How One City in Côte d'Ivoire Successfully Tackled its Sanitation Problem:
Building Popular Support and Adopting an Incremental Approach

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Submitted to the department of Urban Studies and Planning
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Professor Lawrence Bacow
Chairman,
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
To all of you who have helped me.

Always listening patiently,
Often advising carefully,
Reassuring my doubts,
Smiling at my mistakes,

I sincerely thank you.

Anne-Catherine

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Abstract

Aboisso is a mid-sized city in the Côte d’Ivoire where a remarkable sanitation improvement took place between 1990 and 1997. The banks of the river, formerly used as a dump, have been transformed into a public park, and public latrines have been built. The public market is clean and well maintained, garbage is collected, streets are relatively clean.

This thesis tells the story of how that city succeeded to overcome some common problems of sanitation programs at the local level -- lack of public awareness and demand, lack of financial means, and lack of local capacity. The municipality tackled the problem of its sanitation with its own technical and financial departments. Strikingly, this improvement took place during a period of particularly scarce resources.

The main story is composed of three interconnected stories describing the circumstances under which this achievement was possible. The first one suggests that linkages developed between the municipality and the communities were crucial to elicit popular support for the sanitation program and to create over time a demand for related services. The second story suggests that the lack of financial means necessitated an incremental approach that turned out to be an efficient strategy. Energies and means were focused citywide towards a single task at a time. The municipality started with the transformation of the river into a park, and the construction of public latrines. This first phase was focused, easy to do, visible and highly participatory. To have achieved rapidly remarkable result helped the municipality to sustain the efforts in other components of the program. As the third story suggests, this progressiveness also enabled the municipal department to increase its capacity over time and, in parallel with an appropriate strategy, to take advantage of complementary funding.

Beyond its specificities, the study of this case suggests that factors for success belong to both political and managerial spheres, and are inseparably interconnected. It questions the relevance of the dichotomy between demand-driven vs. supply-driven programs in designing and implementing successful programs. Finally, the case of Aboisso shows a possible first step towards the building of accountability mechanisms between local governments and their constituents.
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Introduction: The Metamorphosis of Aboisso

In 1988, one of Côte d’Ivoire’s major newspapers, Ivoir’Soir, published an article depicting the city of Aboisso\(^1\) as one of the most unsanitary in the country. The article described the banks of the river within the city as a dump used for personal and community waste disposal. Garbage collection was badly organized; the public market and the bus station were dirty and badly maintained.

In 1997, a television program\(^2\) congratulated Aboisso for a remarkable improvement in its environment. I visited the city in the summer 1997, and was struck myself when I discovered a landscaped public park along the river. It was hard to imagine that it had been a dump five years earlier! I questioned the walkers there, who explained that it was the result of the action of the municipality\(^3\). I visited the public latrines next to the park; they were clean and well maintained. The municipal employee in charge asked for my payment; the service is fee-based. Further along my promenade through the city, I saw a truck collecting the garbage, which was gathered in a public bin on the roadside, and I noticed that shrubbery had recently been trimmed in the public spaces. It was the end of the day, the activity of the public market was slowing down, and several workers were busy sweeping up the garbage and cleaning the aisles. I interviewed the sellers; they were evidently satisfied with the service provided in exchange for their user-fees. The agency in charge was, again, the municipality.

In addition to my own observation, I interviewed some inhabitants of the city who confirmed that the situation had improved over the previous six years. Users of the public latrines, sellers in the market, and walkers in the park were evidently satisfied with the
change that had occurred. This is what represented "success" to me, and became the entrance point of my research. This does not mean that the sanitation problem is solved citywide. For instance, the sewers are open - their coverage is very costly - and the municipality will need extra subsidies to address this major problem. Roads, except for the main one, are not asphalted, and during the rainy season the soil that flows into the sewers and remains stagnant is a serious sanitary problem. Nevertheless, a significant improvement took place and, in my opinion, the conditions under which it happened deserved to be studied.

The central concern of this thesis is to assess what happened in this city between 1987 and 1997 to bring about such an improvement. I was at first fascinated by the unique set of circumstances that led to the success in Aboisso, which will be presented in detail below. During the analysis of my research, I came to be fascinated also by the general lessons that were to be drawn from this particular case. Undeniably, what happened in Aboisso will never be exactly reproducible. Nevertheless, some "ingredients for success," as I will argue, could be adapted to other contexts and other projects and, I believe, could contribute to their successful implementation.

**About Methodology**

The methodological entrance point of this case study was to select a city where a significant improvement had been achieved since decentralization occurred, and to try to understand the circumstances that led to this “success.” Success is defined empirically, in terms of the outcome. The factors under consideration are the specific circumstances that may explain why a particular municipality was more successful at delivering a service than others. The most important factors are empirically defined, and do not correspond to a predefined methodology. This approach has undeniable limitations, particularly for a Master’s thesis that does not allow the study of several cases that would cross-check findings. Nevertheless, this approach does also enable the researcher to remain open throughout the research process to unexpected findings, and forces sensitivity to a broad range of issues without being limited to the predefined hypothesis that would have been anticipated from the literature or from preconceived explanations.
This thesis is based on a field research that I conducted in Summer 1997. I spent two months in the Côte d'Ivoire, interviewing people and collecting data. The list of interviews is presented in annex 2.

Research Questions

Common opinion in Côte d'Ivoire, also held by international donors, is that the best way to address the problems related to sanitation is to privatize the components on which a user-fee can be applied, and to delegate to communities the responsibility of managing non-excludable goods. As a consequence, several new kinds of institutional arrangements are currently emerging throughout the country to address the issues of garbage collection, maintenance and management of the public markets, and cleaning of public spaces. Associations of youths and women, in particularly, are increasingly involved as service providers. Private developers slowly discover how profitable it can be to manage public markets, and politicians realize how convenient it is not to worry about daily responsibility of such services.

This thesis tells the story of one case where some common problems of sanitation programs at the local level -- lack of public awareness and demand, lack of financial means, and lack of local capacity -- have been overcome. Contrary to the common opinion in Côte d'Ivoire, this success did not involve either privatization or delegation to communities. The municipality itself tackled the problem of its sanitation, with its own technical and financial departments, and achieved remarkable results. Strikingly, this improvement took place in a period of particularly scarce resources (the municipal budget had dropped by 30% in 1991, when the program started).

The first set of research questions concerns building popular support for a sanitation program, and forging over time a demand for related issues. A recurrent problem of sanitation planning is the lack of public awareness of its benefits. So, too, is the lack of

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4 In the context of this thesis, I make a clear distinction between two components of sanitation: public cleanliness (garbage collection and disposal, open sewage, public space maintenance) and 'private' sanitation (household's human excreta, waste water from kitchen and bathroom). The French language, used in Côte d'Ivoire, makes a clear distinction between “la propreté publique” (the public cleanliness), and “l'assainissement” ('private' sanitation). My research deals with public cleanliness.

5 O. Boizo (1997)

6 O. Dembele and A. Fian (1997)
communal willingness to address community-wide problems. This is also generally true in Côte d'Ivoire, where public concern for sanitation is low. On the other hand, public cleanliness became a major plank in the political platform of the elections in Aboisso in 1990, and it remains a priority citywide today. Moreover, the population seems to have become aware of the relationship between preventive health and public cleanliness. How was such awareness developed and diffused? What was the role played by the local elections, given that the political campaign revolved around that issue? How was active popular support built for a public good that is usually neglected? How did the top-down approach end up forging a popular demand for better sanitation services?

The improvement was the result of the action of the municipality and its technical department. What enabled the municipality to successfully tackle its sanitation problem, though it had not done so in the past? How did it overcome the problem of the drastic diminution of its revenues at the beginning of the program? This second set of questions turns around the issue of the scope and the nature of the program, as well as the incremental approach adopted for its implementation.

