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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING IN JORDAN:
JORDAN VALLEY AUTHORITY, 1973-1980

By

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ABSTRACT

Public enterprises are known to all the countries and represent a phenomenon which is undoubtedly characteristic of our times. They are a reality of the existing social and economic organization of modern states, regardless of the ideological and philosophic basis of their social, economic, and legal organizations. Even in the foremost market economics such as the U.S.A., public corporations, such as the TVA, are significant examples. While these developed countries look upon private enterprise as the main source of economic growth and many of these regard the principal tasks of the government as ensuring stability and providing a favorable economic climate for the private sector, the less-developed countries (LDCs) have generally viewed the public sector as the key instrument for securing economic development.

This dissertation is a case study on the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) as the main instrument in the implementation of Jordan's regional development plans for rehabilitation and development of the East Jordan Valley Region. The JVA is many things, but most significant for the writer's purpose is its status as a social instrument. It is this role as an instrument with which this study is directly concerned. Or, to emphasize another word, it is
JVA as an organization to which our attention is directed. Thus it is not dams or reservoirs or power houses or fertilizer as such, but the nature of the JVA as an ordered group of working individuals, as a living institution, which is under scrutiny.

The performance of JVA as a public authority has given cause for concern to the Jordanian Government and the general public. This is because of the great importance that the people attach to JVA as an instrument of regional development and planning of the East Jordan Valley Region, the richest potential source for varied and intensive agricultural production.

The study revealed that JVA's poor performance was caused by many factors -- specifically, weakness in planning implementation; over centralization of JVA organizational structure; lack of central political control, particularly in financial connection between development plans and government budget; lack of coordination between JVA and other cooperating institutions in the Valley; lack of active participation of the local population in formulating and implementing JVA plans; and the JVA's employment of cooptation as a defensive mechanism and alternative to active citizen involvement in decision-making.

The writer has used the institutional analysis developed by Selznick in his classic study: TVA and the
Grass Roots. Selznick's approach has directed the writer to seek the underlying implications of the official doctrine of the JVA, to avoid restriction to the formal structure of the JVA, and to observe the interaction of JVA with other institutions in its area of operation. Data for the study was collected through published and unpublished documents and records of JVA and other public institutions. Unstructured interviews with key political and administrative leaders of JVA and beneficiaries were employed. The writer spent three months (February 26 through May 29, 1981) in the Valley with a daily contact with JVA officials, farmers, laborers, and other beneficiaries in the EJV.