOL and those of

² Similar international lessons can be found in Graham 1994 and Nelson 1990.

community participation. In fact SEDESOL responsibility was precisely to ensure that community involvement was achieved in the way intended; that the possible relaxation of rules was minimised by adjusting programme regulations so as to cover all possible situations that emerged during the implementation process, and that certain levels of efficiency were achieved by improving targeting. The kind of bureaucratic autonomy and political importance granted to SEDESOL was different from that of other agencies. While SEDESOL became the means by which presidential control was exerted in the programme, other agencies had to fulfil their responsibilities and obey regulations, but at the same time, had to adjust their procedures to the logic of Solidarity. Indeed, this difference eventually resulted in jurisdictional and interbureaucratic problems due to such incompatibility.

PRESIDENTIAL POWER REVISITED: STRONG IDEALS, WEAK INSTITUTIONS

If the implementation of a policy is to succeed in the context of Mexican politics, it will require strong political commitment and support in overcoming the bureaucratic, economic and political interests that surround the implementation process. The reinforcement of presidential power in the absence of a strong institutional environment might produce undesirable effects on the implementation process.

It has been commonly accepted that the executive branch, and particularly the President, has a prominent role in Mexican politics. The President's legal and extra-legal powers have overshadowed both the legislative branch and the

judiciary. This has been seriously criticised on the grounds that it has undermined and prevented the development of democratic practices and institutions, that might eventually produce a more accountable and democratic political system. While this is true, it is also true that presidential power in Mexico has been useful in holding together a political system composed of a wide range of regional political interests.

Despite this, bureaucratic agencies both at the federal and state level, as well as regional and local political actors, can influence the policy process and actually oppose presidential power. But while their influence is hardly perceived during the design of a policy, which remains a highly centralised federal activity, it is during the implementation of a policy that they can pull strings to determine its success or failure. It is at this level where policies are adjusted, changed, or even ignored according to the needs of local political coalitions and interests. In Mexican politics, governmental programmes and policies are frequently taken over during their implementation. It is at this point that it becomes evident that presidential power is incapable of controlling the whole range of interests involved when a policy is implemented. As demonstrated in the research, even basic objectives of a policy can be distorted at the local level because of the array of interests surrounding the implementation of a policy. When the objectives of a federal policy are coincident with those of the local powers, the policy has a better chance of being implemented according to its original design. But on the contrary, when federal policy alters the structure or interests of those local powers, even

presidential power can sometimes be incapable of imposing its authority on local political coalitions.

The most important factor to be considered in order to understand the ability of regional political coalitions to resist and confront federal policies is that of elite circulation. Elite circulation has not taken place regionally as it has at the national level. While the so-called "revolutionary family" at the national level can afford different and even contrasting political projects (Cárdenas-Ávila Camacho or Echeverría/López Portillo-De la Madrid/Salinas), local or regional coalitions show less circulation and more cohesion and political ascendancy over time. In many states, it is the same old family and its inner circle that have held political power for a long time. In some regions political power is inherited from one generation to another (i.e., the Figueroa family in Guerrero) making local politics 'jobs for the boys'. This gives local powers the political strength to escape from the control of federal initiatives. The president in turn then is limited in his ability to control all the political groups around the country that in many cases have seen many federal administrations and presidential initiatives come and go. This has given them the power and ability to influence the outcomes of federal policies. Because presidential power is frequently unable or unprepared to counteract the political inertia embedded in the system, the implementation of the programme had to appeal to popular support to counteract the inertia and resistance of vested interests and bureaucratic actors during its implementation. This partially explains

the populist character of the programme and also the firm tenor with which it was implemented.

Nevertheless, it is clear that in a context of multiple political actors and interests, weak institutions, and discretionary decision making, strong political leadership and commitment as well as bureaucratic autonomy, are essential if a policy is to succeed. Its impact in developing a democratic political system is debatable, but it is the only way of confronting the wide range of political and economic interests that surround the implementation process. This is not a case for the authoritarian and centralised nature that characterises the Mexican political system, but it is clear that political leadership, commitment and power are essential for successful implementation in the context of weak institutions and adverse interests.