Finally, a third set of questions addresses the progressively improved performance of the municipal departments. The budget of the technical department had dropped by 25% in 1991 as a consequence of the financial crisis. How did the technical department overcome its lack of capacity, despite a decrease in its financial means? How did the employees come to be motivated and dedicated to a service that may be perceived as degrading to undertake? What is the role of the population in interacting with the field workers? Finally, what is the role of the European grants that funded several projects in the city?

Three interconnected stories suggest some answers to these questions. The first one suggests that the linkages developed between the municipality and the communities were important to elicit popular support for the sanitation program and to create a demand over time for related services. The second story suggests that the lack of financial means necessitated an incremental approach that turned out to be an efficient strategy. The municipality started with the transformation of the river into a park, and the construction

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of public latrines. This first phase was focused, easy to do, visible and highly participatory. To have achieved rapidly remarkable result helped the municipality to sustain the efforts in other components of the program. As the third story suggests, this progressiveness also enabled the municipal department to learn from its mistakes and, together with an internal reorganization, to increase its capacity over time.

There may be other factors that also explain why Aboisso was successful at tackling its sanitation. Nonetheless, I believe that the three stories presented here capture an important part of what has been going on over the last decade in that city. I suggest that these circumstances significantly contributed to the remarkable results achieved in that city.
Chapter 1: Building Popular Support

Sanitation is not a major concern of the population in Côte d’Ivoire in general, even though it is a recurrent problem in mid-sized cities throughout the country. It was a serious problem in the city of Aboisso in the eighties, but in that city, public cleanliness came to be the political platform of the elections in 1990. Today, sanitation upgrading continues to be a priority citywide. Moreover, the constituent communities now demand that the municipality provide complementary services, such as public latrines and public showers.

While talking to people in Aboisso, I was struck by their awareness of the importance of public cleanliness. During my stay in the city (one month in the summer 1997), I lived in the house of the Peace Corps volunteer, a simple apartment located in a populated area. My next-door neighbors explained to me that the best way to avoid malaria was to keep their courtyard clean and cut the shrubbery in front of their house. That family gathered its garbage in a bin that they had bought from the municipality for that use. Twice a week, the truck of the technical department would pass by and collect these bins.

To link sanitation and health is not an obvious process. It requires the dissemination of a message, sometimes long information campaigns, and still it often remains difficult to sensitize people to the importance of sanitation. How had the population of Aboisso come to incorporate and act on such a message? People would not remember exactly who gave them for the first time such a message, but they would remember that it was related to the electoral campaign for the elections of 1990. How had an electoral campaign been transformed into an information campaign?

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8 This is unanimously acknowledged as a major problem by the implementers of sanitation programs whom I met in the country. Another evidence of this lack of demand is the survey conducted in Côte d’Ivoire by Professors Manor and Crook: sanitation is not among the top ten preferences overall, and is only listed in the 8th position for women. This survey was part of a large research program on decentralization. See R. Crook and J. Manor (1994) - The case of the Côte d’Ivoire presented in Chapter 4, pp. 104-155
This electoral campaign had four indirect consequences that are most important from my perspective. First, the mayor established his credibility. Second, the communities became aware of the importance of public cleanliness as a means of preventing sickness. Third, existing community associations were reactivated, initially for electoral purposes; they were mobilized before the election of the actual mayor, between 1985 and 1990, around the issue of cleaning the city, and came to actively support the implementation of the program. A fourth byproduct of this electoral campaign, which is crucial for the long-term success of the project, is the linkages that have been established between the municipality and the population. These linkages are channels for the transmission of information, both top-down and bottom-up, particularly through key-persons within communities who were involved in the initial phase of electoral mobilization.

These indirect consequences of the campaign are important to an understanding of the civic dynamic of the city today, namely the capacity for popular mobilization that the municipality has acquired. In addition, the population now ask for more services related to sanitation, independently from the action of the municipality, which suggests an autonomous demand that contributes to the sustainability of the sanitation program.

Having sketched the structure of the argument of this chapter, let me describe in more detail what happened in Aboisso between the first local elections in 1985 and the next in 1990, when the current mayor was elected.

**The Electoral Campaign**

Independent candidates were authorized to run in local elections in Côte d’Ivoire for the first time in 1985. This was a major change. During the previous thirty years of single-party regime, the local official (the ‘prefet’ 9 under the centralized system, the ‘mayor’ since decentralization had taken place) was nominated by the central government, that is by the party PDCI (Parti Democratique de Cote d’Ivoire). In 1985, for the first time, the politicians had to receive their legitimacy from popular vote, and by 1990 the multi-party system was authorized.

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9 The “préfet” is the representative of the central administration at the local level.
In 1985, the previous mayor, nominated in 1980 by the government, was re-elected. The only opponent was an independent candidate, Mr. Elleighand, who was not very well known by the population, though he was originally from the city. He had a pharmacy in Abidjan, and had left Aboisso long ago. He had never been in politics before, but decided to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the political decentralization. As many observers emphasized, one of the main effects of organizing local elections is “to open political opportunities to below”10, to allow the emergence of new types of personalities, candidates more entrepreneurial and willing to use their popular legitimacy to be independent from the patronage of the single party.

The Establishment of the Credibility of the Mayor.

Mr. Elleighand lost in the election in 1985. How did he win the next time? He had to become known by the population in order to build electoral support. To do so, he had to find ways to communicate with communities. He visited local communities repeatedly between 1985 and 1990, talked to the residents, and listened to complaints. He asked about their main concerns and needs, and often immediately provided a solution. Every month he would go to a different neighborhood, where he asked either the chief of the neighborhood, or another local leader, to invite people of the communities to come to a meeting. A varying number of people attended these meetings. It was soon known that the visitor used to give gifts to the communities. For example, he offered an electronic amplifier to the Muslim community for the mosque. He brought the necessary materials to finish painting two schools in other neighborhoods.

The gift of a new generator for the local hospital is still in the memory of everyone, and is characteristic of the attitude of the future mayor towards the population. Two critical needs had been repeatedly expressed. The first was for an antenna to enable the city to get more television programs, the other was a new generator for the hospital. How was this solved? It is hard to know with certitude, but I was told that he met with a group of representatives of the communities, and discussed the situation. They unanimously

10 "Ouvrir le champs politique vers le bas", in S. Jaglin et Dubresson (1993). See also Y.-A. Fauré, (1991) and T. Bakary (1986). These views are shared by local political leaders of the opposition, as I could
agreed that the generator was more important. “He keeps his word” reflects his reputation as established before the elections: it is the image that the population of Aboisso still has of its mayor today. His popularity is so strong that quality products have come to be called by his name. For example, the long-grain rice is called “rice Elleighand,” while the second quality bran rice is called by the name of the previous mayor.

This story is consistent with the analysis of electoral behavior in Côte d’Ivoire. The first local democratic elections, which took place in 1985, demonstrated that throughout the country the electorate is sensitive to the tangible realizations that the candidates have brought to the community. Their credibility critically depends on concrete actions. Consequently, the local elections have tended to favor “those candidates whose personal achievement symbolizes best the economic and social success of the dominant class.” In Aboisso, the trust that people have in the mayor is still very much rooted in his electoral campaign.

These ingredients are similar to those that lead to patronage and clientelistic politics that benefit small groups of individuals. It does not seem to be the case in Aboisso. The most important action undertaken by the municipality (the sanitation program) is a public service. The first component was a non-excludable public good (the park), and no group or particular area is excluded from the other services (the garbage collection). While campaigning, Mr. Elleighand sought support from certain categories of people, representative of some particular groups, rather than focusing on individuals. He implements certain measures or policies which assist those groups which, in turn, support him politically. The following section illustrates this point in the case of Aboisso: how the candidate specifically sought the political support of the associations of women and youth, how he used some key-persons as intermediaries and mobilized around the issue of sanitation.

understand from the several discussions I had with H. Mêmêl-Foté, one of the intellectual leaders of the principal party of opposition in Côte d’Ivoire, and a noted anthropologist.

11 T. Bakary (1986)
Dissemination of a Message and the Forging of a Demand

Civil society in Côte d'Ivoire is relatively weak after thirty years of an authoritarian regime.\textsuperscript{12} The community associations which are potentially most active in the area of urban management are generally the 'Associations of Women', and that of 'Youth'.\textsuperscript{13} This is also true for Aboisso.\textsuperscript{14}

In 1985, Mr. Elleinghand needed support for his campaign. He had a vision of cleaning the city, and transforming the banks of the river into a public park. Where could he find support? Aboisso is a city located in the Akan kingdom, and the local ethnic group is matrilineal, which means that women play an important role socially in addition to the familial one. In addition, the nature of his program was likely to elicit interest from women. Women are the daily users of the public market; they take care of the children, who suffer often from sickness due to lack of hygiene; they are more concerned with the cleanliness of their households than are their husbands, who work either in the plantations or in the administration or in education. Mr. Elleinghand then looked for influential people in the female communities, more or less involved in collective activities.\textsuperscript{15}

Marianne is typical of these intermediaries who play an important role in this story. She is a seller of fresh meat in the public market. A Muslim, she originates from Mauritania.\textsuperscript{16} She has fourteen children whose ages range from ten to thirty years old. She is remarkably intelligent, despite her low education. Mr. E. came to visit her in 1985, before she had heard of him. She was involved in the 'Association of the Ivoirian Women,' which was at the time not very active. He explained his program and his vision for the city, how important it was to clean the city as a means for preventive health.

\textsuperscript{12} Scholars have argued that the very weakness of the Ivoirian civil society enabled the central government to develop a certain level of independence from pressure groups, which, coupled with the technocratic capacity of the public service and the discipline imposed by the President, is one of the factors explaining the long political stability of the regime. See R. Crook (1991)
\textsuperscript{13} Attahi (1995), Dembele and Fian (1997)
\textsuperscript{14} A Peace Corps volunteer was at the time of my field research in charge of helping community organization in Aboisso. She was deploring that for more than one year she had been searching for other "community-based" and "grass-roots associations", without much success.
\textsuperscript{15} A similar story could be told about the Youth association, which the candidate (later the newly elected mayor), contributed to reactivate, initially with an electoral purpose. These two associations (youth and women) are the ones which are active in the cleaning of the city. The other associations in the city may have played a role at the electoral level, and may be active in other activities, but this has not been a focus of my research.
\textsuperscript{16} The number of foreigners is huge in Côte d'Ivoire: 40% of the total population.
“Public cleanliness is the first medication,” he said. “Health depends on hygiene, hygiene depends on public cleanliness.” Since he is a pharmacist, she believed what he said. She introduced him to the chief of the Muslim community, who organized a meeting with the community at large. Mr. Elleinghand inquired about their main needs, and offered an electronic amplifier to the mosque soon after that first meeting. Marianne came to think he was different from the other political officials. “He wants to get things done;” “He keeps his word,” “He works,” became his reputation. Marianne trusted him and believed he would give the city what it needed. She realized how important sanitation is.

Influential among her community, everybody knows her, and she knows everybody. Mr. Elleinghand asked in 1986 for her support and her help in running in the 1990 elections. She mobilized people, she disseminated the message about cleanliness. She actively participated in reorganizing the women’s associations. “Aboisso had become too big, we needed several associations, one per neighborhood.” She became the representative of the “Association of the Women of the Neighborhood T. P.”

After the elections, the mayor called together the women of the city. He thanked everyone for his support, and explained what he wanted to do. The first action would be moving in to the new public market, which was to be finished soon. The second action would be cleaning the river and transforming it in a public park. He would need the active support of the women to help the municipality to prepare the field. He announced a coming weekend when everybody would be required to come to clean the banks of the river. He invited all the women to visit the town hall, where he showed them what the previous mayor had left (the offices were badly maintained, the trucks for collecting the garbage were deteriorated). He drove them to Abidjan, to show his private house. “He is already rich, he is not hungry anymore, he will not eat from us.” He warned that things would take time, but if women were to help the municipality, things would be better soon.

This story is compiled from the various discussions I had with people in Aboisso. I interviewed people from various conditions, and in various contexts in order to cross check the stories that I was told. I do not pretend to present all the facts, but I believe I

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17 She has been a member of the Women’s Association since 1981. She is a member of the selection committee for the micro-credit project implemented by the Canadian cooperation. She also used to be a member of the “Woman of the Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire.”
have reflected a prevalent perception of how things happened, which captures a certain truth. It shows how a message was spread throughout the communities during the electoral campaign, and how existing associations were reactivated and middle-level leaders empowered to take a public role within communities. It also shows how the population came to be mobilized around the problem of the cleanliness of the city, so that a new mayor was elected on this platform.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{Linkages between the municipality and the communities}

The electoral campaign reactivated existing associations. After the elections, the new municipality promoted new community organizations, which have yet to prove their long-term value to the city, but which nonetheless play a useful role in transmitting information between the municipality and the communities. A new public market had been built by the previous mayor, financed by USAID. Traditionally, people sell specific products, such as bananas, atiéké, fresh fish, smoked fish, etc. A seller of vegetables does not sell meat, or fish. A seller of smoked meat does not sell fresh meat. The technical department\textsuperscript{19} asked the vendors to designate one representative per product, who would be the interlocutor of the municipality during the move in. Marianne is the representative for the sellers of fresh meat. When I went to the market, I was introduced to all these “representatives” whom I wanted to interview. I got lost, and asked a seller of vegetables where the representative of the vegetables sellers was sitting. The first person could not tell me. The second could not either. Finally, the third one told me: “there is no such representative!”.

It appears that some people function as intermediaries between the municipality and the sellers, without being perceived as representatives by all of the people they are supposed to represent. Nevertheless, those people play two important roles: the dissemination and the collection of the information needed by the municipality, and the mobilization of the population of the market. This way of organizing is very top-down,

\textsuperscript{18} It is interesting to note that the two other candidates for the election of 1990, one being the previous mayor, also campaigned around that theme.

\textsuperscript{19} The employee in charge emphasized that it was an idea of the new mayor.
and remains far from the ideal that we can have of a grass root, spontaneous, and democratic community organization.

To summarize, the assets that the newly elected municipality capitalized on at the time of starting its action were his own credibility, the popular support for a sanitation program, and the linkages with the communities. Through these means, a demand for sanitation services came to be forged during the electoral campaign. These assets are also important in explaining the successful implementation of the program, to which I turn in the following chapter.
Chapter 2: Adopting an Incremental Approach

This second part of the story starts in early 1991, right after the elections. The municipal team recently elected had now to meet its electoral promises, including to tackle the sanitation problems of Aboisso. There were many things to do (cleaning the river, collecting the garbage, covering the sewers, sweeping the streets, building public latrines, etc), all with severely restricted resources (technical, human and financial).

The scarcity of resources

The country was entering a deep financial crisis, due to the accumulation of foreign debt coupled with a drop in the international price of coffee and cocoa, the major export commodities. The central government was almost bankrupt, and could not afford to pay its share of the budget of the municipalities. As a consequence of this, the budget of the municipality of Aboisso dropped dramatically (more than 30%) in 1991 and 1992.