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of 'context' is the common thread running through this chapter and indeed through the research project. As O'Toole (1985) notes, this issue has been generally neglected in studies of policy implementation. That is why the emphasis placed on the Mexican political context has been a permanent concern. Some of the most influential ideas in the field of policy implementation have been reformulated because of their limited usefulness in explaining the implementation process in the Mexican case. It seems that, for instance, the debate between "top-down" vs. "bottom-up" does not make sense except in academic terms. In practice,

the choice between one or another of these approaches depends on the nature of the context in which the process of implementation takes place. In a strong institutional environment, where rules are clear and where all actors are expected to follow them, a "bottom-up" approach might yield good results because expectations of controlling the whole process are grounded in assumptions of minimal discretion at the lower levels where the policy is actually implemented. On the contrary, in a weak institutional environment, in which a highly discretionary decision-making process prevails, with a multiplicity of actors and interests, and where bureaucratic performance is more parochial than rational, in a Weberian sense, a "top-down" approach may be more useful in controlling as many variables as possible in the implementation process.

Instead of using a deductive analysis of institutions and practices in general, and then deducing the way in which they can affect the performance of policies, the research has described the implementation of certain policies and worked-back from there inductively to explain the way those practices and institutions operate in the political system. This proved to be an effective means of reviewing both the usefulness of implementation theories and many assumptions regarding the Mexican political system as well.

A second issue emerged from the analysis in this chapter, that of the transitional nature of Mexican politics. As Cornelius (1991, p. 4) notes, Mexican society is more complex and heterogeneous, more urban, better educated, rapidly being integrated into the world economy. Coupled with this, it is also the

accumulated effects of the economic model followed by the country for more than 65 years which has privileged economic growth but has not been able to trickle down its benefits to large sectors of the population and whose political behaviour is now more pragmatic than ever before. Finally, the political liberalisation process reinforced by the Salinas administration opened not only spaces for greater political participation but also produced important fissures in the governing elite and among bureaucratic structures as well. This has produced a slow but systematic change in voting patterns ending with the PRI overwhelming, though sometimes illegitimate electoral control.

Whether such transition will take the country to a more democratic society is debatable. As Cornelius notes (1991, p. 115) many scenarios are imaginable, but one thing is certain, after Salinas the Mexican economic and political system will no longer be the same. The important process of institutionalisation, shows encouraging signs of a democratic change. But its consolidation will depend on the strength of Mexican society and its ability to resist the opposition of political structures and practices still deeply rooted in the Mexican political culture.

This helps to explain many of the problems the programme had to confront during its implementation which are rooted in the clash between old structures and practices and new principles and rules, which is a distinctive feature of this transitional character of Mexican politics. It is precisely the transitional character of Mexican politics which makes necessary a rigid control of the implementation process, as was the case in the National Solidarity Program. The so-called

authoritarian and centralised way in which it was implemented is only understandable by reference to the context in which the programme had to be operated. In a political context riddled with patronage, paternalism and clientelist practices, coupled with weak institutions and lack of accountability, the significant transfer of public funds which the programme carried out would have encouraged the misappropriation of funds that the programme wanted to avoid if tight control had not been maintained. In this respect, the creation of allies during the implementation process by means of community mobilisation, not only produced more effective implementation by keeping local authorities in check, but also helped to counterbalance local political actors who are usually more independent from federal control than has been commonly accepted. That is also why the usefulness of a decentralised implementation process in a political context like the Mexican one is limited.

The transitional character of Mexican politics also imposes another challenge for the implementation of a programme like Solidarity. When an initiative attempts to displace or minimise the role of a group of actors in the implementation process, the policy must find ways of gaining their collaboration. In this respect the creation of incentives proved to be essential in gaining collaboration from participating agencies. But the creation of incentives requires a rather unrestrained control of the implementation process that can only be achieved by increasing the autonomy of the agency in charge of the implementation process. Many of the objectives of the National Solidarity Program were achieved because federal

SEDESOL had sufficient bureaucratic autonomy to control the programme and to create incentives alongside the implementation process.