How do you implement an ambitious program when your resources have just dropped drastically? In Aboisso, the strategy was to adopt an incremental approach, adapting the scope and the sequence of implementation to the existing resources (financial, human and technical). The municipality started with a limited number of projects, affordable within its own budget, relatively easy to do, and highly visible: the transformation of the river into a public park and the building of public latrines. Successfully and rapidly achieving completion of a visible project enabled the municipality to sustain its efforts in the other components of the program. It also helped the mayor to gain complementary funding (European grants). Finally, the incremental approach facilitated a learning-by-doing process for the municipal departments.

Given the municipal budget in 1991, it was out of the question to initiate several projects at the same time. The budget for investment dropped by almost 70% in 1991, and only recovered in 1994 with the European grants. The working budget of the municipal
department dropped by 25%, and has remained relatively constant (+/- 15%) since then. The share of the investments dedicated to the issue of cleanliness has strongly increased since the elections in 1990.\(^{20}\)

The municipality still regrets that it was not able to initiate more projects in parallel. The electoral campaign had put so much emphasis on sanitation issues that they had to tackle this issue in priority. The lack of resources forced them to set clear political priorities, to focus their energies towards a single program and, within this program, towards a limited number of projects.

**A Unintentional but Wise Strategy**

A crucial sanitary problem was the river in the center of the city used as a regular site for defecation and waste disposal. The mayor had promoted his vision of the river bank as a park during the electoral campaign. Not only did he want to clean up the banks, he also wanted to replace the existing dump with a public park. To achieve this transformation was financially feasible, especially if people were to participate in providing free labor to clean up the banks. The park would benefit the whole population, and the only potential opponents (seven informal chicken and palm wine sellers) could be relocated in the new public market which had just been built. The challenge was to mobilize the population around a public good, and to change the behavior of those people who misused the river. The potential for active popular participation had been created during the electoral campaign, as was shown in the previous chapter. With respect to the sanitation habits of the people, a necessary prerequisite was to offer a realistic alternative, particularly to the poor. The ‘carrot and stick’ strategy of Aboisso was to build two blocks of public latrines, and to organize the policing of the park to force a change a behavioral change.

Although no assessment of the demand was made, the public latrines built in Aboisso avoid the common flaws of such facilities, such as lack of privacy, convenience

\(^{20}\) I based my analysis on the cross-checking of data found in the municipality and in the ‘Direction Générale des Collectivités Territoriales,’ the department of the Ministry of Interior which is responsible for the approval and supervision of the annual budgets of the municipalities. See the annex 1 for the evolution of the municipal budget between 1990 and 1997.
and cleanness. This may explain why they are very much used and appreciated. The two blocks of ten latrines are remarkably well maintained. I used to go there every day, since they were much cleaner than most of the private restrooms in the offices throughout the city. They are managed by the financial department of the municipality. Two employees work there 12 hours a day. They collect the fee of 10 CFA for urinating, 25 CFA for defecating (the minimum salary is 45,000 CFA/month), and clean the facilities. Users do not complain about the price, so it seems to be affordable. I observed that the people who did not want to pay went further along the river. I assume this is the case for most of the poorest; at least it presents less of a sanitary problem than when it occurs in the center of the city. Women are particularly satisfied with having such a service, and the latrines close to the public market are intensively used.

The approach adopted by the municipality had some elements of a typical top-down and ‘supply-driven’ approach. The population did not participate in the design, implementation or maintenance of the facility. Nonetheless, the alternative provided appeared to be responsive to the needs of the users. On the other hand, popular participation was elicited for the cleaning of the river, which may have contributed to the willingness to change the behavior. Although no demand had been explicitly expressed for latrines before the implementation of the project, there is now a clear demand for more public latrines and even for public showers, which has been directly and repeatedly expressed to the municipal councilors by the inhabitants. As a direct consequence, three new blocs were under construction at the time of my field research in 1997.

The lack of resources made free labor particularly valuable. The cleaning of the river was an easy task which could be accomplished by the population. The mayor had explained during his pre-election meetings that he would need active help to get things done. As Marianne stated “he helped us, now we will help him.” He prepared for the event by visiting the communities during the first year after his election, explaining again and again his plans for the city, particularly for the river. In early March, 1992, the head of the technical department went all over the city, with a loudspeaker in his car and

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22 She was referring to the generator that he offered to the hospital.
escorted by drums and 'griots.'\textsuperscript{23} He called on people to come the following week-end to help clean up the river. In addition, radio messages were aired in the local languages. The municipality invited the various civic associations of youths, women and neighborhoods.

"Everybody came," people said when I asked them. This is difficult to establish with certainty, but everybody told me that everybody came! This reflects the atmosphere that was created, and the municipality’s capacity to mobilize the populace in handling the problem of public cleanliness.

The strong popular participation had another side effect which may have contributed to the success of the program. Although these effects are difficult to assess, I believe that this active participation contributed to the “ownership” feeling of the park, which in turn contributed to the sustainable change in the behavior of the people.\textsuperscript{24} Hence those who participated in the clean up are now pressuring those who might be tempted to backslide. These people are also pressuring the municipal workers for good maintenance and policing.

This first phase was technically simple to accomplish. There were no land property problems, so there were no problems of expropriation. The only problem was the relocation of the informal sellers who had settled along the river. The municipal employees visited them, explained the project, and offered a place in the new public market. The sellers were happy to move to a more convenient facility within the commercial heart of the city. Once this problem was solved, the project was simply to clean the place, to renovate the sidewalks, and to plant flowers!

This first phase was also politically easy. There were no conflicting interests. The park is a public good, and the whole city benefits from it. The only potential opponents are people who refuse to change their behavior; they are poor people who are not politically organized. They are passive opponents, in the sense that they cannot prevent the project from being realized; they can only resist the change by continuing using the

\textsuperscript{23} A “griot” is a traditional organizer of events in West Africa. These people belong to a special social group, they are called for organizing concerts, dance events, etc.

river as they always have.\textsuperscript{25} They can still use the river as they wish, but further along, not in the center of the city.

The simplicity of the first phase led to its rapid implementation. The mayor took charge of the municipality early in 1991. The latrines were built during that same year, and the park was inaugurated in the summer of 1992.

Lastly, this first phase of the program was highly visible. I was very impressed to discover such an attractive public park in a small city in the African countryside. My attention was first attracted when I was traveling along the road between Abidjan and Ghana. The park is amazingly well maintained, and the population is very proud of it. It is hard to imagine that the river used to be a sewer. It contributes significantly to changing the image of the city, both for insiders and outsiders.

To summarize, I have argued above that, given the scarcity of resources, the municipality had to set clear political priorities and to start with a single program, progressively implemented. It did so with a first phase that was:

- coherent and realistic (the “carrot and stick”)
- non-excludable, then broadly supported,
- participatory, in some aspects,
- technically and politically easy,
- highly visible, and
- rapidly implemented.

It was not entirely an intentional strategy. The municipality still regrets that it was not able to initiate more projects in parallel, due to the lack of money. If it seems that I am arguing that the lack of resources is an ingredient for success, this is not the case. What is true is that the municipality reacted to the strong financial constraints with intelligence, choosing the right project, starting with the right initial phase. Certainly, the scarcity of resources imposed an incremental approach. This also proved to be a wise strategy, which may provide a lesson for others.

To have achieved remarkable results successfully and rapidly affirmed the credibility of the leadership and enabled the municipality to sustain its efforts in

\textsuperscript{25} Actually some do, and the park needs to be watched 24 hours a day.
accomplishing the other components of the program, particularly the garbage collection. I will now turn to the changes that took place within the technical department, enabling it to carry out its responsibilities more effectively.
Chapter 3: Improving the Performance of the Municipal Department

This part of the story also begins in early 1991. The new municipality had been elected. The whole department knew the new mayor, and his program for cleaning up the city. What would he do? The new public market, financed by USAID, was almost finished, sellers waiting to move in. Only one garbage truck was still working. For several months, all the employees had been waiting for the results of the elections, and therefore had not been working much. The technical department had no head, although the new one was supposed to have arrived one year ago. The former mayor was not demanding, he did not concern himself with garbage collection, as long as there were no serious problems. The population did not seem to care much either, so why worry?