It is evident that the debate regarding the relevance of the "bottom-up" or "top-down" approach in the field of policy implementation is unrealistic and therefore superfluous as long as it is not grounded in empiricism. The debate has not given proper attention to the fact that the implementation process is essentially a political one, which affects the interests of groups and because of that, which is subject to negotiation and continuous redefinition. That is why the analysis of policy implementation is useful in describing and understanding the way in which a political system works. The implementation of policy will not be improved by better design. The implementation process will have a better chance of success if it is accompanied by mechanisms of political negotiation that allow not only the achievement of its objectives, but also the minimising of political and bureaucratic resistance as well as gaining the collaboration of those groups which will eventually be affected by the implementation of the policy. Constant negotiation, setbacks and achievements, characterises the implementation process.

The lessons drawn in this chapter then are not aimed at prescriptive formulae that could improve the design of future policies, in order to increase the chances of successful implementation. On the contrary, we have stressed that the implementation process is a political one and that its success will be more likely if opportunities and limitations are identified and if those who give effect to policies fully understand the balance of power in a given political context.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

The objective of this research was to analyse the process of implementation of three of the programmes of PRONASOL and to demonstrate the influence of Mexican politics in this process, with particular reference to the state of Campeche. The analysis of implementation was placed within the context of the development of social policy and anti-poverty programmes in Mexico. It was shown that although some of the most common interpretations of its development offer interesting explanations, they are limited in explaining its variations through history. It was argued here that the development of Mexican social policy can be understood as a "muddling through" rationale, subject to particular circumstances and the attendant political climate. By its nature, social policy is eminently a political governmental activity. But this has been reinforced by the uses Mexican politicians have made of this policy. That is why more than one interpretation may exist in relation to its meaning and purposes.

It is in this context that anti-poverty programmes have gradually acquired importance in Mexico as immediate and rapid interventions which, although badly needed to ameliorate social inequalities, have not addressed the problem systematically. PRONASOL represented the latest effort to accompany the economic modernisation in which the country has been engaged for almost 15 years. The programme showed several similarities to some of its predecessors, but also significant differences. The analysis of implementation showed for instance,

that its political uses did not vary greatly, let us say from PIDER, but given the political conjuncture, it acted as a catalyst which prompted political changes and community attitudes which challenged vested interests and in the end, affected the balance of power in the country.

The case studies of FOMUN, Children of Solidarity and FONAES, were useful not only in confirming the explanatory value of existing propositions in the field of policy implementation, but also in providing alternative explanations that may improve the process of implementation.

The implementation of the FOMUN programme showed a tension between centralisation and decentralisation. A more decentralised implementation of the programme was achieved by an institutional reform, namely by the creation of the Solidarity Municipal Council and the Solidarity Committees, which opened up opportunities for community participation in the decision-making process and the implementation of the programme. However, such an institutional reform could not curb the power of bureaucratic actors who still managed to retain control of some parts of the programme. This demonstrated that the federal government was rather weak because it could not impose the programme without local support neither could it prevent its political appropriation by local actors. This partially explains why the programme had to be carefully controlled and why fundamental decisions, particularly regarding the use of funds, continued to be a central government prerogative. Federal delegates and representatives of SEDESOL at the state and

municipal level, played an essential role in this process. Through them, presidential control of the programme was achieved.

FOMUN also made evident the limited ability of federal government to control the implementation process and how this can be increased when the federal actor finds allies in the community. These allies helped to limit the power of the conventional, well organised elements in Mexican party politics and to produce a substantial shake up in the balance of power at local level. This showed particularly that Derthick is right when she explains and describes the limitations of central government in implementing public policies. But her analysis did not apply fully in the Mexican context where the president found allies among the divided local actors. Central power was thus able to achieve a great deal, despite the fact that this programme aimed ambitiously to introduce changes in the foundations of the Mexican political system.

FOMUN also showed that flexibility in the implementation process is essential for a successful programme. Such flexibility was derived from the procedural nature of the programme. Although goal achievement was important, the success of FOMUN can be better measured in terms of its implicit process, the way in which it altered the balance of power around the country and the social learning process that it produced in many communities. Whether the programme reduced poverty is debatable, but it succeeded in producing community mobilisation to shake up vested interest.