Since 1991, the municipal departments have been doing their jobs better and better. I take as one indicator of this change the improved cleanliness of the city. The garbage is now collected and the market is clean. The sewers are maintained. Illegal disposal of oil are quite rare. The municipal employees are in charge of new tasks, which are well performed; the park is clean, policed and maintained, the public latrines are remarkably clean. User-fees for both the latrines and the market are collected at the excellent rate of recovery of more than 95%, according to the head of the financial department.

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26 I would have liked to start it earlier, but it was difficult to check the information related to the period before 1990. Few employees of that period were still working in the technical department, and they told me contradictory things. Therefore, I could not assess with certainty in what ways the department was functioning differently before 1990. The answers varied from: "nothing is different" to "everything has changed." The factual answers that I received when trying to go beyond these statements were just as contradictory.

27 An administrative deconcentration occurred in parallel to the political decentralization. The head of the local administration, as well as the heads of the technical, financial and administrative municipal departments are civil servants nominated by the central government. These bureaucrats change every four years. Sometimes the replacement is delayed. The public servants are functionally accountable to the mayor. These mixed arrangements, that go beyond the dichotomy centralized/decentralized, work quite well in Côte d'Ivoire, and few problems have arisen (See K. Attahi, 1990).
Several factors may account for the change. It is precisely their combination that led over time and through an incremental process, to an improvement of the outputs of these departments. Let me emphasize here that I take as the indicator of the “success” the results in the field. These results are not only due to an improvement in the performance of the department stricto sensu, but also to the strategy used to elicit a change in the habits of the population (a stick and carrot strategy). In other words, the department is doing the “right” things in the “right” way, and this “right” strategy accounts for the good results as much as does the improved performance of the employees.

**An Effective Strategy**

The sanitation program utilized two features that turned out to be effective: the incremental approach enabled the progressive building of local capacity and the joint use of a “carrot” and a “stick” encouraged the change in the behavior of the population.

The previous chapter shows why the progressive implementation was a good strategy with respect to the first phase (coherent and realistic, easy to do, rapidly implemented, participatory and visible). This progressiveness also gave the municipal department time to learn from its mistakes. In addition, it forced the municipality to clearly set its priorities, which directed the citywide energies towards one objective at a time. To focus on one task helps to overcome the lack of material and of human resources. Once a result is achieved, the department can tackle the next problem. With respect to the sanitation program, the following priorities were established: 28

1. the park and the public latrines (realized in 1991-92)
2. the garbage collection, first in the market and secondly citywide (ongoing)
3. the better maintenance of the sewers, and ultimately their coverage (not yet tackled)

The first phase of the program led to rapid results. The park and the public latrines were realized within a year and a half after the elections. During that period, not much was done in terms of reorganizing garbage collection. The technical department performed these tasks as usual, without changing its method fundamentally. In 1993, after the park and the latrines were built, the municipality sought additional funding to buy

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28 Again, it is difficult to know what was intentional and what was contingent.
new equipment. They made a request to the American Embassy to have the help of two Peace Corps volunteers, including an engineer specialized in sanitation.

The direct positive effect of this incremental approach was that it gave time to the municipal department to learn from its mistakes. For example, in 1993 the municipality bought 50 new public bins to install throughout the center of the city. The mayor had seen a model in Belgium, which they decided to buy. It turned out that the model could not endure the vigorous handling by the workers. “It was attractive but too sophisticated for Africa,” as the person in charge told me. In 1996, USAID offered 150 bins, which were tested for six months. 1600 additional bins will be delivered in case of satisfaction. “This time we chose a very simple model,” said the head of the department, “durability is the most important criteria.”

Another important feature of the strategy used was the joint use of a carrot and a stick to encourage a change in the behavior of the population. The habits of the population in Aboisso were an integral part of the sanitation problem of the city. To change any habit is a long and slow process. Getting out the message about the importance of cleanliness was a first step towards change, and the mayor achieved this result through getting support from community groups. To provide a reasonable alternative, such as the public latrines, or bins in the various neighborhoods is also key. The park is a pleasure for many people, without excluding any inhabitant. These were the “carrot” side of the strategy.

In parallel, the municipality uses efficient “sticks” to prevent misbehavior. The park is patrolled 24 hours a day. A guard in uniform walks around and reprimands those people who still want to wash themselves in the river. According to one guard, this happens less and less, but some people are very reluctant to change their habits, particularly the old people. Another very efficient “stick,” introduced more recently, is the hygiene agent. Three people were hired in 1995 to watch the misbehavior of the population and to report on it. One of them is in charge of the public market, another watches the commercial center of the city, and the third one goes every day to a different neighborhood. Three of them cover the territory of the city. They each report their observations in a notebook, which is countersigned every night by the head of the
technical department. When there are infractions, the municipality meets with the family and explains what the problem is. For example, when a household does not mow the wild grass in front of its house, or when a private water closet flows into the sewer, the family is summoned to the technical department. At the time of my field research, the municipal council had just approved a decision to give the technical department the right to fine anyone guilty of misbehavior the equivalent of $US4, which is relatively high. In addition to this ‘police’ role, the hygiene agents are in charge of explaining ‘good behavior,’ including how to use the public bins, when to put them in the street so that the truck can collect the garbage, how to build a better water closet.

The Symbolic Role of the Mayor

An important role played by the mayor is that of motivating the employees in an occupation usually perceived as degrading. By showing his own dedication to sanitation, he improved the status of all the sanitation workers. The symbolic role of the leader was crucial to initiate and channel the energy for change, and to overcome the resistance to it, particularly relevant in this African culture, where the representation of power tends to be personalized in the chief.

Given this symbolic power, how did the mayor concretely come to create a sense of mission among the municipal employees? After the elections, he invited the department employees to several meetings where he explained his intention to clean the city, and asked for the help of all the employees. He asked for concrete suggestions about what to do and how to do it. It was the first time that such a cooperative approach was adopted by a mayor. The employees who were present at that time told me of how impressed they had been. The mayor explained that the municipality had to deal with diminishing revenues due to the financial crisis at the national level. Consequently, they would have to start with a limited number of projects; the rest would come later. The priority was to clean the river and to build two blocks of latrines, one next to the river, the other next to the public market.

After the beginning of the sanitation program, he spent a lot of time walking in the city and talking to people in the streets. He encouraged the field workers, checked if the work had been well done, talked again and again about the importance of public cleanliness. This behavior undeniably contributed to motivating the workers. A hygiene agent strongly expressed his dedication: “We are not animals anymore. I will teach these women to behave well.” This young man was really convinced that he had a mission somehow to ‘educate’ the population. When I inquired about the source of his sense of mission, he told me simply, “Mr. Mayor told me it was important.” The mayor once came to talk to him personally, and he felt rewarded to such an extent that his job seems now to be his calling.

This demonstrates how the mayor motivated the workers to do their job better. The next section will describe the internal reorganizations that have taken place over time in the technical department and have led to better outcomes of the department as a whole.

**Better Definition of the Tasks**

From mid-1990 to mid-1991, the department had been without a head. There was no leadership during that period though the draught man took charge of the day-to-day tasks of management. The first change occurred in mid-1991, when the new chief of the department, designated by the Ministry of Interior, finally arrived. He took charge with a clear mission assigned by the mayor, to clean the city and, to start with, to clean the river. Independently of the personal qualities of this chief, however, the department was likely to perform better than without leadership at all.

The head of the technical department was given a clear mission, for which he would be held responsible. This is the line followed by subsequent internal reforms undertaken in the department, with regards to tasks like the garbage collection. Progressively, the tasks to be performed were identified systematically, a team assigned to each of them

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30 He was referring to the sellers in the market. Some, particularly those coming from the surrounding villages, refuse to use the public latrines, and he has to reprimand them, sometimes aggressively.
31 He will be promoted to assistant of the head of the department as a reward for his action during that vacancy period.
32 The mayor is the functional head of the municipal administration, even if the heads of the main departments are civil servants appointed by the Ministry of Interior.
with a designated team supervisor, who would be held responsible for the results. This process is still ongoing in 1997. A map of the routes for the garbage trucks now exists in the technical department. Everyday, each team knows what to do, in which neighborhood, through which streets. The schedules for the trucks have also been systematized. The person in charge of one of the teams is a former employee of the administrative department. He said he was assigned to the technical department “to be the eyes and the ears of the municipality,” and to ensure that “the job is well done.” He could tell me precisely the tasks for which he and his team were responsible. He knew he would be held directly responsible if the garbage of this particular neighborhood was not collected on Tuesdays and Fridays. He had to supervise the work of two teams with five fieldworkers each. He would therefore make sure the job got done.

In 1994, the municipality decided to tackle more systematically the problem of the garbage collection. They negotiated with the European Union a new truck, the repair of existing material, as well as the building of two waste disposal sites outside the city. They asked the American Embassy to provide the support of the Peace Corps, preferably an engineer in sanitation. A Peace Corps volunteer was assigned in Aboisso with the mission of improving the process of collecting garbage in the city. He arrived in late 1995 and played an important role in eliciting the reforms and implementing them.

**Expectations of the Population**

The inhabitants of Aboisso really love the park. They use it a lot. They are very proud of the change that took place in their city. “We have to thank the new mayor,” they say. These people actively support the guards in their job, even helping to keep watch for them; “quelqu’un fait caca de l’autre côté.”\(^{33}\) They congratulate the gardener (“he is wonderful”).

The demand of the population is even more evident with regard to the fee-based services. In both the latrines and the public market, there is today a high level of expectations from the users. “I pay my tax, I then deserve a clean market,” together with “it is normal that I pay my taxes, given that the municipality has to pay those guys who

\(^{33}\) “Someone is defecating on the other side of the park.”
clean the market.” I came to understand from my repeated discussions that users are satisfied with the services. The expression of this satisfaction in turn is an incentive for the workers to do a good job.

The people who have been active in the electoral campaign and in the cleaning of the river are particularly encouraging to the workers. They feel this program is somehow their program. Marianne would always tell the hygiene agent about the infractions that she observes during the day. A walker in the park told me, “I cleaned it once, I don’t want to do it again, the guardian has to do his job.” He was critical because he had once seen the guard asleep. These people contribute to the dynamism of the technical department in expressing their satisfaction for the job well done and though their pressure on the part of the population reluctant to make an effort towards better sanitation. Allah Tanoh, the representative of another neighborhood and a seller of smoked fish, often berates her colleagues who do not respect the cleanliness of the market. The new president of the Youth Association also organized an educational session around the issue of public cleanliness.

Nevertheless, some people are very reluctant to change their habits. The park needs to be watched twenty four hours a day. A vender once hurt with a knife the hygiene agent who was trying to forbid her from defecating in the sewer. There is also another ‘side of the coin’ with regard to user fees. In the market for example, some venders throw away their waste in front of the cleaners, right after they have swept: “I pay my tax. I then have the right to dirty. They are paid for cleaning.”

This shows how contradictory are the pressures expressed by the population on the fieldworkers. The population is not uniform in terms of its response to the reforms but, overall, the response tends to be positive. To what extend it is sustainable, and whether it would last if this mayor were to leave the city, is hard to say. I would think that if things were to degrade again, another political candidate would sooner or later campaign around this issue, building on this experience. In this respect, I think the achievements are stable for the long-run.
International funding

The European Union project called “Projet de Developpement des Côtières” (Project for the Development of the Coastal Cities) covers the 16 mid-sized cities of the South of the Côte d’Ivoire. These municipalities did not need to apply for these grants, but they negotiated the concrete projects to be funded by the program. This is a successful example of decentralized cooperation. The general objective of the project is to support the decentralization process, with an intentional emphasis on:

1. improvement of environmental
2. increase in local capacity
3. local economic development, with particular support to local private sector

The budget allocated to the city of Aboisso represents 500 Mio CFA to be spent over five years (1994-98). This amounts to two and a half times the total average annual budget of the city.

The projects financed by the European Community in Aboisso, and implemented locally by the municipality itself, are the following:

- related to sanitation: a more sophisticated layout for the park, two other blocks of public latrines (one in the trucks station and one in a school), two dumps for waste disposal, a new truck for the garbage collection, the paving of the station and of the public market
- additional kiosks and extension of the public market
- rehabilitation of primary schools
- extension of the cultural center

Some features of this European project supported and reinforced the approach initiated by the municipality of Aboisso: the grants came at the “right” time, emphasizing the “right” issue and favoring the “right” kind of projects. The project was designed between 1991 and 1993, in close collaboration of the consultants hired by the European

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34 See annex 1.
35 In addition to these projects implemented by the municipality itself, the following projects are being undertaken by a central government agency specialized in public works on behalf of the city of Aboisso in 1997-98:
- equipment of a rural clinic and of a maternity clinic
- equipment of the morgue
Community with the municipalities, in order to take into account the local contexts and their particularities. The representative of the European Community is particularly satisfied with the cooperative attitude of the municipality of Aboisso.\textsuperscript{36} The first payment was made in 1994, and funded the improvement of the lay out of the park. The following payment in 1995 covered the other improvements related to sanitation. In 1996-97, the municipality started the building of the primary school, the health center and the cultural center.

The PDCC emphasized environmental issues. Therefore, the priorities established by the municipality were not contrary but were, in fact, reinforced by the European project. Finally, “given its small budget,” the PDCC favors small scale projects, which the technical department was therefore capable of implementing.\textsuperscript{37}

To summarize, the combination of the following factors led over time and through an incremental process to an improvement of the outputs of the municipal departments:

- the municipality adopted an effective strategy for implementing the program (its progressiveness and the joint use of “stick and carrot” to elicit a change in the population habits);
- the symbolic role of a mayor politically committed to the project (his strong dedication motivated the employees);
- a set of internal micro-management reorganizations (a clearer definition of the tasks enabled a better supervision of the outcomes);
- new expectations expressed by the population;
- additional funding that came progressively with an emphasis on the appropriate scope, scale and nature of projects, reinforcing the learning process.

I now turn to the concluding chapter, and show how this case study relates to the more general debates in the literature on decentralization and its implications for service delivery.

\footnote{footbridge across the river

\textsuperscript{36} The person in charge of the implementation of the whole project insisted on the “creativity” of the actions undertaken, as well as the “sensible” and “wise” solutions adopted.

\textsuperscript{37} See the project evaluation report, Groupe Huit (1995).}
Conclusion

Aboisso is a case of successful service delivery at the local level. A remarkable sanitation improvement took place in that city between 1990 and 1997, as the result of the action of the new municipality. The banks of the river, previously used as a dump, were transformed into a landscaped public park. The public market and the new public latrines were well maintained. Garbage was collected. The municipal council was re-elected in 1995 on basis of this good performance.