Contrary to one of the most important assumptions in the field of policy implementation, FOMUN showed that the inclusion of a new actor did not prejudice success. This was so because the logic of the programme was different from that of its predecessors. FOMUN was not an old programme that included a new actor. Its structure was based on a new actor around which a set of rules and institutions were created making the programme completely different. Thus the institutional reform which accompanied the implementation of a policy determined its success despite an increase in the number of actors.

The implementation of Children of Solidarity also generated important lessons in terms of policy implementation. As with FOMUN, Children of Solidarity had to impose a centralised control of the main components of the programme to ensure its success. The programme was controlled from outside its natural administrative home, the Department of Public Education-SEP, which inhibited the collaboration of this agency. But at the same time, Children of Solidarity transferred important decisions and powers to new actors, assuming that this would influence the way public services, such as education, are provided. Community participation was essential in stimulating the response of the participating agencies both in terms of performance and in curbing the power of entrenched bureaucracies.

Children of Solidarity also demonstrates that the generation of incentives is essential if policy implementation is to succeed. Participating actors who perceived no positive pay-offs were reluctant to collaborate, as was clear for agencies of the

health sector and for some teachers and educational authorities. For them the programme only produced an increase workload. On the contrary, collaboration was achieved from those participants that obtained positive pay-offs, as was the case with of the federal agency DICONSA. For state and local governments, the incentives for collaboration came mainly from the resources they received which they could translate into political support. However, this depended on the timely allocation of funds by the federation and the state. In the end, what could have been an opportunity turned out to be a problem because of delays.

With FOMUN, community mobilisation was used not only to secure the programme's objectives but also as a political tool to curb discretion which teachers, head masters, and educational authorities had developed inside the sector. This explains why SEP was not in charge of the implementation of the programme and reflects the federal wish to bypass the bureaucratic structures that permeate public performance in the country and which make it increasingly difficult to reach target populations.

Children of Solidarity also confirmed the findings encountered in FOMUN in relation to the number of actors and the conditions necessary for success. The programme showed that by reassigning responsibilities, and by giving access to actors who had a direct incentive in the effective functioning of the programme, the chances for a programme to succeed improved in spite of the number of actors involved.

As with FOMUN, flexibility was essential for the success of the programme. Local adjustment, was possible because of the direct link between the designers of the programme and those in charge of its "street level" implementation. Flexibility and mutual adaptation proved to be essential in the programmes success.

Children of Solidarity also shows that the displacement of actors during the implementation process does not guarantee successful implementation. In an attempt to improve its probability of success, Children of Solidarity gave back responsibilities to the community, as an essential instrument for achieving academic success and preventing children from leaving school early. But in the attempt, it left out the teachers, the other essential element in preventing early leaving. In a way, short term success was bought at the cost of long term failure because of the exclusion of teachers.

The implementation of the FONAES programme also offered important lessons. It helped to corroborate the findings of the previous chapters in the sense that it is not necessarily the number of actors and perspectives that determines delays and unsuccessful implementation, but rather the structure and strategy adopted.

In contrast to FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, the implementation of this programme remained highly centralised. This was so because FONAES' officials feared the capture of the programme by political interests at the state and

local level. By means of rigid controls and constant supervision, it was possible to prevent the diversion of resources and the political use of the programme. But the programme's rigid controls and the relative autonomy, enjoyed during the implementation process, resulted in bureaucratic delay and tension, not only between the programme and state agencies but also between FONAES and other units of SEDESOL.

Examination showed that major decentralisation of programmes like FONAES will depend on the institutional capacity of the states and the willingness of local political interests to implement these programmes in a way that secures effectiveness and accountability in the use of public funds. It is clear that in present conditions, the release of such an important source of funds to the states would have resulted in misappropriation, more patronage and clientelism.