The “success” took place after a period of fundamental institutional reforms in the Côte d'Ivoire. Major political reforms included the organization in 1985 of the first local elections and the authorization in 1990 of multi-partyism. Administrative and fiscal reforms enabled the formerly highly centralized Ivoirian government to devolve significant responsibility and resources to the local level. Evaluations of Côte d'Ivoire’s decentralization experience are mixed. There has been significant criticisms of the institutional and political reforms, many of which appear well grounded. Nevertheless, the case of Aboisso suggests that there are circumstances under which an undeniable improvement in urban governance can emerge from these reforms. This thesis highlighted some factors that favored the emergence of these circumstances.

These factors are both managerial and political and are inseparably interconnected. Administrative performance improved because clear political priorities were set, political commitment motivated employees, and electoral mobilization of communities supported

42 My research did not focus on this, but tax collection and other municipal management issues, such as delivery of administrative services, have also been improved over the last seven years. Aboisso can more generally be considered as a case of improved urban governance, defined both in terms of its output to the population and of its financial management.
the implementation of the program. A thorough understanding of the conditions that led to the success ought to take into account this interconnectedness, which tends to be underestimated in the literature. The way a demand for the sanitation program was nurtured also challenges the controversial literature related to supply-driven vs. demand-driven programs. This dichotomy proved to be irrelevant to capture the iterative process by which popular support for the sanitation program was created in Aboisso. Finally, essential ingredients of the success are the linkages that had been established between the municipality and the communities during the electoral campaign. I suggest that these linkages are a first step towards developing a genuine accountability mechanism, which the literature unanimously acknowledges as being essential for successful decentralization.

**Interconnectedness of political and managerial factors for success**

The institutional approach to decentralization focuses on the incentives that derive from the characteristics of different public goods and services. Although this school recurrently presents “lack of political commitment” and “resistance to change” as causes of failure, its literature tends to underestimate the role of politics. Political underpinnings of the decisions are acknowledged, but the implicit assumption is that local officials are accountable to a representative proportion of their constituents. This literature tends to dissociate managerial from political aspects of urban governance.\(^43\) From this perspective, the objective of decentralization is “not strong local government, but an efficient and responsive system of service delivery.”\(^44\) Taking political conditions for granted, the recommendations for improving service delivery in this literature are essentially institutional in nature.

On the other hand, literature on political decentralization presumes that if the organization of local elections is a necessary condition for democratization, it is not a sufficient one.\(^45\) Moreover, elections are not a sufficient condition for improved

\(^{44}\) Dillinger (1994).
Accountability mechanisms are crucial to elicit responsiveness to public preferences, and those mechanisms do not necessarily emerge spontaneously from democratic institutions. Inasmuch as arguments in favor of political decentralization are numerous, empirical research shows that results in the field are divergent.\(^{46}\) Obviously, additional factors may or may not make democratic decentralization produce the expected positive outcome. These complementary conditions are country- and case-specific, and therefore deserve further empirical research.

The core arguments in favor of autonomous local governments, both the economic and the political ones, rest on the assumption that local governments are accountable to their constituents. In many countries, this assumption is manifestly problematic. Several scholars recently addressed this issue and tried to understand the reasons why decentralization did not yield its expected benefits. Taking political institutions into account, they analyze the interaction and reciprocal influences of managerial and political settings. In the case of Senegal, Marks concludes, “political rewards for municipal politicians are not linked to governance results,” and the main reason why decentralization did not yield its expected benefits is, “that political decentralization has not accompanied administrative decentralization.”\(^{47}\) He argues for a better integration of political analysis into conventional administrative and fiscal analysis, and for the building of mechanisms that explicitly link political accountability with concrete realizations. Complementary to these approaches that aim at explaining why decentralization may not fulfill its expectations, I studied a case where some of them, indeed, have been achieved. Aboisso is a case where urban governance has been remarkably improved in the past.

\(^{46}\) Marks (1996) analyzed in depth the reasons why decentralization did not improve local governance in Senegal, despite the real autonomy - fiscal, political and administrative - of the Senegalese communes. He highlights the characteristics of the political system, which as a whole lacks appropriate institutional incentives for good governance and electoral sanctions. R. Crook and J. Manor studied and compared four Asian and African Experiences (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Bangladesh and Karnataka, India) and suggest that the factors that made the difference between more or less successful experiences were accountability mechanisms, created though particular linkages established between the local governments and their populations. Crook’s detailed analysis of the Ivoirian case points out the absence of these linkages between the commune and their constituents, as well as the weakness of the civil society and the lack of financial means. See also Heller, P, (1997) for the case of Kerala in India, and Fox (1991) for the case of Mexico.

\(^{47}\) Marks (1996)
seven years, in parallel with the decentralization process. Conforming Marks's hypothesis, I found out that political and managerial factors of success go hand in hand.

An example representative of the interconnectedness of political and managerial factors is shown by the setting of clear political priorities as a result of the scarcity of resources. The incremental approach was an important ingredient for the success, not only because it focused the weak existing capacities on the tackling of one problem at a time, but also because it enabled a learning-by-doing process that eventually increased the capacity of the local administration. This incremental approach was directly the result of the lack of financial resources, which forced the municipality to start with an affordable first phase, and to set clear priorities.

To achieve a remarkable improvement in a period of particularly scarce resources is striking, and suggests some lessons for donors' assistance. Donors' assistance is often based on the assumption that the main causes for bad service delivery are the lack of financial means and local capacity. However, this case suggests that the lack of financial means is perhaps not such an insurmountable handicap, at least at the time of initiating a program. Perhaps international donors should look for local small initiatives and help them to develop over time. Moreover, it may be important for the local administration to start with projects adapted to the existing capacity, precisely to give time for the learning process to take place.

Irrelevance of the dichotomy supply-driven vs. demand-driven programs

The unanimous encouragement of community involvement in the literature on service delivery has led to the dominance of the concept of the 'demand-driven' program.\textsuperscript{49} In the same vein, in Côte d'Ivoire, the financial crisis of the late eighties led to new institutional arrangements whereby the population is more actively involved in the delivery of collective services. However, this approach tends to neglect the key question of the sources of demand, which is taken as a given. It is implicitly assumed that

\textsuperscript{48} I use the term managerial to refer to both the administrative and the fiscal factors, and to allude to the 'Urban Management Approach,' which dissociates technical and practical aspects of urban governance from the political ones.

communities know what they want, and that what they want is what they really need. Some authors go even further and consider that the willingness to pay is the best mechanism for eliciting and evaluating demand. Without contesting the importance of community involvement or cost recovery, the case of Aboisso suggests that the role of supply side is underestimated, as well as its political underpinnings.

Despite its crucial importance for public health, sanitation is an issue that generally does not interest the communities, which are often unaware of its benefits. Sanitation programs suffer from this lack of popular concern. In Aboisso, the successful implementation of such a program results from a long process whereby the supplier (the municipality) forged a demand within communities. An interactive process allowed the electoral candidate to disseminate a message around sanitation and elicit popular expectations, which in turn influenced the setting of his priorities. This popular mobilization undeniably contributed to the effective and sustained delivery of the services. The interesting point here is not only that the demand arose, but that it was developed by the supplier itself. The candidate-mayor literally forged the demand and the municipal department reinforced it. The supply-driven vs. demand-driven dichotomy is thus too stark to understanding what happened in Aboisso. This case suggests that demand and supply are intricately linked, and that service delivery programs ought to be designed and implemented with the knowledge that the demand can -- and in some cases should -- be generated by the supply side.

A First Step Towards an Accountability Mechanism

The newly elected municipal team delivered successfully and was reelected on the basis of its good performance. The local administration overcame its initial lack of technical and financial capacity because political priorities were clear. The municipal council was reelected because it responded to the popular expectations created during the

50 See Kycong Ae, Whittington and Lauria (1996); UNDP (1990); Winpenny (1994); Cleaver and Lomas (1996).

51 For a discussion of sanitation programs in general, see Whittington (1996). As part of their research program mentioned above ("Enhancing Participation and Institutional Performance"), Crook and Manor conducted a survey on public preferences. In Côte d'Ivoire, this survey shows that sanitation is not among the top-ten preferred services for men, and is only listed in the 8th position for women.
electoral campaign. It was capable of achieving this result partly because linkages had been established between the municipality and the communities. These linkages are the mechanism by which the municipality informs communities about its actions and by which it obtains their active participation in concrete activities. By-products of the electoral campaign, these linkages are a first step towards citizens’ participation in the management of public services, and may be developed over time into institutionalized mechanisms of accountability.

Political decentralization and multi-partyism created opportunities for politicians to be legitimized by popular vote, instead of being designated by the ruling party. This process enabled the emergence of a new kind of political leader who did not want to play the game imposed by the single party. Aboisso illustrates a case where, indeed, this shift in the source of power led to the emergence of a more entrepreneurial personality. As an outsider, the future mayor decided to differentiate himself from the established politicians by basing his electoral campaign on concrete actions, rooted in the perceived needs of the population. His search for electoral support led him to mobilize people around the issue of sanitation, and to reactivate civic associations to support the implementation of this program. Hence, Aboisso is also a successful case of building popular support for a collective good.

Civil society is considered to be weak in Côte d’Ivoire after thirty years of an authoritarian regime. More generally, a negative outcome of the single-party in Africa was that it prevented any form of autonomous organization within civil society. The state had rightly interpreted community activism in potentially political terms. The conception of the ‘welfare state,’ inherited from the French influence, reinforced the passivity of the population in the provision of collective services. Surprisingly, in Aboisso, the mayor is at the source of reactivating civil associations. He mobilized people initially for electoral purposes, but local associations played a role in the implementation

52 This positive outcome of the recent political reforms is acknowledged by most of the analysts. See in particular Bakary (1986) and Fauré (1991). Along the same line, Marks points out that decentralization led in Senegal to competitive politics (within the single party) at the local level, thereby favoring the emergence of ‘more-managerially-inclined opponents.’ Marks (1996).
53 R. Crook (1990, 1991). The daily Ivoirian Newspaper ‘Fraternité Matin’ conducted a survey of mayors and local officials: apathy and lack of participation were identified as a common complaint countrywide.
phase of the program. They remain important as the institutionalized linkages between the population and the municipality. This functional role contributes to their sustainability over time.

Today, Aboisso is undeniably a case of popular mobilization, as opposed to an example of real participation of the citizens in public affairs. Nevertheless, there are now linkages through which communities are informed about the actions of the municipality, and through which the municipality mobilizes people for concrete activities. This process has been sustained for the past seven years. “He keeps his words,” reflects the image that the population has of its mayor. His electoral promises became concrete realizations, and led to his reelection five years later. The linkages between the Aboisso municipality and its constituents are an embryo of an accountability mechanism. With political rewards for municipal politicians linked to governance results, the case of Aboisso shows a possible first step towards ‘the difficult transition from clientelism to citizenship.’

5 The authors suggest that this top-down mobilization process may be a first step leading to the ‘de-patrimonialization of the public sphere,’ then to ‘the adoption of a shared notion of the public interest.’ Mobilization ultimately favors ‘the emergence of a new generation of notables and politicians carrying an ethic of the public interest.’ See Jaglin and Dubresson (1993).

56 Following Jaglin and Dubresson (1993), I am making a distinction between popular mobilization, viewed as ‘the use of existing resources’ including local human resources, and popular participation, viewed as ‘the process by which citizens participate in the public affairs, including the policy-making process. These authors point out that what is called participation is often barely more than the mobilization of the population, a strategy aimed at their eventual ‘fiscalization.’

57 I am borrowing the expression from Fox (1991).
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Annex 1: Budget of the municipality, 1990-1997

Sources: Direction Générale des Collectivités Territoriales, Ministère de l’Intérieur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Grant</th>
<th>Other intergv transfer</th>
<th>Local Revenues</th>
<th>Total local revenues</th>
<th>European Grants</th>
<th>Total Revenues</th>
<th>Budget of Investments</th>
<th>Inv. in Sanitation</th>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>117,558</td>
<td>115,297</td>
<td>42,344</td>
<td>275,199</td>
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<td>50,759</td>
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<td>5,843</td>
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<td>1994</td>
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<td>59,199</td>
<td>60,009</td>
<td>162,976</td>
<td>64,000</td>
<td>226,976</td>
<td>49,396</td>
<td>118,000</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>43,768</td>
<td>180,091</td>
<td>69,258</td>
<td>293,117</td>
<td>149,259</td>
<td>442,376</td>
<td>39,960</td>
<td>210,783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers are given in 1.000 CFA
1 USD = 560 CFA

In January 1995, the Ivoirian currency, the CFA, devalued by 50% with respect to the French Franc.
Annex 2: List of Interviews

Interview were conducted during my stay in the Côte d’Ivoire, in July and August 1997

Municipality
Etché Eilleighand, Mayor 1990-1997
Bilé Manlan, First adjoint au Maire
Seydou Gueye, Adjoint au Maire
Bosso Koutoua, Head of the municipal cabinet
Several Municipal councillors

Municipal Administration
Mr. Coulibaly, Head of the municipal administration
Francis Aka, Directeur du Service technique
Francis Vonga, adjoint au directeur
Biébrou, Responsible for the sewers cleaning and for the sweeping
Auguste, Responsible for the garbage collection
Syedou, gardener
Albert, market cleaner
Salif, truck driver
Marcellin, Agent d’hygiène
Clement, Agent d’hygiène
Ezoua, guard of the park
Mr. Dosso, Directeur des Services financiers
Denis Blehoué, responsible for the management of the public market (user fees collection)
Albert, latrines maintenance
Clement, latrines maintenance

Local Associations and Communities
Mme Ahui, President of a Women Association (UFRA)
Marianne Touré, seller, Representative of the Women of Quartier T.P.
Allah Tanoh, President of a Women Association (AMOIZE)
Narcisse, Vice-President of the Youths Association (UJCA)
Leandre Kablan, representative for the Youths to the municipality
Koffi Fobah, President of the UJCA
Moussa, sellers of material
Allah, seller of smoked fish
Marianne, seller of atiéké
Other sellers

and people in the street, walkers in the park, buyers in the market, inhabitants of my neighborhood
Key-Individuals at the local level
Brou Ahui, leader of the opposition, former adjoint au maire (1980-1990)
Désiré Aka, political activist of the opposition
Garett Watkins, Peace Corps Volunteer in charge of sanitation
Hope Fang, Peace Corps Volunteer in charge of community development
Melanie, Head of a local micro-credit project

National Level
Anoh Boko, Adjoint au Directeur de la Direction Générale des Collectivités territoriales
Head of the cabinet of the prefet
Mr. Koupé, Directeur de l’urbanisme, based in Aboisso (deconcentrated administration)

Key-Individuals at the national level
Harris Mêmel-Fôte, anthropologist, leader of the FPI (main political parti of the opposition)

International Donors
Eric Yoboué,
Isaac Dé, Urban Development Specialist at the World Bank
Mr. Drevet, responsible of the European Project involved in Aboisso (PDCC)
Theodore N’Dri, technical support to the PDCC municipalities
Akindes, Sociologue, support to the PDCC municipalities

Research Institutes
Tché Tché N’Guesan, Directeur du CIRES, partner research-institute of the UNDP research project
Jean-Maris Chevassu, Directeur de l’ORSTOM
Ori Boizo, researcher, specialist in community participation