Compared to the relatively successful implementation of FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, the main reason for the less successful implementation of FONAES was that it was based on a mistaken analytical framework. It attempted to impose an "entrepreneurial ethos" on groups who lacked the managerial, technical and economic capacity to operate with commercial success. It was clear that the programme, although created to promote different types of productive initiatives, was not able to work with a population who live in conditions of extreme poverty. Its assumptions did not match the target population something that militated against its success. This mismatch benefited some groups, namely co-

operatives, for which FONAES' funds represented a cheap source of funding to expand their economic activities.

The comparative chapter shows the main elements that resulted from the analysis of implementation of the three programmes. It demonstrates that current models, "top-down" and "bottom-up", of policy implementation are not useful in explaining particular cases and particular areas of policy as in the state Campeche. The context in which the implementation process took place proved crucial. In addition, it was demonstrated that a principle that could be applied in a certain area of policy, was not useful in another. While decentralisation increased the effectiveness of FOMUN, it would have produced worse results in FONAES.

While the advocates of a "bottom-up" approach suggest that by increasing discretion at the point of service delivery more effective implementation can be achieved, the research has demonstrated that increasing discretion in the conditions of patronage and clientelism of Mexican politics, would have produced the opposite result. The adoption of one particular model or approach to the implementation of a programme depends then on the power of local coalitions and on the political balance in each community where the policy will be implemented. In urban and more economically developed areas the programmes encountered more obstacles to their implementation, whereas in rural and less economically developed areas the implementation process was more effective. This, was so because the web of economic and political interests that have grown up around the implementation of public policies and public funds, are more powerful in urban

areas where the concentration of public funds and efforts have boosted the local economy and where the popular mobilisation component was more difficult to activate. It is in these situations where local political actors have a significant margin of political and administrative manoeuvre, that opposition to change is at its greatest. These actors have created a network of political and economic relationships that confronts and effectively counteracts central power. This was particularly evident in the case of FOMUN and for the construction of local urban infrastructure, where the 'project by contract' scheme has traditionally favoured the misuse of public resources.

The comparative chapter also highlighted the importance of incentives and local representation for successful implementation. While in Children of Solidarity and FOMUN local participation occurred, in FONAES this did not happen. The same situation accounted for the generation of local support during the implementation. Finally, Children of Solidarity and FOMUN, followed an adaptation process which allowed a transformation of their goals and the way they were achieved to the needs and expectations of the target population, an element absent in FONAES. All these conditions proved to be essential for achieving effective implementation.

The comparative chapter emphasised too the nature of the three programmes and how this affected their success. While Children of Solidarity and FOMUN were procedurally-oriented programmes FONAES was goal-oriented. It was shown that the possibilities of success are greater in procedural than in goal

oriented programmes. It is true that FOMUN and Children of Solidarity were both committed to the achievement of goals and procedures but they are more representative of the first case in which the objective was to get people involved. Therefore, even if the construction of public works or increasing school attendance were partially achieved, popular involvement was important for its own sake. In FONAES on the contrary, success meant producing real jobs and if the programme could not do that, then the programme was a failure. Because of this, it was more vulnerable to implementation failure. While FONAES depended only on one measure of success, Children of Solidarity and FOMUN depended on two, in terms of process and in terms of goal achievement.

In chapter seven the new anti-poverty strategy of the Zedillo administration is discussed, and its character is examined. The National Alliance for Welfare-NAW was designed not only to carry out a major transfer of resources to states and municipalities, but also to give them a more important role in the decision making process as well as in the implementation of the programme. It was concluded that by empowering bureaucratic actors and by depriving the community of an important ally in presidential support, the new NAW is overlooking important lessons from the Solidarity programme that could improve its chances of success.

This research also produced important lessons on how the political context influences the implementation process. The importance of 'context' was a constant theme in the research. Some of the most influential ideas in the field of policy

implementation have been reconsidered here because of their limited usefulness in explaining the implementation process in the Mexican case. The debate between "top-down" vs. "bottom-up" is useful in academic terms. But in practice, the choice between one or another depends on the nature of the context in which the process of implementation takes place. In a strong institutional environment, where rules are clear and where all actors are expected to follow them, a "bottom-up" approach might yield good results because expectations of controlling the whole process are grounded in assumptions of minimal discretion at the lower levels where the policy is actually implemented. On the contrary, weak institutional environment, highly discretionary decision-making, a multiplicity of actors and interests, and parochial bureaucratic performance, could justify the adoption of a "top-down" approach so as to control as many variables as possible in the implementation process.

In emphasising the context of implementation, it was also evident that many of the problems encountered during the implementation of the programmes are rooted in the clash between old structures and practices and new principles and rules, which is a distinctive feature of the current transitional character of Mexican politics. This implied a rigid control and political autonomy of the agency in charge of the implementation of the programme. Many of the objectives of the National Solidarity Program were achieved because federal SEDESOL had sufficient bureaucratic autonomy to control the programme and to create incentives alongside the implementation process.

Thus the implementation process is essentially a political one, which affects the interests of groups and because of that, it is subject to negotiation and continuous redefinition. That is why the analysis of implementation is useful in describing and understanding the way in which a political system works. It is clear that the implementation of a policy will not be improved merely by a better design. The experience of implementation in Campeche shows that a policy has more chance of success if it is accompanied by mechanisms of political negotiation, if it minimises the political and bureaucratic resistance, and gains the collaboration of affected groups.

The experience of community involvement in FOMUN and Children of Solidarity, highlights an important element in Mexican politics. The programme demonstrates that it is still possible to establish direct contact with actors at the community level, bypassing the state and municipal levels. It is important to note therefore that the federal government can still command popular support. In terms of political culture, the analysis shows that the community still perceives that the federal government has something to offer. This is surprising considering the scale of the programme and the hostilities and indifference of some state governments. It represents the survival of the popular elements in Mexican politics.

The importance of local politics must not be underestimated. Even if a programme has full political support, it is still difficult to overcome the obstacles created by traditional political actors. At the community level local politics are more independent of national politics than is usually thought. This affects feasibility

of decentralising government programmes in Mexico. Greater decentralisation depends on the states' willingness to observe the guidelines of federal initiatives. This depends on the evolution of the federal/state relationship and also on the ability and willingness of state and municipal governments to perform according to the rules.

Politically the research also stressed that the presidency in Mexico still exerts the most important influence in policy making and implementation. Despite this, analysis of implementation also showed that bureaucratic actors at the federal, state and municipal level have significant room for political manoeuvre, an element that has not received the necessary attention in studies of Mexico. Implementation studies are useful in bringing to the surface the means by which bureaucratic actors as well as local political interests can obstruct policy implementation. This is so because federal political interests may not be coincident with local ones. It is during the implementation process that local interests emerge, frequently erecting insuperable obstacles to the implementation of a federal policy. Federal initiatives are still empty talk for many regions in the country where patronage and bossism still prevail. These disparities between federal intentions and local ones, also reflect the extent to which the intra-elite struggles of the governing coalition in Mexico are affecting policy making and implementation. But precisely because of this multi-regional composition of the political elite, it was difficult to find a single and recurrent pattern in implementation. In some places the programme achieved better results because the implementation of the programme encountered favourable

political conditions or allies. In others, like Chiapas, the programme threatened the balance of power and was therefore blocked. In Campeche results were mixed. While in some municipalities the programme performed well (Hopelchén), in others (Campeche and Isla del Cármen) its performance was less effective. In sum, because the implementation process is a political one, the success of Solidarity largely depended on the extent to which it threatened the balance of power in a given situation. Where resistance was significant, presidential power, availability of resources and incentives, and community participation were essential in overcoming such resistance.

Future research in the field of policy implementation should focus on the role of local coalitions in the success or failure of policies. Equally important would be to carry out further research about the role of incentives in improving the implementation process, particularly in the rent-seeking bureaucratic context of Mexican politics. What these incentives might be and how they can be applied to motivate and trigger action is important in the implementation of policies in general but anti-poverty programmes in particular.

Finally, the experiences of PIDER, COPLAMAR and now PRONASOL also require more research on institutional changes that have aimed to include community participation in the implementation of public policies. Related to this, is the study of the way in which community attitudes have been shaped by those institutional efforts and whether they have increased the political capacity of the community.

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2